

"We select based on experience, past work, and skill," Prim answered honestly. "Is there something... you'd like to ask?" Her tone softened, as if she'd forgotten the other was a client.

"No, I was just wondering. Like Gorya, is her skill not good?"

"No, of course not."

"Or was she chosen because she's your type?"

"Hey," Prim made a disapproving sound. "That's not related at all. Even if I liked someone, if their skills weren't truly up to par, I wouldn't hire them."

"I see. So, do you like her or not?" Bambi asked with genuine curiosity.

Prim frowned. "Whether I like her or not, I don't see how that's relevant to *this project*," she said, carefully avoiding the word 'you'.

Bambi crossed her arms and looked away. Just then, Gorya came out of the dressing room and whispered something to Prim. Their closeness made Bambi turn to look with a mix of curiosity and mild displeasure.

"I'll handle the directing myself," Prim said softly, placing a hand on Gorya's shoulder before walking straight to the set.

When Prim arrived, Min was talking intensely with Praew. Prim told the other crew members to leave, then stopped in front of Praew. "Let's talk in private."

The three of them stopped at the empty stairwell landing outside the studio.

"Praew, are you hungover?" Prim asked.

Praew fell silent before swallowing.

"Shasha said she could smell alcohol strongly from you. We agreed not to drink before a shoot day, no exceptions."

Praew lowered her gaze, a faint red tinge in her eyes. "Last night at the bar... the owner treated us. And then a large group of customers came, so I had to drink with them." She bowed her head in guilt. "I really tried not to drink too much... but we started early today, so I'm not at full capacity."

Prim rolled her eyes. Min quickly tried to fix the situation. "Alright, the lighting team is fixing the light. It should get better."

"No. Shasha already reported to Bambi. It's already a big issue," Prim said, her voice calm and steady. "And what will Bambi say?"

"What will she say? If I take over the shoot, she might feel more at ease. Don't worry, I'll handle the rest myself."

Prim walked back to the set, just as Shasha had changed into a new outfit. Gorya was fixing her hair. "Shasha, pose please."

Bambi, sitting in front of the monitor, leaned forward, wondering why Prim was now taking the photos. But once it was Prim, everything sped up. The crew knew her style, and the work flowed smoothly. Bambi, who normally walked around checking details, sat still, watching each image Prim sent over.

On set, Prim took off her high heels and climbed onto a chair in front of Shasha, lowering the camera to shoot from a bird's-eye view. "That's it, Shasha. Lower your head a bit more. Yes. Smile slightly."

She didn't notice that the chair she was standing on was wobbling dangerously as she leaned forward. She looked down just as she realized she was about to fall.

In the moment when everyone could only stare in shock, Gorya rushed in.

"Ah!"

"P'Prim!" Gorya grabbed her arm just in time, preventing her from falling.

Prim looked at the smaller woman, seeing they were only inches apart. "Thank you, Gorya."

"You're welcome," the stylist smiled, letting go of her arm once she saw Prim was safe.

Shasha watched the scene with displeasure. Seeing Gorya's caring attitude and Prim's grateful gaze made the model even more irritated.

Behind the monitor, Bambi gritted her teeth, watching the scene between Prim and Gorya on the screen. A thin, displeased smile crossed her lips.

Chapter 15 - The Hard Question

It seemed to have become a tradition. Every time a shoot wrapped, they had to end up at the same bar. Honestly, Prim didn't want this to become a company culture, partly because she was concerned about the team's health, and partly because she didn't want to drink that much herself. But she couldn't really resist the team's desires.

Wait, that's not right. To be precise, it was the 'client's' desire.

"The client isn't leaving yet. Do you want to head back first?" Min whispered in her ear, seeing that Prim refused to take off her jacket, as if ready to leave at any moment. Min's gaze drifted towards Bambi, who was clinking glasses with the team.

"Looks like a blatant money-burning project to me," Prim grumbled, shaking her head.

Min shot her best friend a scolding look. "You're exaggerating. Bambi means well."

"I'm just saying, she's finding excuses to spend her mom's money on alcohol without getting caught."

"You were the one who told her to do something properly. Now she's doing it. What's there to complain about, you idiot," Min said, laughing, before excusing herself and walking away.

Prim picked up her glass and drank it all in one go. Meanwhile, Bambi, who was dancing with the team, kept glancing over at her. From her unsteady swaying, it seemed she was quite drunk. Prim didn't pay much attention. She turned to get another beer, but then a full glass was placed right in front of her.

Prim turned and found a sweet-faced young woman smiling widely at her. "P'Prim, do you remember me?"

"Christy, right?" Prim wasn't entirely sure, but she was confident this must be a model she had worked with before.

"Yes! I'm so glad you still remember me." Christy sat down beside her, crossing her long, slender legs and intentionally letting her foot brush against Prim's. She was a few years younger than Prim, a model she had shot with the previous year.

"You can get into bars now?" Prim teased.

"I've been allowed in for a long time. I've graduated."

"Just kidding," Prim laughed.

Christy leaned in close, locking eyes with her. "What a coincidence, running into you here, P'Prim. Let me buy you a beer."

Prim was about to refuse, but when she turned and saw the gaze of someone else watching from the team's table, she changed her mind. "Alright then, but let me buy you a drink too."

"You've already had a lot. But if you want to repay me, it doesn't have to be alcohol," Christy whispered softly near her ear, her hand coming to rest on Prim's thigh. "It can be something else."

Normally, Prim avoided getting involved with models she worked with, afraid of personal complications. She didn't want to give anyone the opportunity to think she misused her professional power. She had held firmly to that intention... until she saw Bambi's glare directed at her.

"So, what exactly do you want it to be?" Prim deliberately turned to meet Christy's eyes.

"How about your room tonight, P'Prim?" Christy didn't back down, moving closer.

Prim laughed instead of answering. Abruptly, she saw Bambi stomp her foot and walk off towards the restroom. Prim watched her go but didn't intend to follow. Christy leaned her face in for a kiss, but Prim dodged, picking up her beer glass instead. "Let me drink first," she replied vaguely, turning to look towards the restroom, wondering what the little one was sulking about.

"Look at me, not over there," Christy's slender hand turned Prim's face back.

Prim hesitated, asking herself if this might be the way to finally end things with Bambi. She decided to place a hand on the other's neck to pull her in for a kiss.

Suddenly, all the lights in the bar went out.

Prim pulled away. The stage lights were off too; this wasn't a gimmick. Everyone in the bar let out a sound of surprise as the music went completely silent.

"This is exciting, isn't it?" Christy whispered in her ear.

Prim turned towards the younger model, about to kiss her again, when a voice rang out. "Ouch!!"

The loud cry came from the direction of the restrooms. Prim froze. A gut feeling made her stand up quickly, ignoring Christy's startled expression, before striding purposefully towards the sound. The emergency lights in the hallway provided just enough light to see.

A few people were already gathered outside the restroom. Prim grew more anxious, quickly squeezing inside. "Excuse me."

Bambi was sitting on the floor, hands covering her face. Prim's heart sank. She immediately knelt beside her. "The lights went out while I was walking, so I didn't see the door was closed," Bambi said, her voice slurred with drunkenness.

A cut on her forehead was seeping blood.

"Sorry, I didn't think anyone was inside," said another young woman, the one who had closed the door.

"It's okay, I was just too drunk," Bambi replied, trying to stand up, but then lost her balance and fell back to the floor. Prim quickly grabbed her arm and helped her up. "Let's just go back. We need to get this wound treated."

"No, I'll go back myself later."

"You're this drunk?" Prim sounded exasperated. "You can barely walk."

"I can make it. I'm not a child," she said, trying to pull her arm free, but stumbled towards the sink instead. Prim sighed and gripped her hand even tighter.

Bambi looked up to meet her eyes, but Prim ignored her resistance, holding her hand and walking straight back to the table in the bar. The main lights had come back on, and the music started playing again. Christy watched as Prim led Bambi back to the table. Prim picked up her own bag, then Bambi's clutch, before turning to Christy.

"I have to head back early today, Christy. My friend here is really drunk."

"Sure," Christy stood up, then picked up her half-finished glass of beer and threw it directly into Prim's face.

The people around them cried out, "Hey!" as Christy made a face and stomped away.

Prim was stunned, the bitter smell of malt stinging her nose. She turned to look at the person beside her. Bambi stared at her wide-eyed in shock before bursting out laughing, as if forgetting she was the cause of all this.

Gorya wasn't in the bar when the lights went out. She had just arrived after returning the clothes to the brand. The young stylist took out her favorite lipstick, applied it, fixed her hair,

then pushed the bar door open. She took out her phone to call Prim, but before the other party could answer, she saw Prim from behind, walking out into the hallway.

Gorya was about to call out, but her eyes slid away and saw first that Prim was holding Bambi's hand. Bambi was laughing beside her. She couldn't see the director's face, but Prim was definitely holding Bambi's hand. She was sure of it.

Prim was leading Bambi by the hand towards the back exit, while Bambi, who seemed a bit drunk, kept smiling nonstop.

The scene made Gorya feel a tightness in her chest. Her heart beat fast but faintly, as if she couldn't breathe. Prim's call disconnected by itself. Gorya finally came to her senses, taking another breath as if trying to calm her body down. She had only two choices: go home and cry, or walk into the bar and have fun as if nothing happened.

"Oh, Gorya! The table's over there." Min pointed it out to her before gently guiding her inside.

Gorya smiled faintly and walked to the table. Everyone was dancing, but she wasn't in the mood to drink. She felt it was a mistake to come here. Perhaps she should just go home.

Just as she was about to turn back, she found a third option.

Shasha was drinking beer and laughing with one of the team members. Gorya walked over to the tall model, looking up at her. Shasha looked down, questioningly. Before she could ask anything, Gorya stood on her toes and pressed her lips against the other's without hesitation.

She could feel the smell of alcohol blended with the sweet yet solid scent of Vetiver, the perfume Shasha was wearing. The soft lips were more thrilling than imagined. In just the few seconds their lips touched, she felt heat spreading all over her body. Gorya broke the kiss first, startled.

Startled that it was better than she thought.

Shasha smiled back, her eyes holding both surprise and satisfaction. The model bit her lip before moving her hand to Gorya's neck and pulling her up for another kiss. This time, their lips pressed together more fiercely. Gorya couldn't deny that the other was a good kisser. Very good. Better than she thought. And possibly the best she had ever kissed.

Gorya's eyes fluttered open, and the moment their eyes met, she had the answer, even though no one had asked.

"My place or yours?"

This might be the only question she would permit to be asked. Right now.

Chapter 16 - Everything you do just turns me on

Inside the spacious bedroom, the soft hum of the air conditioner was the only sound. A loose burgundy silk robe lay across a large bed. Even with the curtains closed, the wide window offered a clear view of the Bangkok night scene, its lights twinkling like distant stars. Soft jazz played in a repetitive, looping rhythm from a wireless speaker, creating a seductive atmosphere that filled the entire room with a romantic feeling.

The king-size bed was covered with clean white bedding, a stark contrast to the dark velvet throw blanket draped at its foot. The scent of luxurious rose and musk perfume wafted through the air, mingling with the light from scented candles on the bedside table and by the window, their flames shimmering and sparkling like dancing jewels.

Shasha's outer shirt was casually thrown over an armchair in the corner, as if carelessly discarded. All these elements combined made the bedroom seem not just a place for rest, but a stage for desire, where every breath was filled with an intensity hidden beneath the gentle light of the night.

Gorya closed her eyes as the other's lips slowly trailed from her own down to her neck. Shasha's hands moved to gently undo the buttons of her top, and Gorya could feel the other's heavy breathing against her skin. She had to gasp for air to regain her composure, feeling as if she was about to lose control. The familiar pressure of the model's lips pressed down periodically, and every time Shasha kissed her smooth skin, a wave of heat would spread and then gradually deepen.

Just as Gorya was debating whether she should leave, Shasha gave her no time to think. After pointing out the bathroom, the model had rushed towards her, the kisses filled with a longing that suggested she had been craving this touch for a long time. Gorya already knew how much the other person desired her, but she hadn't realized she herself wanted it this much, too.

It seemed using only her mouth to undo the buttons wasn't fast enough. Shasha quickly unbuttoned Gorya's shirt, revealing the chest concealed beneath a black lace bra. The impatient gaze staring at her made Gorya's heart beat stronger and faster.

"You're curvier than I thought."

Gorya took it as a compliment. The heat spread throughout her body. Shasha's deep eyes stared into hers while her hands reached back to undo the bra clasp. The light in the room

reflected off Gorya's smooth, fair skin, her sweet, pink-tipped breasts captivating her viewer's gaze and effectively stimulating desire.

Gorya swallowed thickly as Shasha slowly traced her fingertips over the peaks, pulling her deeper into a whirlpool of passion. She shuddered slightly before the model gently parted her lips, greeting the tip with a familiar tongue, circling the peak before sucking it into her mouth.

"Ah..."

Gorya couldn't help but let out a soft moan. Shasha, pleased with the reaction, gently bit down, sending even more intense shivers through her as one hand began to knead the other breast. Gorya could feel her chest burning, along with a heat building lower within her. Her hand moved up to tangle in the other's hair, lost in the passion, letting out soft whimpers from her slender neck.

Shasha glanced at Gorya's flushed face with satisfaction. Seeing the smaller woman's fluttering eyelids only further aroused her.

"So sweet," Shasha whispered.

Instantly, Gorya opened her eyes. The provocative gaze made her pull Shasha in for another kiss, and she began to undress the other woman. Her slender hands moved to unzip the taller woman's wide-leg pants, but Shasha was more impatient than she thought. The model stood up and pushed her down onto the bed.

Gorya felt disoriented. Even with prior experience, the moment the other woman kissed her, it felt like the first time in her life. Her heart was beating erratically. She had often thought Shasha wasn't her type, but tonight, the model seemed so appealingly beautiful. She tried to hide her nervousness, but the other person seemed to sense every particle of her feeling.

Gorya sat on the edge of the bed, watching Shasha unbutton her shirt and take it off, revealing a toned stomach as beautiful as her chest. The moment the shirt was tossed aside, the model swiftly moved in to kiss her. Gorya leaned back onto the bed.

A thrilling sensation, a feeling she had never known before, washed over her. "Oh... Shasha..." The name was a whisper, a surrender that seemed to make the other woman's body go limp.

Is this normal, to feel this way?

No, Gorya answered in her heart. She never allowed anyone to get this deep inside her. Yet the woman she was with now was breaking through every wall, coming into every part of her. She was letting go of her self-control. Her hands clutched the sheets, her head tilted back as she drank in the other's sweet, intoxicating scent.

Gorya's back arched. She didn't have time to think. Shasha's lips separated from hers, only to nip lightly at her collarbone before traveling back up to her chin. Shasha began a playful rhythm against her body. She took Gorya's wrists and pinned them above her head, making Gorya gasp with a new wave of excitement. The impact of the other's progressive movements sent shivers through her entire body.

She wanted this woman.

This feeling, a wave of pure desire, was more intense than anything she had ever wanted. It grew stronger with every possessive, passionate look from Shasha. The dampness of sweat and arousal mixed on their skin. The other woman was taller, stronger. The blood rushed through Gorya's veins. This was the first time she had been with someone and felt this raw power, this overwhelming passion. The dim light in the room cast a warm glow on her skin. The model was on top of her, their bodies moving in a steady rhythm, Gorya's hands on her back, ready to feel her touch.

She let the other's body fall into the king-size embrace. The smaller woman was pinned beneath the taller one, who looked down at her. On the bed, the model became even more captivating.

"Will you resist?" Shasha asked, her gaze fixed on Gorya's wrist, which rested near her own thigh.

"I can't resist anymore," Gorya confessed. "I want you to stop acting like this."

Gorya knew what she was walking into, but with Shasha, she felt the need to use the word 'surrender'. The other's eyes were no longer asking for consent, yet there was a flicker of consideration in them that drove Gorya wild. Shasha wasn't just hot; she was also cold, and the hardness in her gaze played with Gorya's mind. Shasha's fingers slid between Gorya's, pressing their joined hands down against the mattress. A shudder of pleasure ran through her. Shasha's lips, just before they met hers, paused, and Gorya held her breath, listening to the unspoken desire that was no different from her own. The rhythm of the other's hand grew faster, more intense.

The raw emotion was so potent it was indescribable. No one had ever made her feel like this. From a place of thinking she shouldn't like her, she now felt herself completely changing. The scent of the model was so unique that Gorya couldn't help but be drawn in. It was as if her lips were made for nothing else.

"Oh..." A low sound, overflowing with feeling, escaped her. Shasha used the tip of her tongue to trace Gorya's lower lip, a silent invitation to open up, to let go.

"That's it," she whispered, her voice trembling as she felt the softest touch. Gorya wanted to spend the whole night tasting the other's lips, feeling the rhythm of her breath that she could no longer resist.

"I like it," Shasha's voice was not soft. Gorya couldn't reply, but her heart answered for her.

Shasha's face moved down to Gorya's neck again, her breathing heavy. Gorya's heart beat hard and fast. One of her hands rested on the bed, the other moved up to Shasha's face. Shasha's body trembled, not in rhythm, but in response to the pleasure she was receiving. Gorya sighed.

Their kisses were hot... and warm. They held each other in their arms, letting their heartbeats sync.

She never knew anyone could make her feel this good... ever again.

Chapter 17 - Close and Far

Min wasn't drunk. She had just drunk a little to enjoy the atmosphere. Seeing that Prim and Bambi had left, she could roughly guess the story. Trying to control a friend's relationship is strange; the more you forbid it, the more you seem to encourage it. Both she and Prim were old enough to decide their own paths. Her role as a friend was probably just to support them and drink with them.

While about to book a ride on the app, as team members were starting to leave, her eyes landed on a black 1978 Mercedes-Benz W116 parked in the lot. She had seen the classic car in passing before but had never seen the owner. Min was interested, being a fan of vintage cars herself.

As she walked closer, wanting to get a better look, the person behind the wheel turned and made eye contact with her. Min froze.

"Praew?" she said softly.

Praew had been Prim's assistant on the shoot but had excused herself to go home early, not joining the others at the bar. "I'd like to talk to you, P'Min. Can we talk for a bit?"

"Sure," Min agreed, getting into Praew's car.

Praew didn't say much after they started driving. She only asked for Min's address, nodded, and drove off without checking the GPS.

"Do you know the way well? I just moved there not long ago," Min admitted.

"I remember. I'm good at remembering routes," Praew said with a casual smile. "I like to create a rough map in my head. When I first started learning photography, I liked to walk around taking pictures and then remember the way back, so I remember almost all the routes in Bangkok."

"Oh, I see."

Min hadn't dared to look directly at Praew since their kiss. She had talked much less with her, unsure of what exactly happened that night. She had been asking herself about her feelings, which she couldn't really describe. But one feeling that surged up, and she couldn't deny it, was fear. Min still didn't know what she was afraid of. But what was certain was that she was afraid.

She glanced sideways and saw Praew driving skillfully, turning the steering wheel with just one hand. That alone made Min's heart beat faster. Not wanting the other to notice, she took the initiative. "What did you want to talk about?"

"About today," Praew said, stopping as the traffic light turned red. She turned to look at Min. "I feel that I might not be suitable for the opportunity I received."

"I knew you'd overthink this," Min said, sighing with relief. "I talked with Prim already, she understands. She doesn't hold a grudge."

"No, it's not just that. This company is the lifeblood of you and P'Prim. If I ruin it, it will affect everyone. I just realized it's a bigger responsibility than I thought. I might not be ready yet."

"What does 'ready' mean?"

The other fell silent, the street lights reflecting in her sensitive eyes. "It might be when I... don't have to work at that bar anymore."

"You know, when I decided to start a company with Prim, I had almost nothing except ability, experience, and a few small connections," Min began, recalling the past. "At that time, I thought, if we keep waiting until we're more ready, we'd probably end up old and die in bed. It's not that I wasn't scared; I was very scared. Scared of failing. And I asked myself the same question you're asking now: 'Or am I just not ready yet?'"

The atmosphere in the car quieted.

"But I asked myself, when exactly is this 'ready'? Is it when I'm burned out? When I'm ten years older? It doesn't exist, that kind of readiness. Because actually, people are ready all the time, right? It just depends on opportunities and situations. When everything coincides, we become ready automatically."

Min let her gaze drift forward. "If you want to leave because you can't manage your time, I can understand. But if you're leaving because you're worried about me and Prim, that's unnecessary. We are prepared to accept all kinds of risks. Prim herself received many opportunities and likes to give new people chances. She understands this better than anyone."

"But..." the younger woman paused, then sighed. "Today, I didn't do well at all."

"Everyone has done poorly before. Even Prim once flirted with a client and then stood her up, causing him to cancel the job abruptly, making us take a loss."

Min's nonchalant comment made Praew burst out laughing. "Really? P'Prim is so beautiful, her charm must be very strong."

"That's not the point," Min shrugged. "What I want to convey is that mistakes aren't as scary as not daring."

"That's true," Praew took a deeper breath. "I went to the trouble of getting the opportunity I've always wanted. To give it up just because of a mistake I made, it's like looking down on my own worth."

"Glad you think that way," Min replied.

"I like talking with you, P'Min," Praew smiled, looking at her openly. "Talking with you always gives me new perspectives."

"Same here," Min admitted. "Talking with you often makes me dare to step out of my comfort zone. This time, I wanted to pull you out on your own."

"Sometimes 'comfort zone' is such a scary term, isn't it?" Praew said as she pressed the accelerator. "After staying there too long, it can become a danger zone."

Min turned to look at the person beside her. This woman was several years younger, but her words sometimes sounded like someone her own age or even older.

"So, will you still work with me?"

"Of course. With a boss this beautiful and kind, who would run away?"

"Well, there was almost one stupid person," Min joked.

"It was just a temporary mood, like PMS," Praew laughed. "Stressed all day, it feels good talking with you."

"Artistic people are like this, easily sensitive," Min concluded kindly, seeing the next turn was her new condo.

"Easily sensitive, but not easily swayed," Praew said while smoothly turning into the alley.

"What do you mean?"

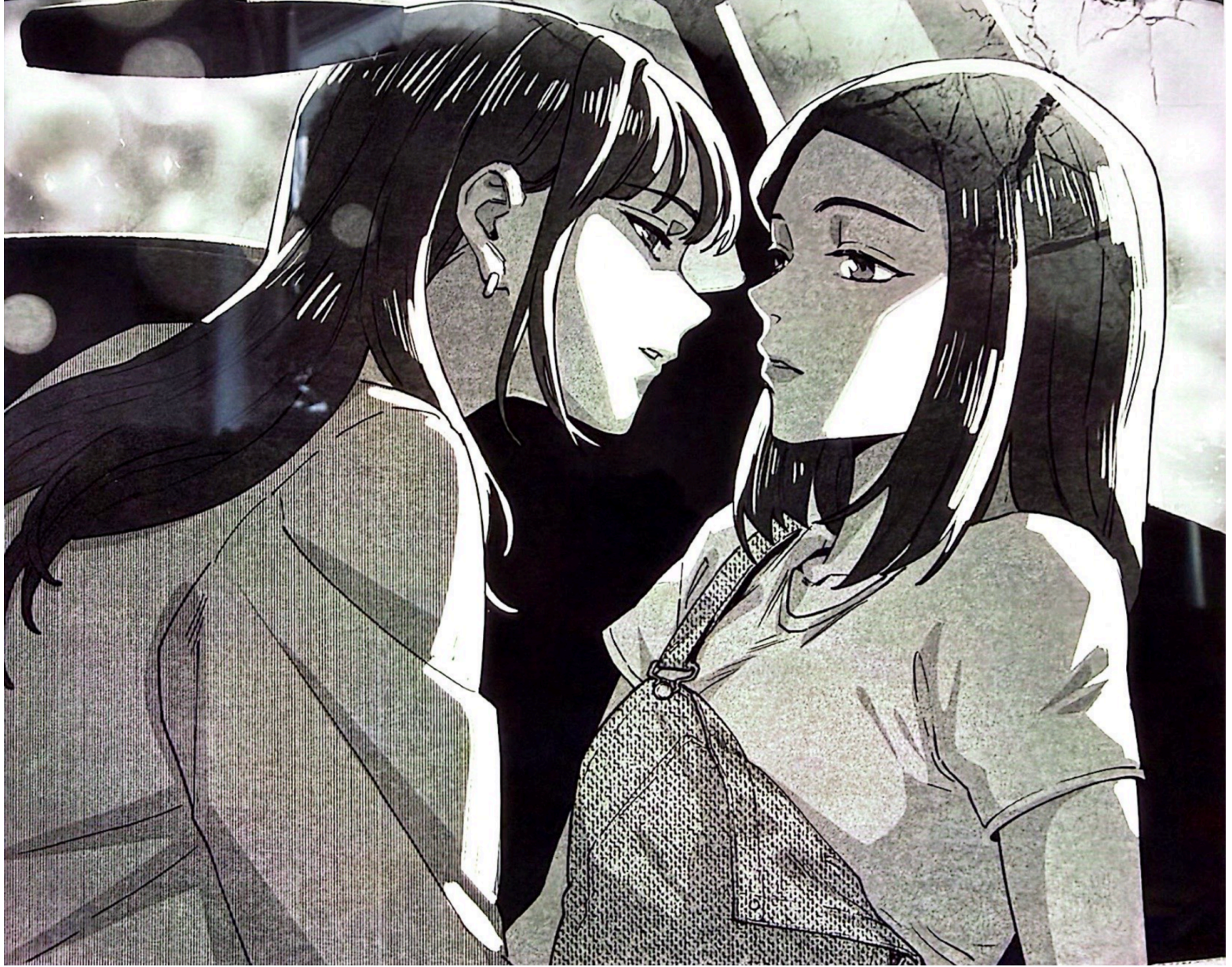
"It means I'm not someone who is easily swayed by just anyone," Praew said with a slight smile.

Soon, the car stopped in the quiet parking area. "What you said earlier..." Min paused. "What exactly did you mean?"

"To be honest," Praew got straight to the point, turning to look her in the eye. "I like you, P'Min."

The surroundings were so quiet that Min could hear her own heart beating loudly. "But I... I'm not sure."

"Sure about what?"



"I'm not sure what this feeling I have right now really is. Since that day we kissed, I admit, I felt good. A kind of good I've never felt with anyone before. But because I've always been straight, I'm not sure if it's just a temporary infatuation, or if it's a real feeling."

Praew fell silent. Min was afraid she would get angry.

"There's only one way to know," Praew finally said.

"How?"

"We have to kiss again, off-duty." Her eyes weren't joking. Min swallowed dryly.

"Are you serious?"

"Of course. How will you know if you don't try? If you *don't* feel anything, it means last time it was just the atmosphere, right?"

"Probably yes."

"Mistakes aren't as scary as not daring, you know," Praew said, grinning.

"Wait, are you tricking me?"

Praew smiled, showing her beautifully aligned teeth. The sweet face made Min's heart melt.

"Can I kiss you one more time?"

Min pressed her lips together, trying to suppress a smile. "Okay," she replied, almost in a whisper.

Praew smiled and leaned closer. The cherry-colored lips were like a spell that drew Min closer as well. She slowly closed her eyes, letting her heart do what it wanted. The scent from Praew's shampoo made her heart beat even faster.

Their lips touched. This time, Min felt even more dazed. As Praew reached out to touch her face, a feeling flashed through her entire body. The taste of the kiss made her almost forget to breathe, forgot all the experiences that had ever happened, forgot even that this was supposedly just a test.

Praew slowly, reluctantly, withdrew. Min fluttered her eyes open to meet the other's gaze, which seemed less confident this time.

"P'Min, if you don't..."

Not waiting for her to finish, Min held Praew's chin and leaned in to kiss her soft lips once more. Praew froze for a moment before kissing her back as if she had been waiting for this signal for a long time. Min slowly leaned back as the other's slender hand moved up from the hem of her shirt and touched her stomach. Praew's hand moved up and stopped at her chest, lingering there as if deciding.

Just as her slender fingers were about to slip inside her bra, Min immediately knew what was about to happen and quickly pushed Praew away.

Praew was startled. "P'Min, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done that."

Min just shook her head. "No," she gasped for breath. "Someone might see us here."

Praew froze, confused.

Min bit her lip. "It's better to go up to my room."

Was this still just a test? Min herself wasn't so sure anymore. She only knew that right now, she didn't want this fleeting feeling to disappear.

Inside Min's room, two bodies intertwined. Praew's pointed nose nuzzled into the crook of Min's neck as she fumbled with the buttons of her shirt. Soon it was undone, revealing her chest fully under a bra. Min hadn't turned on the main light, but the city glow from outside allowed a soft view of her form.

Utilizing her speed and experience, Praew scattered kisses over Min's smooth shoulders before quickly unfastening the bra. "So beautiful," she praised sincerely.

Min felt a thrill at the praise. She kissed the other and removed Praew's shirt with an equally trembling heart. Upon seeing the sweet, pink-tipped breasts, her mind could no longer restrain her desire. Min bent down and hungrily sucked on those peaks, surprising even the more experienced Praew, who gasped and let out a soft moan.

"Ah... Phi... Phi... That feels good."

That voice was more arousing than expected. Their eyes met again. Praew slowly pressed Min against the wall, gazing intently at her chest, making Min shiver uncontrollably. Praew smiled with satisfaction before quickly pulling down the other's trousers. Upon seeing the sexy lace underwear, she knelt down and used the tip of her tongue to tease the sensitive nub. Min felt so good she almost lost her breath.

"Do you like this?" Praew whispered, reluctantly pulling away.

Min smiled, kissing her back instead of answering, which only encouraged Praew more. She slipped her slender fingers into the lace panties. Min held her hand with a flicker of worry.

"It's up to you, Phi," Praew said, looking into her eyes. "You can tell me. I won't be angry."

Min hesitated. "Okay, you can... but be gentle, please."

"Okay," Praew smiled. "I'll do my best."

Warm, slender fingers slipped into her repeatedly. Feeling the wetness, Min bit her lip tightly. One hand kneaded Praew's breast, while the other wrapped around her neck. "Ah... good... so good," Min whispered.

Praew smiled widely, slowly searching for the spot that would make Min feel the best. Once she found it, Min's back arched, feeling the electrifying sensation from below. Praew moved her fingers rhythmically; it was sweet, gentle, yet passionate.

"Like this?"

"Faster," Min replied, holding the other tightly with longing.

Praew quickened the pace. Skin against skin until the heat spread throughout their bodies. Min tensed her abdomen until her body shook. The slender fingers moved faster, the hand kneading her breast intensified, and the sensations blended together perfectly.

"Ah, ah..." Sweet, soft moans escaped her lips. She gasped for breath until her body jerked. Finally, unable to withstand the heat any longer, Min released all her feelings at once. "Ahhh..."

Praew didn't pull her finger out immediately. "I love it when you tense up like this," she whispered. "So sexy."

Min turned to look into the smaller person's eyes. Though little strength remained, her desire was greater than before. She held Praew, turning her so her back was pressed against the wall, then meticulously kissed all over her smooth, white skin.

"P'Min... you know how to do this?"

Min slipped her slender fingers into the center of the flower petals and began to move with a slow, deliberate rhythm, just as Praew had done for her. "You smell so good..." Min whispered.

Those words made Praew smile, turning her face to kiss her. The taste of the kiss came with the quickening rhythm of her fingers. Praew gasped for breath, a burning heat building below.

"P'Min... ah... how are you so good? You said it was your first time."

"You taught me."

"Right now... ah... you're better than me."

Min smiled, biting gently on the smaller shoulder. She thrust her fingertips deep inside until she felt the familiar warmth. Praew's chest heaved violently. "I'm almost there..." she said, before turning to face her. They held each other tightly even while still joined, letting their trembling bodies communicate through touch.

Min became more adept, using her thumb to press down. Soon, she felt the fluid gushing out. Praew's body convulsed once more before her sweet, flushed face buried itself in the mound of Min's breast. "P'Min... I'm done."

She didn't need to say it; Min already knew. Bodies don't lie.

Praew lifted her head, locked eyes with her teasingly, then meticulously kissed her to conclude the test. "So, what's the final verdict? Do you have a new answer about your feelings for me?"

Min was shy but smiled, kissing the other back once more. "After all that, do you still need an answer?"

"And what you said you were afraid of... what were you afraid of?"

Min frowned slightly, her heart rate finally beginning to settle. "Because just now, I didn't see anything to be afraid of."

She played with the other's hair, then whispered very softly. "What we have right now is so good... it's terrifying. I'm afraid of losing it, so I didn't dare start."

That answer made Praew smile widely again. "Don't be afraid. I won't make you lose it ever again."

Chapter 18 - Divine Intervention

The car door opened, accompanied by Bambi's short laugh. Prim quickly paid the taxi driver and ran around to the other side to help Bambi out. The young woman staggered, still laughing as the taxi drove off. Prim supported her and led her forward, but Bambi's expression changed when she saw where they were.

"Why did you bring me here?" she asked, turning to the woman holding her up.

"Because it's your house," Prim replied with a tired voice.

In front of them was the gate of the largest white house in the soi. The moment he saw Bambi, the driver who was about to return home immediately opened it.

"Khun Bambi, please go ahead."

"Thank you," Prim smiled in response, then guided the homeowner's daughter forward. But Bambi held her back, refusing to go in.

"I never said I wanted you to bring me home."

"Then where should I take you? Your head is split open, you need to get the wound treated quickly," Prim argued, pulling Bambi's hand to walk along the path towards the large front door.

Bambi's expression showed anger, but she still followed, perhaps because she wasn't sober enough to resist. Prim held her hand tightly until the housekeeper ran to open the door. Seeing Bambi's condition, the housekeeper immediately understood.

"I'll get the first aid kit for you, Khun Bambi."

"No need. I'm going to sleep."

"But Khun Bambi, you have a wound."

"I'm going to sleep! What if Mom wakes up and sees me?" Bambi raised her voice to end the discussion.

"Khun Pim hasn't returned yet. She called to say she's staying over tonight, preparing for Fashion Week."

Hearing that, Bambi's tense expression relaxed a little. "Thank you. You can go to sleep now. I can handle it myself."

The housekeeper nodded and disappeared towards the back of the house. Prim thought differently. Even though the young client was more at ease, Prim being in this house was still too dangerous. She had met Bambi's mother a couple of times, and none of those encounters were good memories. To Pim, Prim was just a wandering spirit, someone who didn't even exist. Actually, being invisible in Pim's eyes was better, because whenever she became aware that Pim's gaze was on her, it was always a look that scanned her from head to toe.

When Pim gave interviews, she appeared as a well-mannered designer with a consistently good image, an admirable artist who, no matter how famous, remained humble. Prim often asked herself if the Pim she saw in the news and the real Pim she knew were the same person.

"Then I'll just drop you here," Prim said, relieved that Bambi was home safely.

"Wait," the homeowner's daughter grabbed her arm. "You're leaving already?"

"Well, you're home. What if your mom comes back and sees me?"

"She's not home, I told you. Besides, I didn't really want to come back here."

"Then where do you want to go?" Prim retorted. "Let go. Stop acting like a child."

Bambi looked hurt, her face scrunching up as if about to cry. "Fine, at least treat my wound first."

Finally, Prim had to give in. Seeing she had won, Bambi acted like a child as Prim led her to the sofa in the center of the living room.

"Where's the first aid kit?"

"Probably in the kitchen," Bambi said, leaning back. "Probably."

"Whose house is this anyway?" Prim muttered but still walked into the kitchen. The room was so spacious that Prim couldn't help but compare it to her own small bedroom. It was fitted with premium materials, from the high-quality marble countertops to the imported German cabinet handles.

She searched for a long time, opening every cabinet until she found a large first aid kit, fully stocked. She carried it out to find the homeowner's daughter looking at her with a dazed expression, as if she didn't know where the medicine was either.

"Here... sit still," Prim said, sitting beside Bambi and soaking a cotton ball in alcohol.

"Be gentle."

"I know you're actually afraid of alcohol," Prim said, dabbing the cotton ball lightly on the wound. "But I don't know where that fear goes when you're downing it like water."

"It's a different kind of alcohol," Bambi laughed hoarsely, gathering the hair from her forehead.

"Some things never change," the one treating the wound couldn't resist teasing.

"Hey, don't bully me. I purposely keep my bangs to cover my forehead, you know."

"You're still beautiful. With a forehead like this, anyone would want it. All the models get fillers."

"And you? Do you want it?" Bambi asked, sending a challenging look her way.

"You're so cheeky."

"No, I mean it." Hearing that, Prim stopped her hands and looked up to see the questioner laughing cheerfully. "Seriously, how did it feel getting beer thrown on you?" Bambi couldn't stop laughing.

"I felt... enlightened."

"Enlightened about what?"

"That... I've been teasing people left and right. Getting some back isn't so bad," Prim replied nonchalantly, applying ointment to the wound.

"So you admit it, that you're good at spreading charm."

"I never denied it. I just didn't know how to stop," Prim sighed.

"Are you saying it's because of me?" Bambi frowned.

"I didn't say that. But... yeah, maybe," Prim shrugged. "But honestly, blaming you isn't right. It's been a long time. I'm the one who's still stuck in the same old rut."

"What rut?" Bambi looked up to meet her eyes.

Prim sighed and sat down. "The rut of feelings. I think I was really hurt when you disappeared. It felt hollow in my heart, like a huge crater. So... I was afraid that if someone else came along, they might pull me down into that crater again."

Bambi looked at her, her usually bright eyes now gloomy. "I'm sorry."

"You've said that a hundred times. It's in the past. Let it go."

"I just want to tell you that I want a chance to make it right. I won't do that to you again." The look in her eyes softened, making Prim feel moved.

"Okay, I understand."

One of the side effects of love is having to try to understand, accept, learn, and move past the pain. Even though sometimes we ask why it happens to us, the one who loved faithfully all along. Why can't we be the one who receives love in the same way? But these are just questions no one can answer. Prim knew this well.

"I treated you that badly, so why are you still good to me?" Bambi's voice was filled with guilt.

Prim bit her lip, staring back with a sharp gaze. "If being lovers doesn't work, maybe trying to be friends might work better."

"And if that still doesn't work?"

"Then it probably has to end," Prim replied, not even sure if she believed her own words.

Bambi's expression instantly turned vacant. Normally, Prim could easily read her feelings, but whenever she had this look, Prim couldn't guess what it meant.

The sound of the main door opening, followed by high heels stopping outside, made Bambi's eyes widen. She turned sharply towards the door, but it was too late. Pim walked in and saw her daughter sitting with Prim.

"Bambi." Pim, dressed in a shirt and well-tailored black trousers, took off her heels and walked over.

Prim quickly stood up, raising her hands in a respectful 'wai'. Pim didn't return it, her gaze fixed on her daughter. "You're back?"

"Yes. We had a shoot today," Bambi explained quickly. "Prim was at the shoot too. After we finished, we went for a wrap-up party. I got drunk and hit my head on a door. Prim offered to bring me home."

Pim pretended to nod understandingly. "You mean the company we hired for the fashion shoot is Prim's company?"

The question almost made Prim stop breathing. Bambi's expression changed to one of shock. "Well... yes. You hadn't told me?"

"Didn't tell me, or were you planning not to tell me?"

"The top fashion photographers right now are all Prim's team. Besides, Shasha chose this company herself. You said you trusted Shasha's taste," Bambi said, crossing her arms.

Pim nodded repeatedly. "It's not that you're finding ways to use my money to support your ex's business, is it?"

"Mom!" Bambi raised her voice. "I said I wanted to help with your brand because I wanted to help the company! Don't talk like that. Prim is better than that. You've heard of her as a fashion photographer."

"Being good at work and being good at managing a company are two different things," Pim said, lifting her chin. "I didn't know you chose to work with this place for *this* reason."

Prim felt her face go numb, as if she had been slapped.

"You should know that I don't have money for you to keep spending on your exes like this," Pim continued. "If this brand doesn't succeed, you'll have to do exactly as I say, no conditions." After speaking, she shook her head in disgust and walked towards the curved staircase.

Prim, who had been silent for a long time, finally took a deep breath and decided to walk towards the stairs. "Khun Pim," she called out.

Pim turned on the stairs to look down at her.

"No matter how you see me, it doesn't matter. We aren't anything to each other. I don't care about your opinion, just as you probably don't care about mine. But I want you to understand Bambi's genuine dedication to this brand. Please don't look down on her abilities just because of your prejudice. Because this woman is none other than your own daughter."

Pim turned to look at her with a piercing gaze. "Because she's my daughter, that's why I think this way... at least it's better than letting you take advantage."

Prim turned to look at Bambi, who was watching from a distance, tears streaming down her face. Prim bit her lip before speaking in a calmer voice. "I may only know Bambi from the angles I've seen. But you are the same. You also know her only from the angles you've seen. And even though you say you raised her, I believe there are some sides of Bambi that she has never shown you."

"Are you saying you know her better than I do?" Pim asked, her tone raised.

"Not at all," Prim explained calmly. "I just want you to know that there are some angles that both of us don't know about her. Therefore, please don't judge. Since you've chosen to give her a chance, please also have faith in her."

Bambi came and grabbed her wrist. Prim turned to the small face shaking with overflowing tears.

"We'll see about that," Pim concluded, then walked away up the stairs in frustration.

Once Pim had disappeared from sight, Bambi burst into uncontrollable sobs.

Chapter 19 - Kitten

What was the reason that made Prim unable to cut herself off from this woman? She finally understood it today.

Bambi had always been like a stubborn, lost kitten—spoiled, demanding to be pampered, and fond of running off without telling anyone. But in the end, this kitten would always return to the same place. The place where it had once received water and food, where it had once slept warm and comfortable, the place where it had once received love.

And that place was Prim.

For Prim, this Bambi was a kitten she could never get enough of, or to put it more accurately, she never *wanted* to get enough of. This kitten was lonely, shivering in the rain every time she found it. Even though it would bite and scratch, often wounding her so deeply the wounds became scars, she could never bring herself to simply walk past without scooping it up and taking it home.

It was a relationship far removed from common sense, bordering on toxic. Prim didn't deny it. And no matter how it was defined, she could never lie and say that it was a good love. But it was also not a love that she could easily walk away from.

Between her and Bambi, it was as if a thin, fragile bond connected them. No matter how far apart or how much time passed, nothing could ever sever it. Perhaps it was understanding, deep attachment, or a feeling she herself couldn't quite pinpoint. If it was as Min had once said, then it was a form of karma. Prim was starting to agree.

Bambi continued to cry uncontrollably, until Prim could no longer bear it. In the end, Prim took Bambi back to her room.

Prim's room felt slightly different tonight. She showered, washing the dampness from her hair and the scent of malt from her body, then changed into her favorite sleepwear. When she walked out of the bathroom, she saw that Bambi was still awake, lost in thought. Prim pulled out the sofa bed, placing a blanket on it so Bambi could sleep comfortably after her bath. The night felt long. She sat wondering, if she went to explain to Min tomorrow why she got back together with Bambi, where would she even start?

Prim handed sleepwear to Bambi and told her to go shower. Not long after, the petite girl came out with her hair soaking wet. Prim, already dry, walked over, took her arm, sat her down, and began to dry her hair for her.

"I'm sorry. You shouldn't have to bear this," Bambi said after a long silence, her voice filled with guilt. Bambi didn't often say she was sorry; when she did, it meant she truly felt it.

"It's okay. I was wrong too, for taking you home like that when you said you didn't want to go back."

"I know how it looks from the outside. People probably see my life as privileged. I don't deny it," Bambi said, her voice growing sadder. "A life where you don't have to struggle for anything... it really is privileged. To the point that sometimes I'm not sure if it's that I don't *have* to strive, or that even if I try, I *can't* do anything."

Prim continued to gently and meticulously dry her hair. "Just keep doing it. Do it your own way. One day, your mother will see that sincerity for herself," she said, softly combing her hair. "Even if your mother doesn't see it, others will. And if others don't see it, you yourself will see it. You'll be proud. As long as you are happy and proud of yourself... then the words of your mother, or anyone else, can't affect you anymore."

A silence fell over the room. Bambi reached out and took Prim's hand. Prim stopped, looking down in surprise. Bambi lifted her face to meet Prim's gaze, then stood up to look directly at her.

"If I had known that being friends felt this good, I would have been friends with you a long time ago."

"Yeah?" Prim smiled.

Bambi smiled back. "Can we be friends... truly, close friends, for real?"

"Of course. Why wouldn't we be able to?"

"If we're friends like this, I think I can still have you in my life." Bambi's tone was different, laced with tension.

Prim sighed and nodded. "Yes, if we're friends like this, we can still have each other. Otherwise, we'd probably just keep hurting each other endlessly."

"Mmm," Bambi hummed in agreement. "Then what if we're friends who still sleep together?"

That question made Prim raise her eyebrows. Bambi met her gaze, her expression serious and unwavering. "Can we cut out the romantic love, leaving only goodwill as friends... and just sleep together?"

"You mean we wouldn't be a couple, but friends with benefits?" Prim clarified.

"You could say that," Bambi replied with a soft smile. "No commitments, no misunderstandings. If one day I disappear again, you won't have to get hurt like before."

Prim fell silent. She had promised Min she wouldn't return to the vicious cycle of a toxic relationship. But this wasn't a relationship as girlfriends. It wasn't even romantic. It was a friendship... that just included sex. If feelings weren't involved, there would be no expectations, and no repeated pain.

"If that's all it is... then *fine*."

She didn't know if it was the right decision. The moment Prim finished speaking, Bambi moved closer, wrapped her arms around Prim's neck, and pressed her lips against hers.

Bambi's lips felt just as she remembered. That alone was enough to trigger every memory between them. During their time apart, Prim had wondered if Bambi had been with others. As for Prim herself, she might need more than two hands to count, but not a single one could compare to this kiss—a kiss Prim hadn't realized she had missed so intensely.

She sucked on the soft, pliable lips, her tongue intertwining with Bambi's. Her left hand cupped a soft breast as their mouths remained pressed together. The tip of Prim's nose nuzzled against the other's cheek, swallowing the scent of Bambi's body. It was the same scent Prim used. When she realized they had just showered in the same bathroom, used the same soap, a feeling of intense, overwhelming familiarity surged up in her throat, so sharp it almost made her cry.

Had it been that long? Was the time that had passed the same as the time I felt had passed? Would she feel the same way? Or was it only I who had been waiting for this touch all these years?

Bambi was the one who pulled away first. Prim, lost in her turbulent thoughts, looked slightly dazed. Bambi smiled, took Prim's hand, and led her to the bed without a word. Yes... this place had once been Bambi's too.

Bambi turned the room's owner onto her back, her gaze intense. There was no time to wonder more. Her slender fingers came up to stroke Prim's cheek, her thumb slowly caressing the smooth skin. She was doing it again. The way they had always done it. Cradling Prim's face affectionately, placing a soft kiss on her lips, then slowly moving lower.

Lips, cheek, chin, neck, continuing down to her chest. Bambi scattered kisses over her skin, not sucking loudly or being rough. This was a desire that still took its time to seep in, as if they were both unsure if this was the right decision.

Every touch from Bambi was scorching hot. Perhaps it was the alcohol, or the rising body temperature from the emotional high after the confrontation with her mother. But Prim didn't dare think that. They had already agreed their status here was 'friends'. This likely didn't mean anything more.

"Take it off, okay?" Bambi whispered.

Prim nodded. Bambi proceeded to remove her sleepwear, leaning down to find her neck, pressing kiss after kiss. Her nose nuzzled up towards the back of her ear, hot breath landing in light puffs. If it were anyone else, Prim might have thought it was just heavy breathing. But because it was Bambi... she knew it was a word trying to escape. A word about to be spoken.

Saying she loved her.

They used to whisper it to each other every time. But today, when their status was merely 'friends', this word was held back.

Prim held the shoulders of the person still buried in the crook of her neck, shifting and turning so that Bambi was lying beneath her. She placed her hand above the fresh, damp scar on Bambi's body, careful not to cause her pain. Bambi's gaze was complex and thoughtful. *Damn it... Wasn't this inappropriate? Was this kind of comfort crossing the line of friendship?*

Prim pulled her sleepwear off. Her hand found a breast that fit perfectly in her palm. No slow, teasing hesitation. She focused entirely on the woman beneath her. A fleeting, precious moment like this shouldn't be allowed to pass. Because Prim knew well that beyond this physical intimacy... while making love to Bambi like this... it was far too difficult to remain detached.

She scattered kisses over the other woman's breast, lifting her face to make eye contact as her tongue caressed the soft flesh. Bambi let out a small, involuntary sound. Prim, familiar with

her whims, knew that just teasing wouldn't be enough. She pressed her mouth against the firm peak, her tongue licking around it but deliberately avoiding the spot Bambi desired. It wasn't until the frustrated girl let out an impatient sound that Prim finally flicked her tongue swiftly over the tip.

"Ah!" Bambi moaned, the sound almost an exclamation.

The one causing it chuckled, her mouth still not leaving its target. Prim's other hand took possession of the other breast, kneading it wantonly, her thumb flicking rapidly over the tip until Bambi had to writhe and squirm. Bambi's hand slid into Prim's hair, gripping lightly, letting her know that the area below was demanding attention.

Prim lifted her face, meeting Bambi's gaze. Bambi thought she would move lower, but she didn't. Prim shifted to the other breast, while her other hand slid downward, applying pressure with her fingertips, making the receiver arch her back. She stroked and rubbed the wetness, swirling her fingers until Bambi wanted to bury her face in escape.

"Are you going to do it or not?" Bambi lifted her head, seeing Prim's face still buried between her breasts, in no hurry at all.

"In a hurry?"

"Yes, I'm in a hurry. If you don't hurry up, I'm going home."

Prim laughed, shifting up to plant soft kisses on her collarbone. "If you want something, you should ask nicely."

"Are you going to do it or not?"

"If you ask, I will."

Bambi rolled her eyes. Prim knew without even looking up. She retaliated by sucking hard on the soft skin of her neck.

"Ouch!"

"Is 'ouch' a proper request?"

Bambi raised her hand to punch her back, but Prim was faster. She inserted her waiting middle finger just past the entrance, drawing another unprepared moan. "So? Are you going to ask properly or not?"

"Why are you teasing me like this?"

Prim shrugged, moving her finger as if to withdraw it. But Bambi grabbed her wrist, shifting her hips forward instead. In the end, no verbal request came, but Prim acquiesced willingly. Because this kind of attitude from a stubborn girl like Bambi wasn't something you saw every day.

Prim moved her finger deep inside, her other hand bracing against the bed as she looked down at the guest moaning beneath her. Bambi's eyes were fluttering, her lips parted as she panted. No words were spoken. Because from the very beginning, back when they used to say "I love you"... there wasn't a single moment during their long nights that wasn't filled with this kind of communication.

The main rule of refusal and development. The climax washed over both of them, intense and prolonged, until it finally subsided. No one else could enter her like Prim, no one else understood her like this—knowing exactly where to touch, how to hold her, or even how to whisper words of comfort on days when the wall of refusal made her doubt if anyone could ever understand her.

Until the end arrived. The force from within made Bambi's body convulse, her climax soaking Prim's diligent fingers. Prim slowly, carefully, withdrew from the engulfing warmth.

The wall of refusal had crumbled. Prim understood perfectly. Today, Bambi must have been utterly exhausted. She understood. But she didn't know if there would be more days like this in the future.

Chapter 20 - A New morning

The morning sunlight filtered through the burgundy red curtains, which had been left half-open. The warm golden light hit the varnished wooden walls and floor, making the entire room feel much more vibrant and alive compared to the previous night. The city outside was waking up with the sounds of traffic, replacing the deep silence of the night before.

The king-size bed, which last night was filled with intense passion, was now covered with sheets slightly wrinkled from genuine sleep. The bedside table, which had held the glimmer of scented candles, now only held a half-full glass of water and a vase of white lilies that looked even fresher in the morning light.

The outer clothing from last night still lay draped over the armchair in the corner of the room, but at this moment, it looked gentle, merely a trace of the night that had passed.

The whole atmosphere was warm, fresh, and filled with new hope. It was as if Gorya's luxurious bedroom wasn't just meant for romantic nights, but also for embracing the dawn of a new day.

Gorya was the first to wake up, her internal body clock stirring her early. She had already been awake for a while, lost in her own private thoughts, before realizing she was in the embrace of the person with whom she had shared a love song the night before. She slowly sat up, turning to look at the person still sleeping beside her.

So beautiful... Gorya thought. Even though she had seen this face countless times, the face completely free of makeup made Gorya look softer and younger than usual. *Her bare face is really pretty.*

Though she didn't say it out loud, it seemed her intense gaze was felt. Gorya fluttered her eyes open. Gorya was startled when they made eye contact, feeling a bit embarrassed. Right now, she was wearing the oversized pajama top and shorts that Gorya had thrown to her last night. Not wanting to admit she was captivated, Gorya got up and walked to the window. The morning atmosphere made her feel brighter, and she completely forgot about the image of Prim and Bambi together and the pain it had caused.

"Peeking at me while I'm sleeping, you have some nerve, huh?"

"Is it expensive? If it's expensive, I won't pay."



"Of course it's expensive," the speaker said, getting up and walking over. Gorya was also already dressed in proper sleepwear. "Can you afford it? If not, you can pay with something else."

"Here we go again," Gorya sighed. "This debt really never gets settled, does it?"

Gorya sat down on the chair, then pulled Gorya onto her lap, wrapping her arms around her waist. "It feels good, doesn't it?" the model said, pulling Gorya closer and scattering kisses down her neck. "Or are you going to say it doesn't?"

"I didn't say anything," Gorya retorted.

The thin wall that once existed between them seemed to have dissolved after last night. Gorya shifted to sit fully on Gorya's lap, wrapping her arms around the other's neck before lowering her face to kiss her. Their tongues hinted and intertwined. Gorya slowly broke the kiss and made eye contact. Gorya smiled, her hand slipping inside the oversized shirt, kneading her bare back. It was both warm and electrifying.

"What about the series, have you eaten anything?" Gorya asked, remembering it was breakfast time.

"Eat," Gorya replied, before pulling her down for another kiss.

And then Gorya understood that the word "eat" meant something entirely different for the two of them.

The door of 'Blance', a brunch-style restaurant in the Ari district, opened and closed almost non-stop. The sound of conversation mixed with the clinking of cutlery, all accompanied by soft instrumental music. The restaurant was full of people: groups of friends laughing, couples sharing pancakes, and families with young children.

On a table at the very end of the restaurant, three plates of food were laid out: Eggs Benedict, Avocado Toast, and Smoked Salmon & Scrambled Eggs.

Min sipped her iced tea, needing the caffeine to wake herself up. She wore dark sunglasses to hide her face as she hadn't put on much makeup. Praew, sitting across from her, sipped her hot cocoa while sneakily glancing at her.

"Has P'Prim answered her phone yet?"

"It's probably not a problem," Min said, checking the chats between her and her close friend. She had called Prim three times this morning, but the director hadn't answered. There were

two possible reasons. First, she was still asleep, which was unlikely. And second, she was with someone and had her phone on silent. Min was fairly certain it was the second reason.

"So, is it something urgent?" Praew asked.

"Nothing urgent. Everything for the evening shoot is prepared. I'm just worried about her being with Bambi, that's all."

"P'Prim and Bambi... what kind of relationship do they have?" Praew asked carefully.

"Well... they're exes. Exes that never really became 'exes', I guess," Min said, not knowing how to define it herself. "On and off. Sometimes together, sometimes breaking up. It's been like this for a while."

"Why though?" Praew raised an eyebrow. "Why make it so complicated? If they love each other, they should be together. If they don't, then they should just break up."

"Humans are truly complicated creatures, you know," Min said with a sigh. "Maybe it's because they love each other so much they don't want to let go, but they also can't live together. It's probably something like that."

"Then..." Praew hesitated, but finally spoke up. "What about us? What kind of relationship do you want us to have?"

"Huh?" Min raised an eyebrow.

"Our situation," Praew said with a slight smile. "What I said, I meant it, you know. That you should try dating me."

Min fell completely silent. She had thought Praew might want to know, but she hadn't prepared an answer. Perhaps she didn't think she would ask so quickly.

"Or we could just try talking first, if you prefer. So that you won't feel too pressured."

Min put her fork down, deep in thought. Praew, waiting for an answer, didn't look too pleased. "Am I being too pushy?"

"No," Min sighed, shaking her head. "No, it's not that. I feel the same way. The same way you feel." Instantly, the younger woman's face brightened.

"It's just... like I said before. Having just walked out of an unsuccessful relationship, I'm a little scared. Scared to step into a new one."

"It's okay to be scared. Everyone is scared," Praew said, reaching out to hold Min's hand. "But you're not scared alone. I'm here with you too. Whatever it is, we'll face it together. That's probably better than being alone, right?"

The words were plain, ordinary, yet they were filled with meaning. Min held her hand tighter. Praew smiled back, a warm and sincere smile.

For Min, this might just be the best start to a relationship in her entire life.

Chapter 21 - If Only We Could Step Back

The University of Communication Arts building wasn't too hot this afternoon. A number of students were chatting as usual around the stone table benches. Prim walked in, looking neat and tidy, a familiar sight. She often appeared with her sweet, pretty face, but dressed in a student's shirt and jeans for practicality, a large DSLR camera in hand.

"I still haven't found a model for my poster project," she complained while gathering her hair with a simple black hair tie she had borrowed from Min's makeup bag.

"You have to shoot it next week, you know. Time's running out. Just ask anyone," Min said, taking a sip from her coffee cup.

Prim sighed. The 'Marketing in the Film Industry' elective was supposed to boost her GPA, but she never thought the professor would assign everyone to design a movie poster as their final project. She had been too complacent, used to easily taking photos for other subjects, and hadn't paid enough attention. If Min hadn't reminded her, she would have probably forgotten. If she couldn't find a model, it looked like she wouldn't graduate with her friends next year.

"Wait, my friend from Fine Arts is coming. She invited me to go walk around the market. There are some fashion kids coming too. That group is full of pretty ones. You should try asking one of them," Min said, handing over the class notes she had kept for her.

"No way. Fashion kids are all just spoiled rich kids. One minute they complain it's hot, the next they complain the AC is too cold. So annoying," Prim grumbled. The 'fashion kids' were students from the Faculty of Fine Arts, majoring in Design and Apparel, and their vibe was completely different. Prim had seen their princess-like lifestyles and decided she'd rather pass.

"Fine then," Min said, listing off names. "You should just pick Nong Fa, she's cute. Or Nong Allie, she's easy to talk to. Pick anyone, but just don't pick the girl named Bambi. That one is probably the hardest to handle. The daughter of Ming Yaning."

Prim shrugged. "I don't need to waste time remembering that, since I'm not asking any fashion kid to model for me," she said firmly and stood up. Just as she turned to walk out of the building, she ran into a younger girl. Her large, round eyes were looking right at her.

As if under a spell, Prim felt pinned by the gaze of the owner of those sweet eyes, unable to look at anyone else. Her lips parted unintentionally before she quickly composed her expression.

"Hey! Let's go to the market. I'm hungry... Oh, Prim, we're going ahead!" Min shouldered her bag and waved goodbye.

Prim was silent for a moment before walking over to the sweet-eyed girl who looked like a wild deer.

"You're Min's friend, right? My name is Prim, from Comm Arts. I was wondering if you could help me out by being the model for a movie poster I need to submit?"

The girl raised her eyebrows in surprise. "Oh? But didn't Min just say you don't like fashion kids?"

"I don't like *all* of them," Prim said deliberately, letting the shorter girl hear. "I like *some* people."

Min rolled her eyes, sighing in exasperation.

The sweet-eyed girl smiled a satisfied, sly smile, before it widened into a broad grin. "Okay. It sounds fun."

Prim found herself smiling back. "Okay, I'll send you the concept later... and what's your name?" she asked, taking out her camera and staring at the beautiful face through the lens.

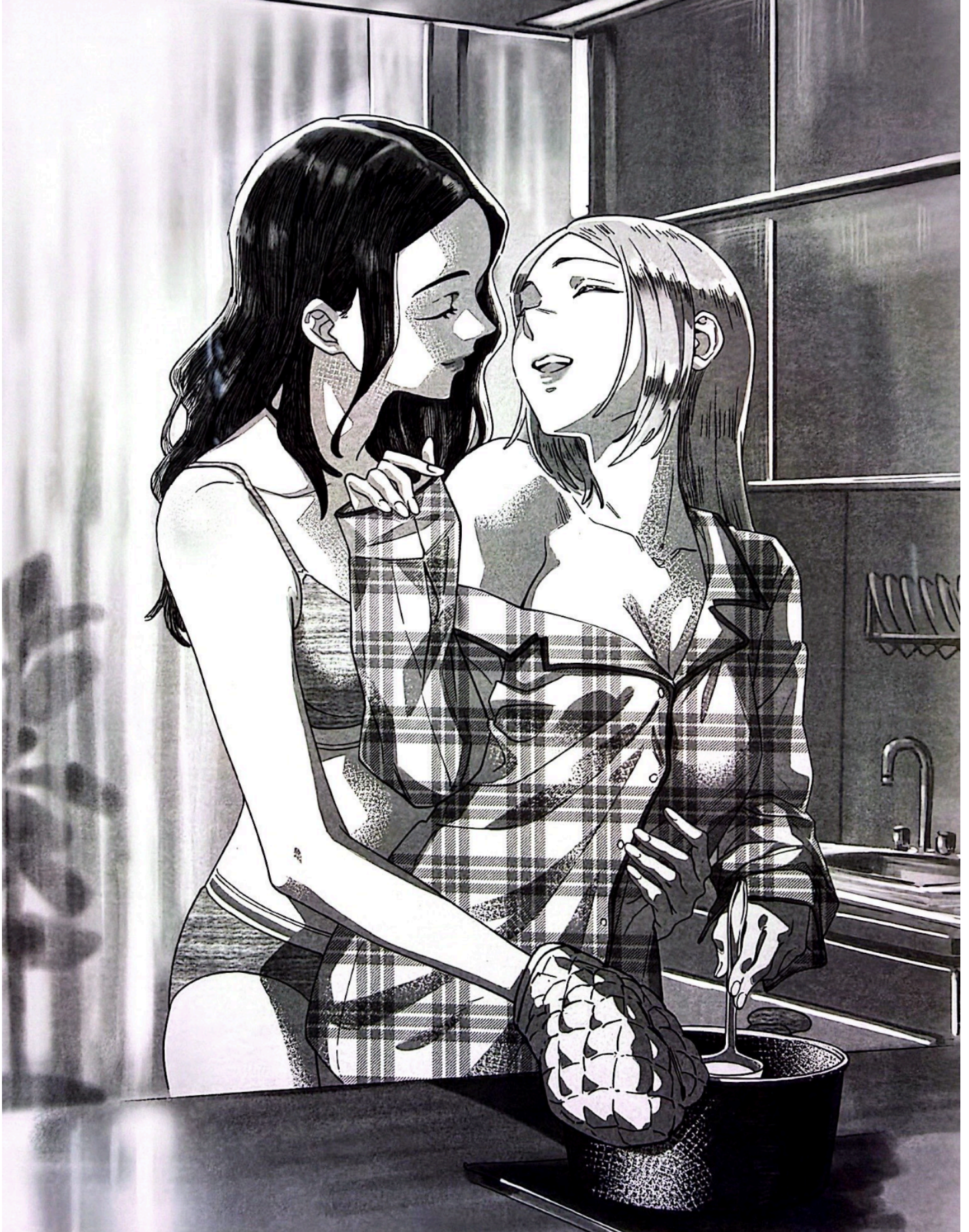
"My name is Bambi," the beautiful underclassman replied with a smile.

And that was the beginning, the first time Prim met Bambi.

The sound of clattering came from the kitchen, waking Prim. Light filtered through the curtains and hit her eyelids. She slowly sat up, realizing she was on the sofa, which should have been Bambi's bed.

A dream... She had dreamed about the first time she met Bambi. That memory had become the scar of their relationship.

She walked into the kitchen and saw Bambi tearing open a packet of instant porridge. Bambi had tied her hair up, revealing the graceful nape of her neck. Prim swallowed and went to hug her from behind. Bambi started slightly, but when she saw it was Prim, she leaned in to give her a morning kiss.



Prim smelled the fried eggs Bambi had cooked just before a burning smell hit her nose. "Hey, it's burning!"

"Ah!" Bambi cried out, flustered, quickly lifting the pan in a panic. The edges of the eggs were charred black. She made a guilty face.

"Never mind. We can just eat porridge instead," Prim said indulgently.

Bambi pouted. "I wanted you to eat something else."

"It's really okay," she replied honestly. Prim took over, placing a small pot on the stove to boil water while Bambi could only stand and watch.

"Do we really have to be so detailed and have agreements about everything?" Bambi grumbled, seeing Prim seamlessly take over.

"Fine, if you don't want to."

"Shasha's condo. Last night you left the bar without telling her first," Bambi said, making Prim feel a pang inside.

"And I have to report to you now?"

"Whatever. I called her and she didn't answer. Don't know if something's wrong."

"If it's like that, it's more likely she's with someone," Prim said dismissively, pouring the porridge into the pot. Bambi stepped back, looking at her with displeasure.

"And what if the person Shasha is sleeping with is Gorya?"

Prim's hand, holding the spoon, stopped mid-stir. She turned to face her. "And so what?"

"Just curious. If Shasha is really sleeping with Gorya, would you be angry or not?" The gaze was challengingly mischievous.

"No way."

"What makes you so sure?"

"Gorya doesn't like girls like that," Prim replied without thinking, which only irritated the smaller girl more.

"You know her so well. Are you jealous of Gorya?"

"And what about you? Are you jealous of me, or jealous of Shasha?"

Bambi glared back, feeling a sudden urge to win. "And you, the one who's irritated right now, are you jealous of me, or jealous of Gorya?"

Prim straightened up, glaring back defiantly. When she saw the resentful look in those eyes, she felt utterly foolish for ever thinking she could really just be friends with an ex like Bambi.

"I can't be jealous of you anymore. We're just friends now," Prim tried to hide the sharpness in her voice, but the smaller girl knew anyway.

"Fine. It's a pity that's all we are," Bambi said curtly, then grabbed a towel and went into the bathroom.

Prim watched the person she had just been holding all night walk away. Bambi's scent was still etched into her senses. No matter how sweet the dream... *we still have to wake up to reality. We can't love each other anymore.*

The film set this afternoon was unusually chaotic. Just when Gorya thought she had prepared everything perfectly, it all went haywire. The shoes were the wrong size, the wrong jewelry box was brought, and the makeup team's car broke down, making the already tight schedule even more pressured.

"The set is ready. P'Prim says if the model is ready, we can start now," a crew member informed her in the dressing room.

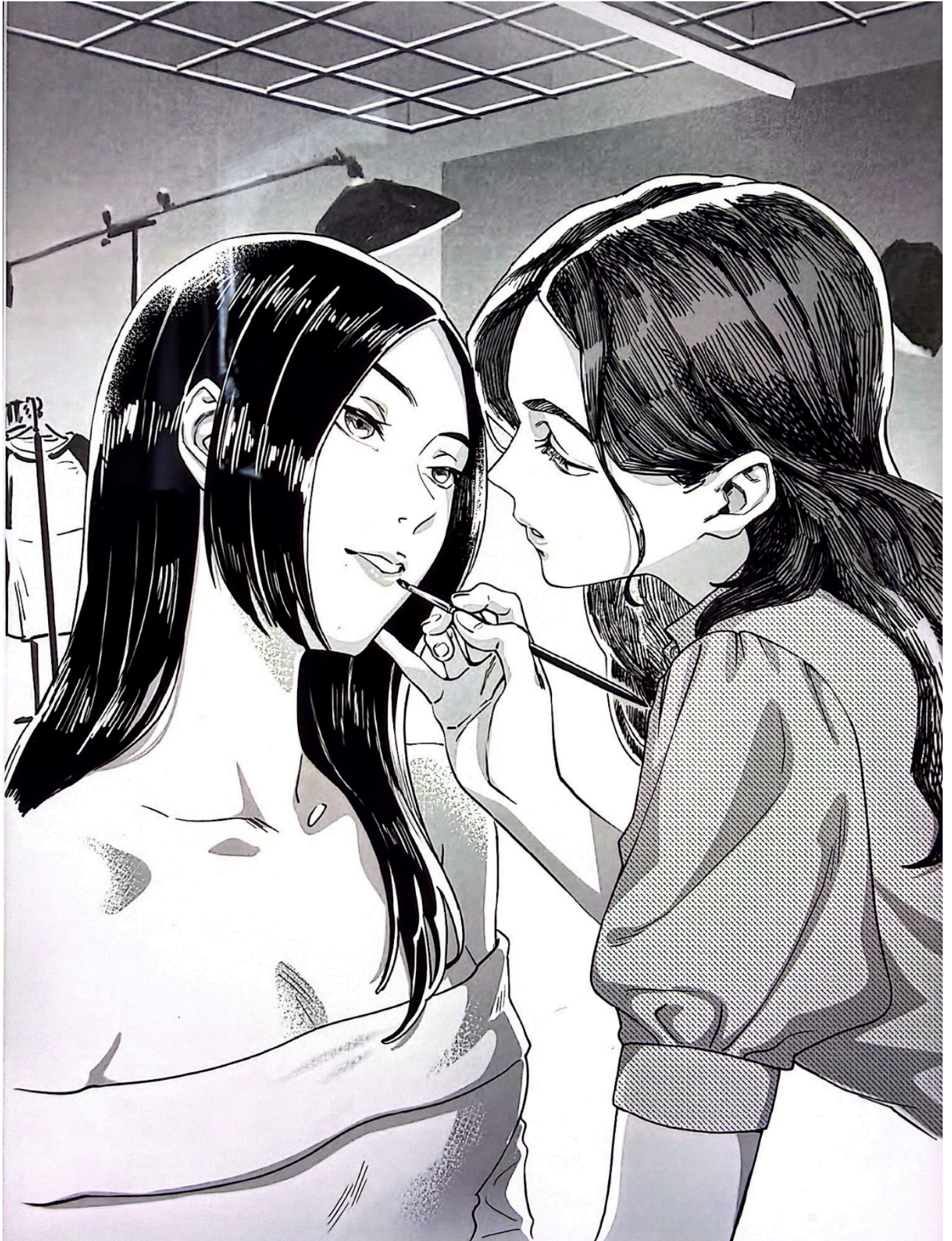
Gorya didn't respond. She stood watching the makeup artist do the final touch-ups on Shasha. "Wait a moment. She needs a bit of gloss," Gorya said, feeling a detail had been missed. She picked up a lip gloss and carefully applied it to the tall model's lips.

These full, alluring lips had strangely sucked her in. Just looking at them easily reminded her of their passionate night together. Her heart pounded loudly. And at that moment, she found the other's eyes looking back at her, equally seductive and desiring.

"Don't tell me..." Shasha whispered so only the two of them could hear, "You're missing me *this* much already?"

The teasing tone made Gorya's cheeks flush. "Not at all. Don't be so full of yourself," she retorted, turning away. Shasha laughed softly, recognizing Gorya's flustered state.

"Hey, have you heard the news?" the makeup artist chatted with the hairstylist. "About P'Prim? Seems she's already patched things up with Khun Bambi, that client."



That sentence made Gorya's hand, which was selecting accessories, go weak. Even though she already knew, hearing it again didn't make it any easier to accept. She sighed deeply, and when she turned, she found Shasha standing there, watching her.

"I came to get the earrings," Shasha said, pointing to the earrings in her hand.

"Oh, right," Gorya snapped back to reality and handed them over.

"Heard about Bambi and Prim, and lost your composure, huh?"

"It has nothing to do with me."

"That's true, you have nothing to do with those two."

"That's not what I meant..." Gorya turned back, not one to back down. "It has nothing to do with *us*."

Shasha actually laughed out loud. "Why are you so hung up on Prim? What's so special about her? I'm getting curious now."

"There's more than you think," Gorya said, about to walk away.

"If you still have any hope, I'll tell you to rest easy," Shasha spoke up. "There's no way Bambi can ever go back to dating Prim."

Gorya's feet stopped dead. She turned on her heel to face Shasha, seeing the serious expression and demeanor of the other. "I'd like to know why."

Chapter 22 - Feelings

Prim could hardly remember the last time she had seen this scene. Ever since the day Bambi walked out of her room, she had tried to pull herself out of the swamp of longing by drowning herself in work. It worked quite well, especially in the first three days. But after that, she was utterly exhausted. Whenever she missed the touch, the familiar scent, she would get up and work like a madwoman. Until today, when she realized she was tired even when breathing, tired of having to push these feelings away. The longing, the need, the desire—she wanted all of it from just one person.

"I told you, didn't I? Don't go back in. So? How's that working out? Does the field medic need to be called in?" Min stood with her arms crossed, talking to Prim by the desk. She had seen her friend looking like she hadn't slept for a week.

"At least I didn't get back together with her. I just went and slept with her, plain and simple."

"That's even worse," Min sighed. "I'm asking seriously, you know your own nature. So why did you still agree to be her FWB so easily?"

Prim finished signing the documents, her gaze drifting forward. "It's like you know that if you drink, you'll get drunk, and it's bad for your health. So why do you still drink?"

"Oh, so you're talking back to me now?" Min leaned in, staring at her with suspicion. "This time, handle it yourself. I'm not free to go drinking with you, you know."

"What, you have a girlfriend now so you're ditching me?" Prim teased, handing the documents back.

Min gave a smug little smile. "Sorry, your friend is genuinely busy now."

"It's good that you're happy. But be careful. Praew is a bartender. If you don't go sit guard, I'm sure girls will be swarming her," Prim said, half-joking, half-serious.

Min frowned, a hint of rising anxiety in her eyes. "Really?"

"Just kidding. You... your face really paled!"

"Hey, you... you scared me!" Min laughed, and Prim laughed along.

Min walked out of the room. As Prim watched her go, happy for her, she suddenly remembered her own situation. She picked up a document to read, trying to ignore the voices in her head. Just then, a knock sounded at the door.

"May I come in to submit the designs?" Gorya's voice rang out. Prim immediately permitted it. Gorya walked in carrying sample outfits for the next shoot. Prim stood and selected the photos she wanted, putting them in a folder for her.

"Let's go with these. You've chosen excellently once again."

"Sure, P'Prim. Um... P'Prim," Gorya said, receiving the folder. She looked at Prim's face with her usual work-related demeanor.

"What is it?" Prim asked, thinking she was going to ask about work details.

"Have you ever liked me at all?"

Prim's hand stopped abruptly. Her face froze.

"I..." Prim was speechless. Gorya's expression, looking much more resolute, made her feel even more flustered.

"You've known about my feelings all along. But I... I have never known yours."

"I already told you, I don't date anyone."

"But I still wonder, at the very least, have you ever liked me... even a little?" Gorya tried very hard to hold back her tears while saying this.

Prim was silent for a long time, biting her lip in thought. "I have," she admitted readily. "It was a good feeling that happened between us. I felt that way."

"But that's all it was, right? It couldn't develop into anything more?" Gorya asked in a choked voice.

Prim immediately stood up and walked over. "Gorya, are you okay?" she asked, reaching out, but Gorya stepped back.

"I only wanted to be fooled by you just once. That was when you said you wanted me to be your happiness. I should have realized then it was just a lie. After this, I won't ask you to tell me the truth anymore."

The pain in Prim's eyes was no less intense. She was finally seeing the consequences of her own actions, reflected in Gorya's eyes.

"You've hurt many people, phi. Do you think the good feelings others have for you are just toys? You can't possibly love anyone, because in truth, you might not even know *how* to love. You've been hurt by love before. But I want to ask, is it my fault? Is it the fault of the women

who like you? That they have to be seen by you as just a way to kill time? Or is it because you were hurt by Bambi?" Gorya poured out all her emotions at once.

"I'm sorry... Gorya... I didn't mean to."

"Of course, you definitely didn't mean to. It's my own fault for falling for you from the beginning. From now on, I won't be fooled by your words anymore."

Gorya walked to the door. Just as her hand grabbed the handle, she remembered the most important thing she should tell her. "You know what? Bambi can never love you again."

Prim looked at her in surprise.

"Because Bambi herself is just like you. She sees love as fun, a way to kill time. She doesn't know how to love; she only knows how to trick people into loving her," Gorya paused, making eye contact. "To the extent that someone was willing to *die* for Bambi, but she still didn't get it."

Suddenly, Prim felt a stinging sensation on her face, as if she had been slapped. "Who died?"

"Huh? You don't know?" Gorya tilted her head in feigned surprise. "Bambi's ex-girlfriend committed suicide while they were together."

The laughter of Min and Praew echoed through the hallway in front of the elevator. One of Praew's hands held a bag of vegetables just bought from the supermarket, while the other was linked with Min's arm. Today, the two of them planned to make shabu-shabu in the room.

"I don't know if we bought too much. I'm afraid we won't finish it," Praew said.

"If we don't finish, we can eat it tomorrow. It's fine," Min replied without any worry.

"Really? So does that mean I can stay another night?" the smaller girl asked with a look. Min only then realized she had been lured into a trap.

"Of course you can stay. You can stay as long as you want," Min said sweetly.

The two laughed and held hands tightly, a warmth Min didn't want to fade. But then her feet stopped in front of the door when she noticed it wasn't closed. She and Praew looked at each other, confused. The apartment door opened, and Min's parents walked out.

"Surprise!"

Min, startled, quickly let go of Praew's hand and went to hug her father and mother. Praew stood there, somewhat understanding the situation, so she didn't say anything.

"Why didn't you tell me you were coming?" Min asked, overjoyed.

"I was worried," her mother said. "I heard you broke up with Park and moved out to live alone. Dad wanted to visit too."

Min turned to hug her father, who patted her head gently before turning to Praew. Min quickly introduced them. "This is Praew. Uh, she's a.... she's the new photographer at the company. I invited her over today to make shabu-shabu in my room."

As soon as Min finished, Praew turned to look at her, not understanding.

"You can have shabu-shabu another time. Mom cooked a lot of food. Come in and eat with us, Praew," her Mom said, pulling Praew's hand into the room. Praew was a bit overwhelmed by the familiarity until Min had to gently restrain her parents.

"Hey, we just met. Don't get too familiar too fast."

"Your friend is like another child to us. Look, her face is so bright and cheerful. Really adorable," her Mom said, bringing food to the table. Min smiled happily before turning to look at Praew, who had an equally happy expression.

"She eats a lot of pork, you know. I don't know if Mom and Dad can afford to feed her."

"Of course we can! This is sweet pork stir-fry, I stir-fried it myself."

Praew took a bite and her eyes widened. "It's very delicious!"

Her Mom, who was waiting for the compliment, beamed. "I know you have to praise it out of politeness," her Dad teased, making both Praew and Min burst out laughing.

Min glanced at Praew, who was continuing to eat her mother's cooking. Seeing the person beside her happy, she felt happy too. It was strange how a person could be happy simply because the one they loved was receiving love from the family she cherished.

This was the relationship she had been searching for in her life, for real.

Chapter 23 - Healing Kiss

A 'click' sounded as Shasha opened her door. She froze immediately upon seeing Gorya standing there, face streaked with tears, makeup ruined as if she had been crying nonstop.

"Gorya," Shasha didn't get to say anything more before the smaller girl rushed forward, pulled her face down, and kissed her.

Shasha felt good for a brief moment before coming to her senses. She quickly pulled Gorya into the room, closed the door, and held her shoulders firmly. "What happened? Like what... wait, not like this."

Gorya's small fists clenched. The stylist bit her lip tightly before finally letting out a sob. "Why does she have to lie to us? Why does she act like we don't matter at all?"

The choked sob echoed through the room. Shasha was sure it had to be about Prim. She sighed before pulling the smaller girl into a hug, gently patting her back and comforting her in a whisper. "But I'm here. It's okay now."

"Let go of the person who doesn't value you. Listen, I've always valued you, you know?"

Gorya looked up at Shasha's face through her veil of tears. "But you just want me too, don't you?"

Shasha pulled away from the embrace, looking at the person in front of her who seemed angry and afraid of being hurt. "When did I say I wanted you like *that*?"

"How could you be serious with me when you've slept with so many others?"

"I'm single now..." Shasha paused. "But whenever I'm with someone, I'm serious. And I've never cheated."

"Been with?" Gorya raised an eyebrow. "You've ever been seriously with someone?"

"Yes, I have. It didn't end well, but it still counts," Shasha said, changing the subject. "But what's certain is, I've never done what Prim did. I might want a one-night stand with others, but I've never given false hope or played with people's feelings... especially with you."

"Are you saying that what you feel for me... is a real feeling?"

"Yes," Shasha affirmed, crossing her arms. "And if I said it's real, would you be with me?"

That question hung in the air before Gorya leaned in again and began kissing the other passionately, as if needing to confirm something. This time, Shasha didn't resist. She responded with a tight embrace, their breathing becoming increasingly ragged.

Gorya didn't care about anything else anymore. At this moment, she needed to be with the person who wanted only her.

The condo parking lot was full tonight. Her parents' car managed to find a spot just by the entrance. Min was holding a bag of clothes she wanted her mom to store, partly because the condo was too small, and partly to make space for Praew's clothes.

While Praew was folding a collapsible ladder, Min's mom turned and smiled at her. "Next time I'll bring some snacks for you. Just tell me what you like, dear."

Her dad chimed in, "Come to our house on your day off, so we can have a meal together."

Praew raised her hand in a wai, smiling so widely her eyes sparkled. "I can eat anything! Thank you so much, Dad, Mom."

Her mom nodded. "Such a diligent, hardworking child. I just know you'll have a bright future. But don't overwork yourself, dear, you're so petite."

Praew sniffled lightly, her eyes brimming with happiness. Min stood beside her, and seeing that scene warmed her heart more than anything. It felt like her love was being accepted.

"Uh... hurry up and open the trunk for me, it's heavy," her mom protested lightly, making her dad rush to open it.

After her parents drove off, the engine sound gradually faded, leaving only the dim streetlights and a lingering warmth. Min turned to Praew with a serious look.

"Praew... I'm sorry. That I was a coward and didn't dare tell my parents we're dating."

Praew shook her head, giving a gentle smile. "It's not a problem at all. I understand. Right now... just this much already makes me happy."

The rainy season embraced the two of them hugging under the streetlight as if time had stopped right there.

The main road was quiet late at night. The orange streetlights cast long shadows on the car's hood. The soft sound of the engine pierced the silence between the two people sitting together.

Gorya sat in the passenger seat, leaning her head against the window. "Sorry for making you drive me home."

Shasha shook her head slightly. "It's fine. Next time you can use my service again."

Gorya hesitated, then let out a long sigh. "I'm really sorry for dumping all this on you. If it weren't for you, I don't know who else I could tell."

"No friends, huh?" Shasha said, half-teasing, half-serious. When she didn't hear a denial, the model turned to look at the smaller girl.

"You could say that. These days, I just work, no personal life. If I'm not with people from the company, I don't go out."

"Hey, seriously, do people like you really have no friends?" Shasha laughed lightly. But when Gorya turned and gave her a sharp look, the model quieted down.

"Just the burden left by my parents before they disappeared is heavy enough. Working to pay off debt, I don't even know when it will end. I don't have time to make friends."

She fell silent. Shasha knew Gorya was carrying something heavy, but she hadn't thought it would be this much. She swallowed before speaking seriously. "From now on, if you have nowhere to go, you can message me. I'll go with you myself."

Gorya turned to meet her gaze, sensing the sincerity in that voice, and it made her heart feel strangely warm.

As the car passed through an alley, Gorya pointed out the window. "My old house is over there. When I was a kid, whenever the teacher called for a parent, no one could go. I had to hire a motorcycle taxi driver to go instead. The teacher was so confused." She laughed softly, her eyes gloomy.

Shasha listened and fell silent, as if those words had struck a deep chord in her heart. "No wonder..." she said softly. "No wonder you understand my loneliness so well."

Gorya turned to look, feeling as if the wall between them was slowly crumbling, leaving only two hearts truly opening up to each other for the first time.

"Loneliness? That's a nice way to put it. Actually, it should probably be called arrogance."

"Wait a minute," Shasha laughed. "I had a feeling you must sense it, and it turns out you really do."

"Me? Sense something that profound?" Gorya sat cross-legged, looking at the person driving.

"When we hug, I can tell you know how to make someone feel warm," Shasha gazed at the road ahead. "Because you need the same thing yourself, don't you?"

"Do you say that to everyone?"

"Not everyone. Only to you."

Gorya's face flushed. Shasha continued, "And I've already thought about it... I don't want it to be just about sex."

"Not yet?" Gorya laughed softly. "Are you saying you want to ask me to be your girlfriend?"

"Yes, precisely," Shasha said, parking the car in front of Gorya's condo and turning to give her a serious look. "You make me think about you, want to see you, want to touch you. When we're together, our sex is really good too. You know how to fulfill someone, and you want me to fulfill you as well. Therefore, there's almost no reason for us not to date."

"There is," Gorya raised an eyebrow. "The reason is, I don't want a girlfriend who's a 'promotion item', you know?"

"I told you, whenever I have a girlfriend, I'll stop everything immediately." The model crossed her arms and stared at her face, searching for an answer.

"Give me two days. Go and get over Prim, then come back and give me your answer."

Chapter 24 - Unlocking

The air in the meeting room was freezing cold, but it couldn't match the chill from the silence and pressure everyone was facing. The long conference table was strewn with documents and design drafts. Some papers were crumpled into messy balls.

Bambi, sitting at the far end on the client's side, applied dark lipstick and took a sip of water, her eyes scanning the table as if testing everyone. Prim, in an oversized suit, sat opposite, her expression calm as if unaffected. Her hands were busy with documents, but her gaze never left Bambi, as if observing what tantrum the spoiled young woman might throw next.

Prim had grown weary of the constant clashes. Next to her, Min was flipping through documents, her pen the only sound breaking the silence. Gorya sat close to Prim but didn't speak, her gaze shifting towards Shasha intermittently, her expression hardening every time she saw the teasing smirk on the model's lips. Shasha leaned back, slightly tilting her head as if enjoying the tension, her fingertips twirling a pen.

The silence was a psychological standoff. Until Bambi spoke softly, but clearly enough to make everyone look up.

"Still not approved. The concept strays too far from what we usually do."

"How about a horror film concept?" Gorya, who had been quiet for a long time, suggested.

"We've never done a horror film before."

Min covered her mouth to laugh politely, but Bambi wasn't amused. "If you, Khun Gorya, can style the models as ghosts and the product still sells, then I'd be interested. But I think it's better to get the normal concept right first," the words were sharp, stinging. Gorya bit her lip to stop herself from retorting.

Min seized the moment. "Perfect timing. This is the best abandoned location I found in the Sathorn area. It's an old building, uniquely beautiful, and still maintains the brand's core 'live-fed' cool aesthetic." She handed a tablet over with pictures of the location.

"Wait a minute, this building..." Prim interjected. "Weren't people warning about the structure and electrical system being very dilapidated?"

"Yes, but the building owner has confirmed they will repair it before we use it," Min quickly added.

Prim opened her mouth to ask more, but the client had already made a decision. "This place is fine. It looks nice."

"Okay, then we'll confirm this location," Min hurried to conclude.

"The location fee is more expensive than all previous times. I hope this time, there won't be any photographers arguing and disrupting the work again," Shasha said, intentionally getting on Prim's nerves.

Both Min and Prim turned to look at her.

"For the last time, I apologize. I will try to be more careful from now on," Prim spoke clearly.

"I understand. I wouldn't want to ruin the company's reputation that you, Khun Prim, have worked so hard to build," Bambi left this final remark before turning back to work matters. Prim looked at Min's face. The moment their eyes met, they could sense the exhaustion hidden within each other.

Dust danced in the air, mixing with the smell of mold. The high ceiling was cracked and full of tangled wires. From a distance, it looked like architecture from a certain era of Bangkok, but in reality, it wasn't very habitable.

Dust swirled so thickly that Prim had to wear a mask as she walked around checking camera positions. "Clean it thoroughly! Make sure there are no nails or debris on the floor where the model will sit," she instructed the cleaners. She couldn't afford to lose the client just because a model stepped on a nail.

"And they said they'd fix the electrical system? The wires are still hanging loose," Prim pointed.

"Right. We'll have to ask for a discount," Min said, taking pictures of the damage.

"The light hits this chair perfectly... move the light over a bit," Prim called out.

At that moment, Bambi, who had just arrived, walked in chewing gum. She slowly took off her sunglasses, leaned against a pillar, and looked at Prim with a teasing smirk.

"Everything okay? Do you need to adjust anything?" Prim asked.

"Not at all. You can continue working," Bambi replied, then walked away to sit nearby.

"Prim, which necklace should we use?" Gorya held a tray of silver necklaces for Prim to choose from.

"It might be better to let Khun Bambi choose," Prim suggested.

Gorya showed a hint of impatience but still did as she was told, walking behind the monitor with the tray towards Bambi.

"Khun Bambi, which necklace do you think looks better on Shasha?"

Bambi pretended to examine both necklaces carefully before picking up the thinner one and handed it back.

"This one."

"Okay."

"I say—I don't want this one," Bambi said deliberately with a provoking, playful expression.

Gorya took a deep breath, trying to control her temper.

"None of them are to your liking? Are you sure they match the reference?" Bambi crossed her arms, staring at Gorya's face. Gorya was counting to ten in her head, praying she wouldn't snap.

Suddenly, a loud "CRACKLE!" sound erupted. The old wires along the ceiling short-circuited. A blinding flash of light filled the dim room, followed by a "BOOM!" A fireball shot up along the old curtains.

"Watch out!" Prim shouted, seeing the burning curtains were closest to Gorya. She ran over and pulled Gorya to safety just as debris began to fall. The place turned into a sea of flames.

"Fire! Everyone, get out this way, quick!" Prim yelled, rushing to pull an electrician who was trapped by smoke. Screams filled the air as the crew ran into each other in chaos.

"Here! The fire exit is here!" Gorya shouted, pointing to a staircase. But before anyone could move, charred ceiling fragments came crashing down with a loud "CLANG!", blocking the exit.

Prim quickly grabbed Bambi's wrist, who was coughing from the smoke, and held her close. "Come on, quickly!" Her other hand supported Gorya, who was about to stumble over a cable. All the other crew members had managed to escape, leaving only the three of them running last.

They ran through the intense heat towards the dark fire escape, the crackling of burning wood all around them. Hot debris fell on Gorya's arm, causing a burn. She gritted her teeth and kept running. The fire exit door opened to the outside. The sound of ambulance and fire truck sirens was deafening.

Min was waiting outside, her heart pounding. The sound of collapsing structures cut through the panting breaths of the crew. Gorya fell to the ground, her arm burned and bleeding. Bambi was pale, having trouble breathing. Prim still held both of them tightly, then hurriedly took them straight to the ambulances.

Paramedics ran over. "Get on this one, quick!" Bambi was carried on a stretcher to the first ambulance. Gorya, supporting her injured arm, was directed to another.

Prim stood frozen for a split second, having to choose.

She glanced at Gorya, who was calling her name with a pained look, then looked at Bambi's ambulance where paramedics were putting an oxygen mask on her.

It was the longest second of her life.

Then she made a decision, striding straight towards the ambulance Bambi was in. She got inside with her, holding her hand tightly.

Gorya lay in the other ambulance, seeing clearly that Prim hadn't run to her. Her gaze froze, calm. Even without saying anything, she knew the answer well in her heart. It had never been clearer than this moment.

The back door of her ambulance opened again. Shasha, who had just arrived, stepped onto the vehicle. "Are you okay?" was the first thing she asked.

The stylist stared at the taller woman, who looked more startled than she was. Shasha held her hand. "It's okay. I'm here now."

Gorya slowly closed her eyes as a tear rolled out. Shasha held her hand close, then gently kissed it.

The flames from the old building gradually died down, but a different kind of fire in their hearts had been ignited... and no one knew how far it would spread.

Chapter 25 - Day

The sterile smell of the hospital was the first thing she noticed, followed by the cold from the air conditioner. Gorya struggled to open her eyes, her heavy eyelids wanting to close again, but a part of her consciousness told her it was time to wake up. The light from the room lamp made her vision blurry at first. As her eyes adjusted, she saw a figure standing beside the bed. A tall, long-haired woman she knew very well... Prim.

But as the image before her cleared, Gorya had to swallow that name back down.

It was Shasha, in a t-shirt and jeans, tidying up the flowers for her. The model wasn't wearing makeup, making her look more casual and approachable than usual. When she turned and saw Gorya trying to open her eyes, Shasha quickly leaned down close.

"Are you awake? Are you hurt anywhere?"

This kind of warm tone was unfamiliar. Normally, Shasha was always teasing and arrogant. She hadn't known the tall girl had this side too.

"No... not hurting yet," Gorya answered honestly. Her whole body was still numb. But when she tried to move, a sharp pain shot through her left arm. She turned and saw it was wrapped in a cast.

"At first, I thought you just scraped your arm. But once we were in the ambulance, we found out your arm was broken. You were both shocked and in pain, that's why you passed out," Shasha explained, probably because her surprised face had asked all the questions for her.

"And... will it go back to normal?"

"Of course it will. It's just a broken arm. Needs a cast for 4-6 weeks. You should rest for now," the model said, sitting on the chair by the bed and crossing her arms.

"Did anyone else get hurt? I remember the fire spread very quickly," Gorya tried to recall. Strangely, everything faded the moment Shasha held her hand in the ambulance.

"No, everyone escaped safely. Actually, the last three to escape were... you, Bambi, and Prim. Luckily Prim pulled you out, otherwise it would have been worse. But you still tripped and fell on your way out."

Hearing Prim's name, the final memory came back. Prim getting into the ambulance that Bambi was in.

Remembering that scene, a flood of emotions washed over her. It wasn't resentment. It wasn't pain. It wasn't disappointment. It was a feeling like someone who had just surfaced from underwater. It was clear. She could see everything distinctly. It was clear now who Prim had always needed.

It had always been Bambi.

And for her, this feeling might never have reached the word 'love' even once.

Gorya bit her lip. Strangely, she wasn't as sad as she thought she'd be. Perhaps because deep down, she knew this better than anyone. Prim did give her hope, but the one who gave the most hope was probably herself, constantly hoping. Now faced with the truth, it was just the final nail in the coffin, confirming what she had known all along.

Prim never felt for her more than someone she liked, who came and went. That was all it ever was, and all it ever could be.

Gorya took a deep breath before letting it out slowly. "You must have inhaled a lot of smoke," Shasha said, helping her sit up. Gorya coughed a few times, expelling the smell of smoke from her throat. She realized how lucky she was to have survived. Still, she had to thank Prim for grabbing her.

"And Bambi?" she asked, remembering the young client had inhaled quite a bit of smoke.

"She's getting better. It's not too serious. I just visited her," Shasha said, pouring her a glass of water. "She's talking as much as before, so she's probably fine."

Gorya took the water and sipped just a little. "And you? How long have you been here?"

"Since I came with you," Shasha replied, taking the cup back. "I went home briefly to shower and change, then came straight back."

"Then why... are you here?"

"What do you mean?" Shasha asked, a puzzled expression on her face.

"Why are you staying with me?" This was what Gorya wondered about the most.

Shasha froze for a moment before laughing. "Does it need to be some complicated reason?"

"It should be. Why would you do something like this?" Gorya raised an eyebrow.

Shasha stopped laughing and met her gaze with a serious look. "There's no complicated reason. I was worried about you. I was worried about going back to sleep at my condo. I was

afraid you'd wake up in pain, feeling lonely, with no one around. The image of you not making it out of that building... I told myself I wanted to see you lying in bed. I wanted to reassure myself that you were okay, that you were safe. So I stayed here. Stayed until you woke up. Stayed until you told me to leave."

Gorya's heart, which had grown callous from Prim's treatment, began to beat strongly and rapidly again. She bit her lip, wondering if what the person in front of her was saying was true, or if it was just another act.

"Why? Didn't you just want to sleep with me? And you got that already," she said, suspicious.

Shasha laughed. "I did want to sleep with you, sure. But I never said that after getting that, I wouldn't want to love you further."

Those words made Gorya's face flush. She bit her lip tightly, feeling her throat tighten as if she was about to cry.

"Why?" Gorya asked. "Because I... understand boundaries too well?"

The model paused, then smiled. "That's one of them. But... if I want to love someone, isn't the feeling more important?" Shasha stood up and sat on the bed, close to her. "When I'm with you, I feel good about myself. I want to love this person. I want to make this person as happy as I am. If this person has any problems, I want to help solve them, to help them smile brightly again. That's it. That's all my reasons."

Gorya could no longer hold back her tears. They fell as if they had been waiting. Shasha smiled, leaning in to hug the smaller girl, gently patting her back to calm her trembling figure.

Gorya looked up and kissed the tip of Shasha's chin. "Then... can you promise to take good care of me? I promise I'll try my best to love you too."

Shasha smiled, then leaned down to kiss the other's lips. It wasn't a kiss driven by sexual impulse. It wasn't a kiss to stir up passion. It was a kiss devoid of any infatuation.

It was merely a steadfast heart, wanting to be worthy of love, and that's all.

Chapter 26 - Love's Test

Bangkok, the city that never sleeps. The roads were filled with glittering lights, skyscrapers twinkling like competing stars. Tonight in Bangkok was like any other night—bustling and full of people, yet tinged with loneliness under a gloomy sky.

The lights in the room were warm. Prim stood by the large window, the coffee cup in her hand releasing faint wisps of steam. Her gaze fell on the view she once thought was mundane. But today, after the near-death experience, the view outside seemed more valuable than she had ever imagined. If everything had gone wrong by just a split second, she might not even be standing here right now.

Prim took a sip of coffee, her eyes sinking into endless thoughts. The fragile relationships, the deep-seated pain, and the unanswered questions—everything seemed so insignificant compared to yesterday's events. The warmth from the coffee offered little comfort. The thoughts in the quiet night were so dense she could barely breathe.

"Are you going to shower next?" Bambi, who had just come out of the bathroom, was using a towel to dry her wet hair.

Prim turned to look at her. "Not yet. Let me finish this first."

"Coffee? At this hour?" Bambi asked in disbelief.

"It's fine. I usually can't sleep no matter what time I wake up anyway," she replied truthfully.

Bambi let out a soft laugh. Prim looked at the beautiful girl in front of her. "Are you really okay?"

"Yes, really. I'm not scared anymore," Bambi replied, then went to sit on the sofa.

Prim followed and sat beside her. Looking at Bambi's face from the side, her heart relaxed a little. At least Bambi was still here. Still alive. That was probably the most important thing.

"You know what?" Bambi spoke up. "When I was in the ambulance, I really felt like I didn't want to close my eyes. I was afraid that if I fell asleep, if I died, I wouldn't wake up again."

"Was it that bad?" Prim asked with concern. She remembered her own heart wasn't beating normally in that ambulance either.

"Yeah. At first, I was afraid that if I fell asleep, I wouldn't wake up. But when I actually fell asleep and was about to wake up, what I feared changed completely," Bambi spoke in a sad tone, different from her usual self. Prim didn't say anything, letting her gather her thoughts.

"When I was about to regain consciousness, I was afraid that if I opened my eyes, and you weren't here, what would I do?"

Bambi's words left Prim speechless. She placed her coffee cup on the table and leaned back, looking at the person beside her who smelled of her own shampoo.

"You know, I never told you the real reason why I disappeared from you back then."

"Yes," Prim sighed. "I've heard a little. Is it related to your ex-girlfriend?"

Bambi froze. The silence was the best answer. She sighed before nodding. "My first girlfriend committed suicide."

"Please! Don't! Please don't!"

Bambi screamed into the phone. Dressed in her student uniform, she was running barefoot on the rough ground. Even though it hurt, it didn't make her stop. She panted, running up the stairs until she reached the top of the bridge over the river.

"Let's talk properly, please!"

The plea came through the small phone. Tears mixed with sweat streamed down her cheeks. She turned, looking around for the person on the other end of the line.

"I can't do it anymore. I can't go on."

"Don't say that! You still have me! Whatever it is, we can solve it together!"

The other end was silent for a moment before laughing. It was the coldest laugh Bambi had ever heard.

The wind from the river blew through her hair. She saw a slender figure standing on the wall at the far end of the bridge, almost a hundred meters from where she stood. Bambi's eyes widened when she realized the person she saw was the same one talking to her on the phone.

"Having you... is exactly why I don't want to live anymore."

Bambi stood frozen, telling herself she had to run faster, to make it in time. But that icy voice left her speechless.

"Why... is it because of me?"

"I wanted you to have only me...." the other side spoke back with a sob. "But it's impossible. You don't have only me. You have friends. You have your mother. You have other people more important than me."

"That's not true at all! You are the most important to me! You are my first girlfriend, my first love!" Bambi kept running, tears streaming down her face.

"For me, you are my whole world. But for you, I'm just your girlfriend... that's all."

"No! Don't think like that! Come down and let's talk properly!"

Just a moment more... just one more moment, she would reach her. The slender figure in the student uniform, the pleated skirt fluttering in the wind. Bambi ran even harder. Almost there... she was almost there. If she could make it in time, she could save her.

"You made me love you, become obsessed with you. Only you could make me like this. I can't help it. If one day you have to laugh with other friends... you don't belong to me alone."

"What do you want me to do? Tell me! I can do anything for you!"

The other end laughed as Bambi ran even faster. "Can you kill everyone else except me?"

As the words ended, the slender figure jumped, disappearing into the dark Chao Phraya River right before her eyes.

Bambi stood frozen. The phone in her hand fell to the ground. Her whole body trembled. She ran to the edge of the wall, leaning over to look for the body she had just been talking to. Nothing. Everything was swallowed by the dark depths below.

"AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!"

Bambi screamed at the top of her lungs, tears pouring down. That wound was too deep to heal.

"I'm not afraid to love someone not because I don't want to love, but because I'm afraid... afraid of hurting them, afraid of losing them again."

Prim blinked, looking at the person in front of her who was telling the story while crying. She handed her a tissue and held her trembling hand. "Why didn't you tell me about something this big?"

Bambi bit her lip. "You are the last person I would have wanted to know."

"Why?"

"Because I loved you," Bambi looked up, meeting Prim's eyes. "Loved you so much I didn't want you to go anywhere. Loved you so much I was afraid my love would hurt you, like it hurt my first girlfriend. This is my fault. I didn't want you to think badly of me. I didn't want to lose you, like I lost her."

"So you... so you ran away from me, from all your friends, at a time when we loved each other so much, is that it?"

Bambi nodded, and suddenly tears streamed down. "On the day I loved you the most, and you loved me the most too, I was afraid... afraid that if it went further, you would leave me like that again. At that time, I only thought one thing: I had to run away. Run away before one of us couldn't live without the other. That's the reason I obeyed my mother and ran away."

Prim lowered her gaze. She never thought this was the reason she had cried and been hurt by this love for so many years. Bambi sobbed until her body shook. Prim held her close to comfort her.

"If you had told me sooner, I wouldn't have let things go this far," Prim's lips began to tremble, also unable to hold back tears. "It wasn't your fault at all, Bambi. You don't have to carry that feeling alone anymore."

Bambi cried even harder.

"You don't have to endure that terrible memory anymore," Prim whispered. "From now on, I will love you myself. I will love you in the way that is the most correct love. Because the wrong kind of love has hurt the two of us enough."

Bambi looked up at her. Prim gently kissed her lips. "I'm sorry. For everything."

"Don't be. Thank you instead. Thank you for everything that made me meet you."

Bambi smiled through her tears. Prim leaned down to kiss the small figure in her embrace. Her voice was hoarse. "After this... whatever we haven't tried, can we try it again, Bambi? If there's anything, you have to tell me. If there's anything, you have to speak. I'm begging you."

Bambi buried her face in Prim's shoulder. Tears flowed, but her smile became clearer. She replied softly but firmly. "Okay... let's try again."

In the quiet, silent room, only the sound of two hearts beating in harmony remained, and two people ready to start their love anew.

Chapter 27 - The Only Who Lost

Bambi closed her eyes as she felt the pressure from Prim's lips. The warmth from the other's body made her breathing quicken. The next thing she felt was a cool tongue, sweeping into her lips as if trying to get to know her all over again.

Bambi's breath fell out of rhythm. Even though she was familiar with the other's scent and patterns, she was excited every time. Prim always brought new sensations. She reached up to wrap her arms around the tall woman's graceful neck. Prim's probing tongue tasted the sweetness of her lips until it was almost gone, feeling the skin that was soft, warm, and smooth.

Prim slipped her hand inside the nightgown she was wearing, kneading the peak of her breast. The warmth from the other's body made Bambi's breath catch. Even before much had started, her body seemed ready to melt. Prim's gaze was fixed on her flushed face, and she seemed to like it.

"Let it out. Don't hold back."

"Okay," Bambi whispered by her ear.

Prim seemed very pleased. The slender body began to tremble as Prim used her fingers to pull down the spaghetti strap covering her chest, then swept her warm tongue over the peak. It stiffened in welcome. Bambi let out a sound she couldn't control.

"Ah..."

It was a short, natural sound. Prim smirked before sucking on the breast more forcefully. Moans escaped intermittently with every flick and suck of Prim's tongue on the sweet peak. The familiar scent of soap aroused her more than any luxurious perfume. Prim knew every nook and cranny of her body better than she did herself. Her slender legs, beginning to tremble and tense, were a clear signal that her body was ready.

Prim hooked her fingers, pulled the small panties down over Bambi's slender legs, and tossed them away. Then she used her thumb to press and circle the lower part of her body, massaging in a perfect rhythm—not too hard, not too soft—letting the person in her embrace relax, before parting the petals with a slender index finger, carefully and slowly probing deep inside.

"So warm. And wet," she whispered.

Bambi wanted to retort that she didn't need to be told; she had known before Prim did. Her body was being gently invaded. Bambi bit her lip, losing herself. Prim laughed, then began to speed up her fingers, adding a second, moving faster and harder. Bambi's body jerked rhythmically, her breath barely keeping up. Inside, she pulsed as if trying to tell her body just how good it felt.

Blood pumped throughout her body, hot and fierce. Bambi grabbed Prim's hand, holding it tightly, pleading for her to slow the pace, to at least let her breathe.

But Prim wasn't that merciful. Seeing the other so unraveled only made her want the one she loved to climax many times over. The tall woman moved to straddle her this time, withdrawing her fingers and pressing her own body down, intentionally letting their most sensitive parts grind against each other.

Prim bit her lip when she felt that her own inside was just as soaked. Bambi pulled up the hem of Prim's shirt and then sucked on the peak of the person straddling her. Prim inadvertently moaned.

"Ah.... Ahh..."

Her voice was lost in the abyss. Bambi held the other's buttocks and moved her hips to get the rhythm she wanted.

"Trying to take control?" Prim teased, nibbling lightly on Bambi's earlobe.

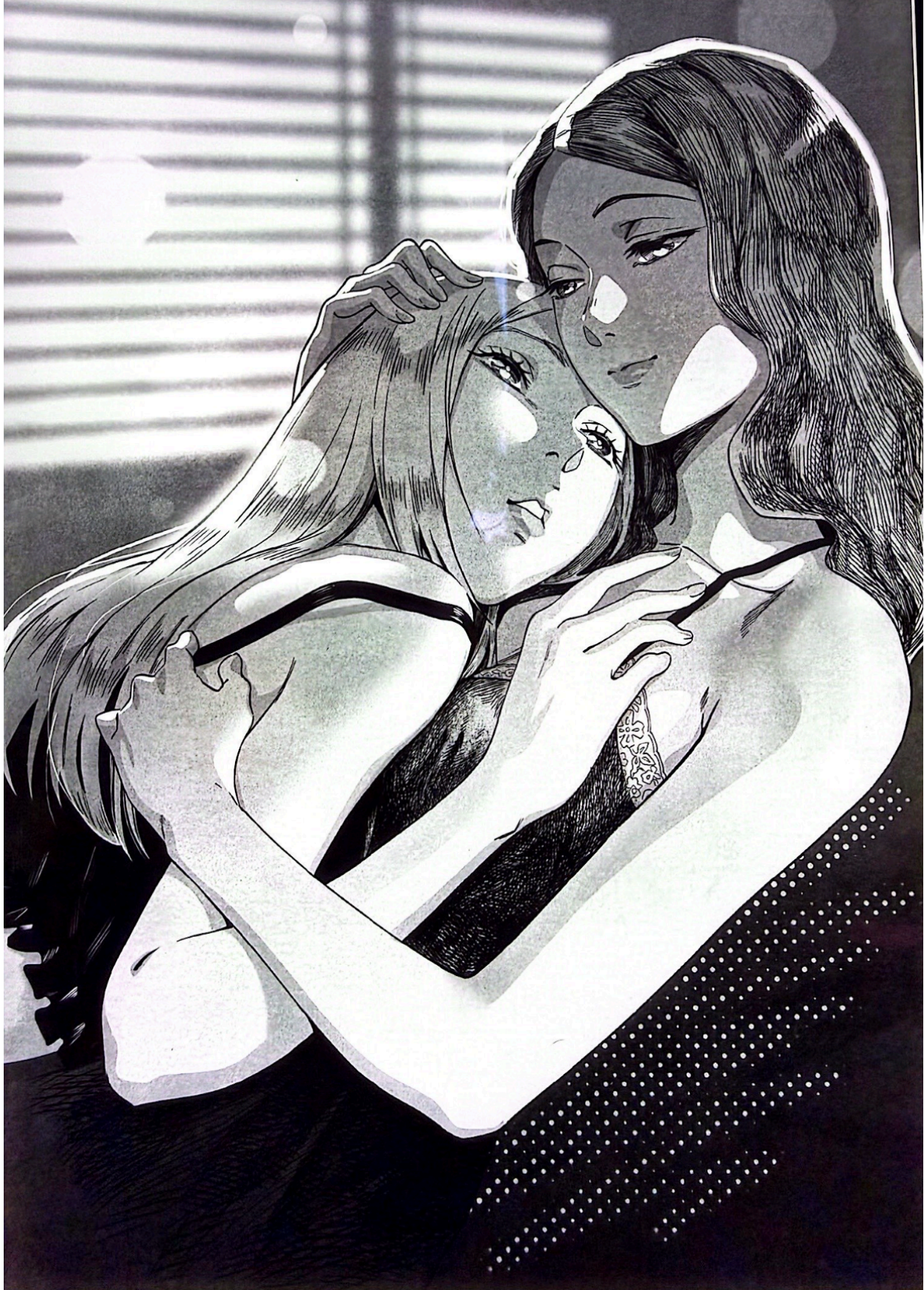
Bambi laughed softly. "I want to try it too."

Prim let her have her way. The smaller girl spread her legs wider to let their bodies connect more closely. Prim helped by moving her hips while grinding with a faster rhythm. Bambi sucked on that breast peak, nipping lightly with her teeth just enough to send shivers. Desire built up inside. Prim moved her body, kissing the other's forehead with a heart full of love.

The desire of both was so intense it was irresistible. Prim looked at Bambi's sweet, soft face as their rhythms synchronized perfectly. Lips reddened from the pumping blood, she pressed her lips to kiss the person she had yearned for all along. Finally, they reached the point of climax together.

Prim held the weakened Bambi close in her embrace, clinging to each other on the bed with a feeling of heartfelt warmth.

Defeated completely, defeated in heart. No matter how much time passes, she could never resist the feelings that came from her.



Chapter 28 - The Love That Was Never Wrong

A Sunday afternoon. Sunlight filtered through the large trees in front of the house, casting dappled shadows. The two-story house wasn't large but was filled with small details that showed care. Potted plants lined the pathway, and ixora and bougainvillea bloomed brightly by the white wooden fence.

The moment she stepped inside, Praew felt the warm atmosphere. The sound of Min's parents' laughter drifted from the living room, and the fragrant smell of food cooking in the kitchen touched her nose.

"Mom... Dad... I'm here!" Min called out as soon as she pushed the door open.

Both of her parents laughed and stood to hug their only daughter before Min's mother turned to Praew and opened her arms wide to hug her too. "It's so good that you came too, Praew. Today we have *tom yum* with soft bone ribs."

"It smells amazing! I'm hungry," Praew smiled widely as Min's mother held her hand and led her to the kitchen. Praew looked around the house, taking it all in. The wooden table in the middle of the house had family photo frames arranged neatly: pictures of Min as a child in her school uniform, grinning with missing teeth, and family photos from trips, all full of happiness. The living room had a light-colored carpet with colorful cushions scattered on the sofa.

Praew's eyes sparkled. In her heart, she could feel what real happiness was—a warmth that didn't need explanation, a small space where anyone would want to return. *If I could be a part of this warmth, it would be wonderful... but even thinking that feels like hoping for too much.*

She glanced at Min, who was smiling at her from across the room. "Let's go eat," her girlfriend said, leading her to the table where various dishes were already laid out.

"Sit here, Praew," Min's mom said, setting a place for her and serving her rice.

"So, has the building owner decided what to do about compensation?" her dad asked about the fire. Min and Praew had been busy managing documents and medical treatment. Today was their first real rest.

"Everything's settled. They didn't want it to become a legal case."

"It was so dangerous," her mother said, stroking Praew's back with concern. "We could have lost our children!"

Praew had never received such overwhelming love before. She smiled, savoring the brief happiness, and turned to look at Min, who was also beaming. Their eyes met, and Praew felt that she was truly lucky.

After the meal, Praew picked up the used plates to put in the sink. Min hurried over to stop her. "No, you can't wash them. You're a guest."

"Don't be silly. Your mom went to the trouble of cooking for us, how can I not wash them?"

"Mom didn't say *you* had to wash them. *I'll* be the one washing them."

"You're not that much older. What kind of girlfriend makes her own girlfriend wash dishes?" Praew turned and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek.

Min grinned. "Fine then, let's wash them together. End of discussion."

As they washed, Praew said, "Your home is so warm. No wonder you grew up so well."

"What's your home like?" Min asked, realizing she had never known the other's family background.

"My parents separated when I was young. I lived with an aunt. She was good to me, but she wasn't very involved. It was more like we just coexisted," Praew spoke in a normal tone, but Min felt the sadness for her. Praew saw the regret on Min's face. "You don't have to look so sad. I'm fine. I can live alone. My aunt was often unable to work, so I had to earn money myself from a young age."

"That's why you're so capable."

"Are we just taking turns complimenting each other now?" Praew smiled, giving her a sweet look. Min laughed and turned to meet her gaze. The afternoon sunlight cast a golden glow, making Praew's profile look golden. Beautiful... so beautiful it was almost unbearable. Min leaned her face closer. Praew, feeling the same, turned to face her. Their lips touched gently.

"Min!"

A cry from her mother came from behind. Min immediately pulled away. Both turned and saw her mother standing at the doorway, her eyes wide with shock. In that moment, the happiness vanished.

The atmosphere at the dining table became tense and suffocating. Min sat next to Praew, feeling like a child caught doing something wrong. Both parents stared at them with stern eyes.

"What I saw just now, what was that?"

Min bit her lip and lowered her head. Seeing this, Praew felt helpless. The gaze that had once looked at her with affection had now turned to one of questioning. Praew's heart sank.

"Answer me, Min," her father asked in a sterner tone. "Is this the reason you broke up with Park?"

"No, it's not," Min looked up. "The reason I broke up with Park was because I couldn't see a future with him. It has nothing to do with Praew."

"Then what was it I saw just now?" Her mother's gaze fell on Praew as if she were the culprit. "Is that how friends act with each other?"

Min's heart sank. She sighed, gathered her courage, and spoke in a clear voice. "Praew is my girlfriend."

The room fell silent. The smiles from before had completely disappeared.

"Girlfriend?" her mother repeated, her voice full of disbelief. "You mean... more than a friend?"

Min nodded resolutely. "Yes. We love each other."

"Love each other!" her father shouted. "You're both girls!"

"We can love each other, Dad," Praew quickly interjected. "Times have changed. Love doesn't discriminate by gender. I cherish and care for P'Min. I love her for who she is, and she feels the same way. That's why we decided to be together."

Her mother rolled her eyes, her face showing incomprehension. "I understand that in this day and age, people who love each other don't have to be just a man and a woman. But when it happens to my daughter, my only daughter... I truly cannot accept it."

Those words were like a stab to the heart. Min gritted her teeth, tears welling up.

"You've been spending too much time with Prim. I told you from the beginning not to work with her," her mother said.

"What does Prim have to do with this?" Min asked, confused.

"It's because you've been hanging around with Prim! She's brainwashed you!"

"Min, think carefully," her father chimed in. "Soon, your mother and I won't be here anymore. If you end up with a woman and have no children, who will take care of you when you're old?"

"That's not related at all. I'm not thinking of having a child just to have someone take care of me," Min argued. "And a woman with a woman... it's not impossible, dear," her father said. "How can you marry a woman? When my friends come to the wedding, where will I put my face?"

Praew felt her face grow cold. She wanted to get up and leave immediately, but she chose to say nothing. Min, with tears streaming down her face, spoke for her.

"Why? Before this, everyone loved Praew. But as soon as you found out we're girlfriends, everything changed!"

"Well, that was before I knew you and Praew were girlfriends!" her father shot back.

Praew remained silent, her gaze lowered. "Does loving another woman change who I am in your eyes, Dad, Mom?" Praew finally spoke, her voice calm and steady. "I'm still the same Praew. The one Mom praised for being hardworking. The one Dad said you loved, with a good personality. I can't see how, just because I love Min, it changes your image of me."

Her parents remained silent.

"I'm sorry that I can't be who you thought I was," Praew continued. "If I were just P'Min's junior, whom you loved, that would probably be fine. But the moment I'm her girlfriend, I instantly become something terrible in your eyes. I'm truly sorry. But my apology probably won't change the fact that I love Min."

Praew stood up and raised her hands in a *wai* to Min's parents. "The food today was very delicious, Mom. Thank you."

She picked up her bag and walked out. Min followed, grabbing her wrist. Praew looked back at her parents' faces, then turned to Min. "P'Min, I don't want to be the cause of you..."

"Don't say anything more. We didn't do anything wrong," Min said, then turned and raised her hands in a *wai* to her parents. "I'll come visit another day."

Min held Praew's hand, and together they walked out of the house, confident in each other.

Chapter 29 - Love Should Belong to Everyone

The meeting room door opened, causing Gorya to startle. She hadn't locked the door, not thinking anyone would come to the office on a Sunday afternoon. Silly her—the person who would come to the office on a holiday was the company owner, of course.

"What are you doing here?" the tall girl asked, surprised to see the stylist packing clothes into a box.

"I came to get my things for the press conference. I just got my cast removed, so I stopped by," Gorya said in her usual calm tone, surprised at her own composure.

"And how is your arm? Is it better?" Prim asked with concern.

"It still feels a bit tight sometimes. I'm continuing with physical therapy," Gorya smiled amiably and continued packing.

Prim pressed her lips together and walked over. "We haven't talked since the incident... about..."

"It's okay," Gorya looked up and met the taller girl's eyes. "I understand everything now. You don't need to feel guilty or apologize for anything anymore. For me, the matter is completely over."

Prim was taken aback by Gorya's directness, almost forgetting she had always been this kind of strong-willed, petite girl. "And how about you and Sasha... how is it going?"

"Very good," Gorya smiled when she thought of her. "It's a very good love. The reason I'm not angry at you at all is probably because I understand. Before one understands one's own feelings, one must have made many mistakes, probably hurt others' feelings countless times. But that's it—every relationship, every wound, makes us all grow up."

Gorya tidied up, then picked up her bag, smiling at the senior she had always had a crush on. "And growing up will lead us to our true destination."

"I'm glad you think that way," Prim smiled. "You've really grown up so much."

Gorya smiled in acknowledgment, then walked past Prim. No flinching, no blushing, heart not pounding. She truly felt nothing for Prim anymore.

Sasha's sports car was already waiting in front of the company. Gorya walked out and saw her girlfriend leaning against the car door. "Finished faster than I thought. I was about to come in and get you."

"I ran into P'Prim," Gorya answered honestly.

Sasha looked a bit worried, turning to look towards the company's second floor. Prim was standing by the balcony railing, watching them. Seeing Sasha look over, Prim waved a greeting. Sasha simply smiled back, then opened the car door.

"Where should we go next?"

Gorya sat for a moment. "Hmm, let's drop the car off... then go to a bar, shall we?"

Camera flashes went off intermittently. In front, the elegant gold letters 'Breakfast & Bed' stood out on a deep red background. Shasha, as the brand ambassador, was there, posing in clothes from the collection. Reporters, fashion bloggers, and VIPs were packed in. The atmosphere was both lively and tense.

The female MC on stage began the introduction, "Today is an important step for Breakfast & Bed, which is not just a fashion brand, but a lifestyle that reflects the beauty of everyday life..."

The lights in the room dimmed before the new brand concept video appeared on the large LED screen. When the video ended, applause erupted.

Bambi walked out onto the center of the stage amidst the applause, her smile broad and happy. Today, she was in the style of a young female executive, wearing a long, tailored skirt designed to be wearable every day.

The MC handed the microphone to Bambi. "What kind of woman wears this brand?"

Bambi paused, sweeping her gaze over the crowd. In the middle of the audience, Prim was sitting, staring at her with a proud glint in her eyes.

"I believe one thing: our thoughts influence what we will experience. If we think we are confident, we are beautiful, we will attract only good and beautiful things. Similarly, when we are confident that we deserve to be loved by a good lover, we will get good love in return. Therefore, the woman I want to wear our brand's clothes is a woman who wants the best for herself."

Applause sounded loudly, along with Prim's pleased laughter.

The event was over. Bambi's whole body slumped into a seat backstage just as Prim walked in holding a large bouquet of flowers.

"Why did you just bring it to me now? Why not give it to me during the interview?"

"I didn't want to draw too much attention. I just wanted to do it like this..." After speaking, Prim kissed Bambi's soft lips. "If I did it backstage, I couldn't kiss you properly. Others would feel awkward."

"That's true," Bambi smiled widely.

Praew and Min followed them in, also holding bouquets. Bambi rushed to hug Min excitedly, before turning to Praew. "The project was so beautiful, Praew. Everyone praised the video."

"Wait a minute, the Project Manager is right here," Prim interjected softly.

Bambi turned to grab her girlfriend's arm and hug her. "I praise you often enough. I've never told Praew to her face before."

"I'm glad you liked it. Today's event was also great. Congratulations again, Bambi," Min said, coming in for a hug.

Gorya and Shasha, who had finished changing, came to find the group. Gorya made eye contact with Prim and smiled sincerely. Prim smiled back. Seeing the happy glint in Gorya's eyes, she felt relieved.

"I really liked working with you so much today," Bambi said, holding Shasha's hand. Shasha pulled her in for a hug. "I liked working with you too. Working with you is always fun."

"Let's take a picture," Praew suggested, seeing a photographer passing by.

All six of them stood in a row, smiling widely and happily. Prim held Bambi's shoulder, looking at the person beside her. Then she looked at her close friends, the junior she had always adored, the new photographer she wanted to nurture, and the model she might not have gotten along with at first, but who had now become an important person in her life.

Relationships are like this: complex, messy, chaotic.

But it cannot be denied that all paths always converge at the destination our life needs. Let's just be gentle with each other, and offer each other a safe love. That's enough.

Because everyone deserves a good love.

The End

เบื้องหลังของแสงไฟในวงการแฟชั่น ยังมีความรัก และความลับ
ของความสัมพันธ์ที่ยิ่งเหยียง ซบซ้อน วุ่นวาย

ปรีม ผู้กำกับภาพสาวสวย ถูกชะตากรรมเล่นตลกเมื่อได้กลับมา
ทำงานกับ **แบมบี** แฟนเก่าที่ทิ้งเธอไปอย่างไร้เยื่อใยโดยไม่มีแม้คำลา
แต่ครั้งนี้แบมบีกลับมาเพื่อจะบอกว่าอยากกลับมาเป็นเพื่อนกัน แต่ปัญหา
ก็คือ...เพื่อนที่ยังนอนด้วยกัน ถือว่าเป็นเพื่อนได้อยู่หรือเปล่า...

ซาซ่า นางแบบสาวคนดังสุดมัน มีเบื้องลึกที่กลับหัววันไหวต่อ
กอหวี สไตลิสต์สาวที่เล่นตัวนานที่สุดเท่าที่ซาซ่าเคยจับมา ยิ่งถูกปฏิเสธ
เท่าไรเธอก็ยิ่งโหยหา และมันยังจุดความปรารถนาของเธอให้ลุกเป็นไฟ
ถางด้าน มีบ โพรดิิวเซอร์สาวผู้แบกทั้งชีวิตและความฝัน ที่ต้อง
เลือกระหว่างแฟนหนุ่มที่คบกันมานานกับการแต่งงานที่ทุกคนรอคอย
จนได้เจอกับ **แพรว** บาร์เทนเดอร์หญิงที่ทำให้เธอได้รู้จัก 'ความรักในแบบที่
ไม่เคยเจอมาก่อน'

หกหญิงสาว หกหัวใจ กับความสัมพันธ์ที่สับสนจนเกินกว่าจะ
อธิบายได้

กฎเดียวที่ต้องยึดไว้เพื่อความปลอดภัยของหัวใจ คือ **'ห้ามรักเธอ'**



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