

Two Quote Story

In the second-floor restaurant, where there were never many people around, they were having their last meal. JiYeon was wearing jeans that were loose and comfortable, and wore a baseball cap real deeply on, to both avoid eye contact with Daniel, and to hide her greasy hair that hadn't been washed for days due to the deadline for the magazine piece just a few hours ago. That particular restaurant had forl one full side of the wall only windows. When they opened up every window, which they usually did on a good breezy spring day like this, one could look down on the people, like they were looking down on an ant farm. Both JiYeon and Daniel pulled out their phones constantly, but with different purposes. Daniel checked his phone because he was scheduled for another date right afterwards. JiYeon was checking her phone because, pathetically, she wanted to appear like she had another appointment.

“How was work?” said Daniel, trying to drag a conversation out of her.

“Not bad. That story about high heel addicted bitches for Cosmopolitan? That was due just a few hours ago.” JiYeon knew that he knew all about this. They just ran out of stuff to talk about. The best thing about this restaurant was that it's only on the second floor, that she can observe her ants close enough to see enough of them, but not too close where they will notice that they are being watched. The few details that she couldn't see were filled with her own imagination. Like Gatsby looking down on his parties, she also did have a specific purpose as well. Like right now, where a little kid is walking down the street with her mom where she is raising her hand up high, like she has been taught in her kindergarten. Except, since she is walking down with her mom, cars can see her just fine so raising her hand is pointless. At the

end up the cross road, another women, who looks a bit older than the woman who crossed the street with the kid was waiting. The older women picked up as the kid was running towards her. Both of them looked quite relieved to see each other as if they thought they would never meet again. Maybe they really thought they would never be able to see each other again. Daniel knows very well about this habit of hers. JiYeon would stop in the middle of conversation, in the middle of her sentence drifting off to her LaLa land like that very often. Daniel used to just look at her while she was doing that no matter how long it took for her to come back to earth. Now he is just staring at his black screen of his touch phone, waiting for something to come up there.

After my husband gambled away the little money we had, and the big money we didn't have, we were slaves for that gang. Aside from my husband digging, in the dark up in the mountain, what was destined to be someone's unofficial grave almost every night, and me putting on makeup and fake smiles and fake orgasms to get just little more tips we often did some other seedy underworld groundwork. This was one of them.

“You'll see one girl standing by the parkfront alone. Pink shirt with jeans, about 7 years old. Don't let anyone think it's suspicious, and go talk to her like you've known her long time. Her name is Suzi- if it helps. Bring that kid to Café Bene in front of Yawori Street, and give that kid to the mother. Don't tell her anything.”

I approached the kid who honestly did not look worried at all. She was calm but I was shivering. From the kid's unwashed hair and disorganized clothing, I knew she spent a day where she wasn't supposed to be. I asked her name, she said she was Suzi. She was calm but I

was shivering.

“It’s my dad. He hasn’t come for days. Those big muscular grown-ups told me that my dad has done something bad. And taught me a game.”

I didn’t ask but she told me when she fastened her belt after she came in to my car. After I parked in a remote area, we walked to Café Bene- that was quite far away for a little kid to walk. She didn’t complain a bit though, not once. As we were crossing a street she raised her hand high to look bigger in front of the car, to be visible, with her little palm up, with her hands up to be held, in front of the cars, she was so desperate to be noticeable. She was telling everybody that she does what she has been told. That she was a good girl, who deserves Santa instead of Gang banging, literally. But even with her hands up as high as she could, it only came up to my waist, and though I noticed her I couldn’t tell her anything. I couldn’t even tell her mom anything, after crossing the street, as she was thanking me. I couldn’t even tell her that my twelve year old girl, who was ten when I last saw her, ran away from home after the same thing. I just had to accept her thanks with a bigger guilt.

After drifting off a while, that’s the story that JiYeon told Daniel.

“So what do you think Daniel? Does this work?” JiYeon tilted her head on her seat and asked.

“I guess. You might want to add more details for the ending though. I did not like the fact we broke up,” Daniel answered.

She giggled out. "It's just a story."

"It's never *just* a story," Daniel answered in serious calm voice, "especially a story as dark as this."

She had her cold snotty smile up and said, "I'm sorry, that I don't write fairy tales anymore."

Daniel blinked in retrospect. "Don't be. Please. You never did. I still remember what you told me from the jump on our first date.

So did JiYeon. It was same thing that she says to every man that she dates. The chemical brain response of the human mind lasts as long as two years. More than that is impossible. So if you think about it, love has lasts shorter than a can of spam.

"One can still enjoy it though. Till the spam grease burdens your heart so much that you just have to quit? Till the strong salts in them makes your tongue sore." Said JiYeon little over a year ago. A women who doesn't believe in love was refreshing back then for Daniel, but he did want fairy tales, if he did not attempt to write one. The breakup was quick and painless. In fact the only reason they made this appointment was to break up, and they both knew that. After Daniel left, JiYeon pulled out her laptop and ordered a cup of coffee. She changed seats, where Daniel's butt heated up, where it facing directly toward the open windows to look at her own ant farm. She wondered if they could be a lesbian couple raising one child together. And the child was coming back from kindergarten, picked up by one of her mommys after being teased by mean-spirited peers.

By Kanchanaburi, famous river in Thailand, 34-year old writer JiYeon is sitting by the side eating Mangos that are significantly cheaper than in Korea. This is a really pretty view, if only I came with him. The mangoes were soft, juicy and firm; just like his new girl's ass that he will be sucking on. But she promised herself not to think about this. He'd be doing that with or without her thinking about it, so might as well get over with it. She is in her thirties, and she is tired of getting judgments from relatives every New Year's. With the silent eyes they will ask, "What is the matter with you". Sometimes but more often than not, those judgments will become vocal. This year her mom finally gave up and gave her permission not to come home this year. That could have been a good feeling, obtaining freedom, but she felt more like her mom was giving up on her. "You'll never get married, so what am I going to do. I'll just have to give up on grandchildren and hide you as much as I can." As much as she didn't like being trophied by her parents, the fact that they considered her a shame, who doesn't even shine enough to be presented didn't feel all that good either. It is true that she was more comfortable being a single. It fits her. She wanted to be one of the famous "gold miss", so to speak. She was earning enough money to support herself for now, and it's always been a while since she has paid her dues as a writer, enough that she will have no trouble paying her bills with the pen now. All those times that would have been wasted on anniversaries, fancy dinners, and lovey-dovey stuff that has a shorter expiration date than Spam, was well spent for her. While her friends labored for little lumps that never let them sleep tight for at least few years, she experienced different things each year and it showed in her writing. But just like anything else, it also does have downsides.

Wrinkles on her face were possibly covered by makeup till now, but starting the past few years her neck was giving away her age too easily. She was getting significantly older than guys who go “clubbing”, so she started to have long extra times in the weekend where she had nothing to do but work. It wasn't him, but it was timing. Daniel just happened to be in her life when she needed to get married, not that she wanted to. After all, it is all about the timing. It was still a very good view. Good enough view for people to kill for. Good enough view for two strangers to fall in love with, maybe the two characters of her story fall in love with here in this spot. No matter all these things in her mind, the mango was still soft and juicy and the weather was nice.

The river was floating back and forth like a dragon trying to go up against the flow. Everything looked pitch dark except for the lights of the street market across the river where they bought priceless juicy mangos at almost no price. He felt the head of her resting on his shoulder getting heavier. She fell asleep. He observed the rise and fall of her chest, as he was counting the her long eyelashes. He observed the cool breeze disorganizing her hair in most calculated amazement. He forked into a dice-sliced mango. Just by poking in like that made the juice flow from the firm skin. He kissed in that small piece in to his mouth. Feeling the sweetness spreading in deeply as he caresses it with his tongue till he swallowed in. He hold her shoulder till it got bright.

Dragon. Dragon flowing against the river. And one who use to be mother and wife of a man. A whore who is a mother without a child and her guilt. Maybe this is where the story ends as well. Maybe this is the spot of beginning and the end.

She sat on the side of the river where she came for honeymoon. At that time, she thought she would be able to live happily with him forever. She walked straight to the river where the water was floating back and forth like a black dragon trying to climb up. The dragon swallowed her whole.