Chapter One

She must have gone crazy.

"Do you want me to stop?" His breath caressed her lips, his tongue dipping inside her mouth before she could even think of answering. The bastard. Umungol siya at bumaon ang mga daliri sa buhok at balikat nito.

It's not like she's going to say stop. Not when the coarse hair of his chest rubbed deliciously against her naked breasts, not when his fingers were between her legs. The tips of her swollen breasts beaded against the hard planes of his chest muscles, the friction sending electric heat rushing to her womb.

Puwede niyang sabihing lasing siya, o nainggit siya sa mga kaibigan nilang may mga boyfriend at asawa na. Pero mas mabuti pang idahilan niyang may terminal cancer siya. The latter would be a lie. Mas healthy pa siya kalabaw ng Lolo Erming niya. Ni hindi niya magamit na brokenhearted siya at pinagtaksilan siya ng kanyang hudas na boyfriend. Hindi na niya maalala kung kailan siya huling nagkaroon ng boyfriend. Counted ba ang dalawang date matapos ang college graduation? She didn't think so.

Nadia heard Levi groan as his fingers slid inside her wet tightness. He murmured something dirty in her ear. Napakagat-labi siya at bumagsak ang ulo sa unan.

Damn!

Ngayon, alam na niya kung bakit maraming babae ang naisahan nito high school pa lang sila.

She tried touching herself these past three months. Nadia thought it felt nice. But after having Levi's fingers inside her, para niyang sinabing exciting ang pagpapaputok ng watusi. This—*this* was fireworks. Levi was a *firework*.

He had magical fingers. And a magical tongue. Speaking of his magical tongue, it was currently f*cking her mouth. He tasted like beer and male lust. And Levi. She was sure the spicy, tangy flavor was pure Levi.

Itinulak niya ang balikat ng binata at umungol ito.

"Condom," usal niya, habol ang hininga.

He grunted and nipped her jaw, then reached for something on the bedside table.

Tatlong buwan na siyang umiinom ng pills, pero hindi siya kayang protektahan niyon sa unwanted diseases. She wanted to feel alive, not contract STD. And Levi in all his glory had always been open to casual relationships.

At hindi sigurado si Nadia kung STD-free ang lalaking ito na napili niyang maging sexual partner.

It was stupid, she knew.

But all things considered, si Levi Raul Serquiña ang best choice para sa kanya. Unattached, sexually talented (ayon sa chismis na napatunayan niyang totoo), and always available for a one-night stand. Yup. Perfect.

Narinig niya ang pagpunit ng foil at napamulat siya.

Damn, the man could pass for a porn star. Or a movie star. Or a model for the statue of *David*. He had always been gorgeous even back in high school. Every hard muscle, every ridge conveyed that he was sex and danger personified.

And his face…

Hindi mapigilan ni Nadia na basain ang mga labi.

That face could make the gods jealous.

Hindi niya napigilang iangat ang sarili at dilaan ang dibdib nito. Umungol ito at napasabunot sa kanyang buhok.

"F*ck, Nadia," he hissed.

She smiled and continued licking her way down his stomach. Dinama niya ang matigas nitong tiyan at muli itong nagmura.

Okay. She could do this. Ilang beses niyang napanood ito sa mga porn videos nitong nakaraang tatlong buwan. As long as she didn't swallow his come, she'd be fine. No danger of contracting any disease. Okay, she could do this.

His muscles tensed as her lips went further down. He was warm marble, bronze and golden and sculpted to perfection. Lifting her eyes, she stared at him as her lips closed over his swollen hardness. Nagmura ulit si Levi at tumiim-bagang.

Lust burned in his eyes, making her toes curl. His lips parted as she tightened her lips around his length, his teeth grinding as she suckled the wide head. It was strange. Giving a guy a blow job should have felt a bit, she wasn't sure, degrading? Pero hindi niya naramdaman iyon. She felt powerful—like some sex goddess.

Gusto niyang tumawa roon. That was just corny.

His flavor spread in her mouth, her tongue learning the texture of his arousal. She tried to take more of him, to rub her lips along that steely length, pero hinila ni Levi ang buhok niya at nilamon ng bibig nito ang kanyang protesta. His hand was between her thighs again, his fingers thrusting inside her quivering hole.

He was all business this time. No more playing. He pushed her to the edge with quick efficient strokes. Her muscles quivered, her inner walls contracting greedily around his pumping fingers. Hindi nito pinakawalan ang bibig niya habang umuungol siya.

Humiwalay ito at lumipad pabukas ang mga mata ni Nadia.

She watched him roll the condom down his

length. Her walls quivered in anticipation. She wanted him raw, she realized. She wanted to feel him inside her, skin to skin. She wanted to feel every ridge, every vein of his hard thickness moving inside her.

Maybe next time kapag nakapagbigay ito ng health certificate? Gusto niyang tumawa. Oh, she's going mad.

Next time talaga?

"What's so funny?" untag ni Levi at itinulak nang mas pabuka ang mga hita niya.

Hinawakan nito ang mga balakang niya at hinila siya pababa. The soft bedsheet felt coarse against her hot skin. Ipinosisyon nito ang sarili sa pagitan ng mga hita niya.

Napangiti si Nadia.

"Funny?" he asked. "You're grinning like a cat."

Kinagat ni Levi ang pang-ibabang labi niya at tuluyang ipinasok ang dila sa kanyang bibig. Muli siyang nalasing sa lasa nito. He pushed inside her before she could blink.

Hindi niya napigilang mapasinghap at mapahawak sa mga braso nito. She knew it. S'abi na nga ba niya at dapat ginawan niya muna ng paraan ang virginity niya. She had considered using a dildo. Pero parang napaka-desperate naman kung sa ganoong paraan mawawala ang virginity niya.

Pero ngayon sa pagtigas ng katawan ni Levi at sa pagtigil nito sa paggalaw, mukhang dapat nga yata

ay gumamit muna siya ng dildo.

"What the f*ck?" singhal nito.

Napangiwi siya. Okay, so mukhang hindi talaga ito ganoon kalasing. Well, mukhang hindi talaga ganoon kadami ang nakita niyang ininom nitong beer sa high school reunion nila kanina.

"What the—"

Ipinulupot ni Nadia ang mga hita sa mga balakang ng kaniig bago pa ito makalayo. "Shut the f*ck up, Levi, and do it."

Humalo ang galit sa pagnanasa sa mga mata nito. He was too darn sexy when angry. Pinaigting ng galit nito ang matitigas na anggulo ng mukha nito, lalo itong pinaguwapo.

"I knew you were up to something—"

Hinila niya ito at siniil ng halik. Ibinaba niya ang dalawang kamay sa matigas na puwitan nito at ibinaon ang mga daliri sa muscles nito roon. He cursed and almost involuntarily pumped inside her, burying himself to the hilt.

Suminghap ulit siya, hindi niya mapigilan.

He was thickest at the base. The swollen lips of her sex rubbed against the wiry hair between his thighs. Hindi siya makahinga. He was just too big. He stretched her to breaking point. But it was a delicious kind of pain. She throbbed deep inside. She wanted to feel him moving, wanted to feel his thick, hard shaft pumping inside her tight heat.

"Levi, please…" Sinubukan niyang gumalaw at

muling napasinghap sa mumunting dingas ng apoy sa kanyang kaibuturan.

It zapped her like an electric sting. She became keenly aware just how tight she was. Bumagsak muli ang kanyang ulo sa unan at umarko ang kanyang likod.

Narinig niyang nagmura si Levi at naramdaman niya ang palad nito sa kanyang dibdib. He palmed her tender breasts, his hot mouth closing over one pointed tip.

His hips moved and she whimpered in bliss.

Finally.

His rhythm was hard and heavy, animal lust pumping in his veins with every plunge of his hips. She followed her instinct and planted her feet on the bed, bucking her hips up to meet his powerful strokes.

"Goddammit, Nadia," mura nito sa dibdib niya.

Pinagapang niya ang mga daliri sa likod nito, sa balikat nito, paakyat sa makapal nitong buhok. Umungol ito at muling hinuli ang kanyang mga labi.

His kiss was as lethal as his thrusts.

Hot, dominant and heavy, it felt like he wanted to suck her soul with every plunge of his tongue. He was f*cking her, she realized. He was really f*cking her.

Shit. She really did it.

His hips swiveled, his hard length gouging her tight channel until she could feel her walls

collapsing around him. The ball of pressure coiled tighter and tighter inside her womb as he sank repeatedly inside her. The bed creaked and the headboard thumped rhythmically against the wall in time with every forceful thrust of his hips. She'd be bruised and swollen tomorrow, she was sure.

But darn, it was worth it.

Pinakawalan nito ang mga labi niya para makasigaw siya. At talagang sumigaw si Nadia. The world exploded into lights and colors, disintegrating into glittering dust particles.

He never stopped moving inside her, his intense thrusts prolonging her shattering release, until another onslaught of liquefied fire burst inside her, melting into another… and another… and another…

Yup. Definitely worth it.

*F*ck, what just happened?*

Hinihingal na tumitig si Levi sa kisame ng hotel room.

Did he just f*ck Nadia Valeria f*cking Valdez? Class valedictorian, future principal ng high school alma mater nila? Ang babaeng nagpaligo sa kanya ng pineapple juice noong prom nila?

"Stop thinking, it doesn't suit you," anang babae sa tabi niya.

Tumaas ang sulok ng kanyang mga labi.

Yup, it's Nadia all right.

The woman could insult him even in her sleep.

"What the f*ck happened?" Ipinukol niya ang titig sa katabi.

Nakatiyaha ito kagaya niya, nakabuka pa din ang mga hita. It was a very disconcerting scene.

Nadia, prim, straight and proper as hell Nadia was lying naked in bed beside him with her thighs spread apart.

For him.

His eyes shamelessly roamed over her swollen breasts, her tight abs, and the creamy flesh between her thighs. Heat still simmered in his blood, and Levi could feel himself getting rock hard again.

"Goddammit, close your legs." Humila siya ng kumot para itabing dito pero tumawa lang ang dalaga. "What the f*ck happened?" singhal niya ulit.

Naghikab ang babae at nag-inat, itinataas ang mga braso. Dumausdos ang kumot, muling inihahantad ang dibdib nito. Her breasts weren't big, but they were firm and full and high. His mouth watered to taste them again.

"Calm down, Levi, we used protection, and I'm on the pill, so it's okay—"

"Naka-drugs ka ba?"

Tumawa ulit ito at muling naghikab. "No. I'm clean, don't worry."

"You came on to me," pakli niya, inaalala kung paano sila humantong sa kama.

High school reunion nila. Hindi iyon pormal na gathering, nagkita-kita lang silang magkakaklase

sa isang bar sa Antipolo. They got drunk, partied, danced, and he saw her.

Nakita na niya ang dalaga pagpasok pa lang nito. Hindi supermodel gorgeous si Nadia, pero noon pa man, parang may electric field na sa paligid nito na humihigop sa pandama ng mga tao sa paligid nito.

Look at me, I'm awesome, may ganoong aura si Nadia high school pa lang sila. Nag-increase iyon tenfold ngayong treinta na sila.

Nakatulong ang maikli at masikip na itim na bestida para hilahin ng katawan nito ang mga mata ng bawat lalaki sa venue.

He had hardened instantly.

Lasing na siya, s'abi niya sa sarili, kung na-attract siya kay Nadia *Medusa* Valdez. He almost got kicked out because of her when they were sophomores.

Nahuli siya ni Nadia sa likod ng Computer Building, may kasama siyang babae. Public indecency ang kaso niya kung nagkataong hindi na siya minor noong mga panahong iyon. He wanted to strangle her pretty neck back then. Halos isang buwang grounded si Levi dahil doon.

Then there were her snide remarks and her snorts and her glares. She treated him as if he were some kind of subhuman species.

The f*ck? He swore may crush ito sa kanya kaya ganoon katindi ang galit nito sa kanya.

But as she swayed and swung her hips in the naughty music earlier tonight, Levi knew he wanted her. At nang makita niya ito sa labas ng hotel room niya, he knew he had to have her.

"You got a crush on me even back in high school, didn't you?" akusa niya.

Tumaas ang sulok ng mga labi nito. "Did I? I'm not sure—"

"What the f*ck are you playing at?" Hinagilap niya ang mga braso nito at matiim na tumitig sa mga mata ng babae. They were big and clear and dark. He tried to ignore the way her breasts were pressing against his chest, the way her fragrant breath was touching his lips.

Tinapik siya nito sa pisngi na para bang bata siyang may tantrum. "Wala. Thanks for the night, Levi, gotta go–"

Hinila niya ulit si Nadia nang akmang tatayo ito. "What the f*ck happened?"

Lumabi ito, at lalong nag-init ang ulo niya. She had this way of making him feel stupid. Minsan na itong nag-tutor sa kanya sa Calculus noong high school sila at halos sumadsad sa lupa ang confidence level niya sa tuwing matatapos ang session nila. Nagpaka-nerd siya sa Calculus para maibalik ang dangal at para hindi na niya ulit kailanganin ang tutoring sessions mula rito—o mula sa kahit na sino.

Inihiga nito ang sarili sa kama at muling ihinilig ang mukha sa unan. Kumalat ang mahaba at wavy

brown hair nito sa puting pillowcase.

"Okay. I wanted to get rid of my virginity and I thought you're perfect for the job. Kailangan pa ba ng mas mahabang explanation?"

"Why?"

"Why what?"

"Why me? Why do you want to lose it?"

May ibinulong ito na parang isang mura, pero hindi siya makasigurado, distracted siya sa pagtitig sa dibdib nito. Naka-expose pa rin iyon sa hangin. And the rosy tips hardened against the cool air in the room.

"You want me, too. Don't deny it."

Nagtaas siya ng tingin sa mukha nito. Nakataas ang sulok ng mga labi ng babae na parang isang batang nakakita ng bagong laruan.

Naningkit ang mga mata ni Levi.

Inangat nito ang sarili at ipinulupot ang mga braso sa leeg niya. Her soft, sweet scent fluttered around him. Lumiit ang mundo niya at nilamon ng presensya ni Nadia. Her fragrance, the feel of her skin underneath his fingertips, her hair, her eyes, her lips—wala siyang nagawa nang ilapat nito ang mga labi sa kanya.

She tasted like heaven. Itinulak siya nito sa kama at pumaibabaw sa kanya.

When he woke up the next morning, she was gone.

Chapter Two

Lose your virginity: check!

Ngayon, ano ba ang susunod niyang gagawin? Ihinilig ni Nadia ang ulo sa unan at tumitig sa kanyang maikling listahan. Mula sa sampu ay naging beinte ang mga items na nakasulat roon magmula nang simulan niya iyon tatlong buwan na ang nakakaraan. Napatitig siya sa kulay cream na mga dingding ng kanyang kuwarto.

She'd always wanted to paint it lavender or lime green, kaya lang wala lagi siyang oras. And she'd always wanted to buy a giant corkboard and plaster it on one of the walls.

Inilagay niya ang dalawang iyon sa kanyang listahan na sa halip na mabawasan ay tila lalong humahaba.

Nag-ring ang phone sa tabi niya at kinuha niya iyon. "'Ma! Ano, kumusta ang *El Nido*?"

"Ang mahal ng buko dito! Two hundred! Talagang nananaga 'yung mga tindero dito!"

Tumawa si Nadia at sumandal sa headboard ng kama. Iniunat niya ang mga binti sa kulay pink na bedsheet. "Gan'un talaga kapag tourist spot, mahal lahat. Si Papa?"

"Naliligo, papunta na kaming Puerto Princesa

mamaya. Sa makalawa uuwi na kami ng Baguio. Ano, kumusta ka d'yan? Si Ate mo, pumupunta?"

"N'ung isang araw. Bilhan n'yo si Aunty Karla ng mga ref magnets, nagkokoleta siya n'un."

"Oo nga, bumili na kami. O, lumabas na si Papa mo. Sige, ingat ka d'yan. Kumusta nga pala 'yung reunion mo kagabi?"

Ngumisi siya. "Okay lang."

"O, sige na, ang mga pinto at bintana, isara mo, ha? Ingat d'yan. Next time tayong lahat naman ang magbakasyon, ha? Isama natin si Ate mo."

"Oo nga, kaya lang kailangan pa nating mag-ipon ng mas malaki para d'on. Sige, ingat din."

"Sige."

Tinapos nila ang tawag at binalingan niya ulit ang listahan na kanyang hawak.

Vacation for parents: check.

May *vacation for whole family* pa siya na hindi natse-check-an.

Dumako ang mga mata niya sa item five. Learn to play the piano, or keyboard.

Okay, siguro magagawa niya iyon sa natitirang one and a half month sa vacation niya.

Tamang-tama, magbabakasyon sa Baguio sa mga kamag-anak nila ang mga magulang niya at siya lang mag-isa sa bahay.

Hinagilap niya ang towel at tinungo ang banyo.

Panay voice messages ng mama niya ang sumalubong kay Levi sa kanyang pag-uwi. Ipinaalala sa kanya nito ang family reunion sa dulo ng buwan, pero sa kabuuan, his mother just nagged him to get a steady girlfriend. Hindi niya maintindihan, may apo na ang mga ito sa ate niya. Bakit pa siya kinukulit ng mga ito na mag-asawa?

He went to his room and took a long shower.

Kiniskis niya ang balat ng loofah, tinatanggal ang lahat ng bakas ng nagdaang gabi. He could still smell Nadia on his skin, could still taste her on his tongue. Images from last night flashed through his mind. Nadia beneath him, lips parted and eyes wide open. Nadia above him, riding him, her hair falling like silk around them.

His blood heated and every part of his body hardened.

Nagmura siya at nilakasan ang malamig na tubig.

What the hell happened last night? Hindi pa rin niya alam ang sagot doon. It shouldn't bother him, really. Lalaki siya at nag-enjoy siya. He enjoyed one night stands, preferred them to commitments, actually.

Relationships gave him migraines. 'Love 'em and leave 'em' ang kanyang modus. But he was not an asshole, ipaglalaban niya iyon kahit saang korte. He never sweet talked anyone into anything.

Okay, so maybe he did. A little. Pero hindi siya

nangangako ng kung ano para lang makuha ang gusto niya. It was all for fun. He always made sure that was clear. Last night was all for fun, too.

But still.

"A f*cking virgin," he muttered as he rubbed shampoo on his hair.

Ano nga ang s'abi nito?

She wanted to get rid of her v-card and he was the perfect candidate? Why the hell did that make him feel used?

"F*ck," mura niya ulit.

He's turning into a sissy.

Matapos mag-shower ay binuksan ni Levi ang laptop at hinarap ang emails. It was a Saturday, but it became his habit to check his mails even during weekends. Ayos na ang problema sa pabrika nila sa Mandaluyong, dumating na ang mga shipments galing Indonesia, walang problema sa shipment sa mga kliyente at stores. Na-finalize na ang proposal para sa printing press na balak nilang bilhin. It would be a good investment.

Fifties pa lang ay nagbebenta na ng school supplies ang pamilya niya. Why not go into printing books? Lumalaki na ang market ng book industry sa bansa nitong nakaraang mga taon.

Inasikaso niya ang mga emails na dapat sagutin bago nagtungo sa kitchen para maghanap ng makakain. Ibig sabihin niyon ay maghahanap siya ng cup noodles. O magpapa-deliver ng pizza.

His kitchen was every housewife's dream with its granite island, mahogany cabinets and stainless steel appliances. He never used it. Masuwerte na kung magpainit siya ng tubig sa stove isang beses sa isang linggo. Beer, bottled mineral water at ilang tuyong apples ang usual na residents ng stainless steel double door fridge niya.

Ini-on niya ang 75-inch LED TV na nakadikit sa isang dingding sa living room. Binalaan siya ng news report tungkol sa ulan at traffic sa *EDSA*.

He snorted. *Kailan ba nawalan ng traffic o baha sa EDSA?*

It was Saturday, it was his night out with friends.

He worked five days, fifty plus hours a week. Weekends lang ang totoong pahinga niya.

He'd go crazy if he didn't go out and f*ck.

And right now, he really needed to f*ck.

Binuksan ni Levi ang fridge at humagilap ng malamig na tubig.

He was still hard even after the shower.

The image of Nadia riding him hard was burned into his mind. The feel of her breasts against him, her mouth on his, her tongue …

Nilagok niya ang tubig sa hawak na bote.

Hindi siya maniniwalang virgin ito kung hindi niya mismo naramdaman ang pagbigay ng hymen nito.

Thinking of how he tore away that barrier as he thrust into her made his maleness jerk. Mariin

siyang tumitig sa bote ng tubig.

What the f*ck happened?

The weather report had been right. Hindi na dapat siya umalis ng unit niya. It's April, for Pete's sake! Bakit sila binabagyo?

Tinitigan ni Levi ang mga kotseng animo'y multi-colored insects na nakakumpol sa kalsada. Parang mga bato ang pagpatak ng malalaking butil ng ulan sa mga bubong at salamin ng mga ito.

"Global warming," he muttered. That, at masyado nang maraming may kotse sa Pilipinas.

Minasahe niya ang leeg at sandaling pumikit. Masasaulo na niya ang plate numbers at modelo ng mga sasakyan sa harapan niya. At para bang gusto talagang pukpukin ang kanyang ulo, may bumusina nang malakas sa likuran.

So much for his Saturday night.

Dinukot niya ang phone sa bulsa para tawagan si Ted. By the look of things, he'd be stuck here for another hour or so. Akmang pipindutin niya ang call button ni Ted nang may mahagilap ang kanyang mga mata. Tumigil sa pagdiin ang kanyang mga daliri sa screen ng phone at napalipad ang tingin niya sa kanan.

A jolt of electric heat chased away all his sleepiness and headache.

"Look who we have here," usal niya sa sarili.

Mukhang naghihintay ito ng taxi. May dala itong

payong pero hindi iyon nakatulong. Her arms and legs were wet from the frigid rain. Before he could stop himself, he imagined himself licking those drops of water on her skin.

Humigpit ang hawak ni Levi sa manibela.

Naka-puting shorts ito at nakahantad ang mahuhubog na mga binti. The same shapely thighs she'd wrapped around his waist all night long.

Memories came flooding back. The feel of her beneath him, above him, around him… He hardened like a teenager seeing a pair of naked tits for the first time.

"F*ck." Gusto niyang umiwas ng tingin dito pero hindi niya magawa.

Gumalaw ang traffic. Should he, or should he not?

Pinaandar niya ang kotse papunta sa tapat ng babae bago pa siya makapagpasya. Ihininto niya ang kotse, ibinaba ang bintana.

"Need a ride?"

Napapitlag si Nadia at lumipad ang mga mata sa kanya. He watched those dark eyes widen with shock and with a hint of panic. Those dark eyes glazed when she's at the height of her orgasm, he knew. And he found himself craving to see that sight again.

"Get in, Nadia."

He unlocked the door and waited for her to get in. Pero nanatili itong nakaawang ang mga labing

nakatitig sa kanya.

Numipis ang kanyang pasensya. “Get in, Nadia. Or I’ll haul your ass inside.”

Itinikom nito ang bibig at kunot-noo siyang tinitigan. Parang nakikita na niya ang pag-run ng babae ng mga options at probabilities sa utak nito. She loved doing that. Naalala niyang minsan itong gumawa ng probability kung magkano ang magagastos nito kung tatayaan nito ang lahat ng combinations ng numero sa lotto.

Who the f*ck did that? Si Nadia Valdez lang iyon.

“I’ll put this in your trunk,” untag nito, nakakunot-noo pa rin.

Lumabas siya para tulungan ang dalaga. Nanuot ang tubig ulan sa kanyang T-shirt at pantalon pero masyado siyang nakatuon kay Nadia para magreklamo. Halos kalahati ni Nadia ang haba ng rectangular box na dala nito. Nakabalot iyon ng brown paper at straw.

“Ano ’to?” Ibinaba niya ang lid at ini-lock ang trunk.

“Keyboard.” Pinayungan din siya nito, at sa ilalim niyon, tila nalusaw ang mundo sa kanilang paligid.

She had soft creamy skin. He remembered how velvety smooth it was against his tongue. Iniiwas niya ang tingin dito at walang-imik silang pumasok ng sasakyan.

In the small enclosed space, her scent hit him in the gut. Fresh and clean and sweet. He wondered if it was her shampoo or her lotion. Hindi iyon pabango o cologne, sigurado siya roon. Masyadong mabini iyon, masyadong nakadikit sa balat nito para maging pabango. But he knew the scent would get thick and heavy when she's aroused.

"Where do you live?" Minaniobra ni Levi ang kotse pabalik sa traffic.

"Sa Libis."

"Still with your parents?"

"What's wrong with living with my parents?"

Inihinto niya ang sasakyan nang huminto ang kotse sa harapan. Traffic didn't seem so bad now, at sa likod ng isip niya, natagpuan niyang hinihiling niya na sana mas lumakas pa ang ulan at mas bumagal pa ang takbo ng mga sasakyan.

"Nothing. Isn't this strange?"

Alangan itong sumandal sa likod ng upuan at bahagyang umurong sa tabi ng pinto. Pinanood niya ang paggapang ng kulay sa leeg nito at kinagat niya ang pang-ibabang labi para pigilan ang pagngiti.

"Ang alin?"

"Us seeing each other for two consecutive days."

"Small world, isn't it?"

Nagkibit-balikat siya at sumandal din sa backrest. "Why are you out in this rainy day, Nadia?"

"I bought something."

Nag-angat ng kilay ang binata. "A keyboard?"

"Uh-huh."

Bago pa siya makasagot ay tumunog ang kanyang phone. Doon niya naalala na may lakad siya. Dinukot niya ang phone sa bulsa at gaya ng kanyang hinala, si Ted iyon, tinatanong kung nasaan na siya. Lumipad ang mga daliri niya sa screen.

I got stuck in traffic. I'm heading home. Sorry, Bro. Next week na lang.

Ipinadala niya ang mensahe at ibinalik ang titig sa kalsada.

"May pupuntahan ka ba?" narinig niyang tanong ng katabi. Gumalaw ito para hagilapin ang clutch pero hinila niya ang kamay ni Nadia. "It's okay, ibaba mo na lang ako—"

"No. I'm heading home."

Her skin felt satiny smooth underneath his fingers, and he resisted the urge to rub his thumb over her wildly leaping pulse. He knew she was soft and smooth all over, from those high cheekbones to the tips of her toes.

Tumagos ang sigaw ng sirena sa loob ng sasakyan at sabay silang napalingon ni Nadia sa pinanggalingan niyon. Tatlong trak ng bumbero ang lumiko sa kanto papunta sa intersection.

"May I?" untag ng dalaga, nasa radio sa console na ang kamay.

Tumango siya at hinayaan itong buksan ang radio para malaman kung saan ang sunog. Sa may corner iyon ng *Boni Serrano* at *Katipunan*.

"Shit," mura ni Nadia.

"Yeah, shit." Umandar nang ilang sentimetro ang kotse sa harapan ni Levi. "D'un ang way natin papunta sa inyo, di ba?"

"Yes, kahit saan tayo lumiko, kailangan nating dumaan d'un. Unless iikot tayo sa *Aurora*."

Sabay dumako ang mga mata nila papunta sa kalsada sa direksyon ng *Aurora Boulevard*. Mukhang tinubuan na ng ugat ang mga jeep at kotse roon.

"We could stay at my place," kaswal niyang suhestyon.

She'd say no, he knew. She'd probably say something nasty about contracting STDs by coming to his house. Minsan na siya nitong inakusahang STD-infested manwhore noong fourth year sila.

"S'an ka nakatira?"

May maliit na boltahe ng kuryente na umagos sa mga ugat niya. Napatitig siya kay Nadia. She stared back at him, too, those big, dark eyes clear and bright in the dimness of his car.

*It's a f*cking trap,* he told himself.

Nakikita niya sa isipan ang isang *Venus flytrap* na kinakain ang isang langaw. O ang sapot ng gagamba na nakapulupot sa isang langaw. Bakit laging langaw ang biktima? Poor bastard.

But he found himself forcing his throat to work. "A few blocks from here."

Tumango ito, and he could feel himself hardening painfully.

Okay, Levi, down, you asshole. Pero ano ba ang iisipin niya? He could still taste her in his tongue. Could still feel her around him, her soft, wet tightness unbearably hot even with the elastic condom between them.

He wanted her raw, he realized. He wanted to feel her with nothing between them.

Nakatiim-bagang, tahimik nilang hinintay lumuwag ang traffic para makapag-U-turn.