

## CHAPTER ❖ 3 ❖

### **July**

Hyo was not busy at work. He had suggested some small, creative ideas to improve the roads in several of the company's projects. Kwan was against the changes.

In Korea, the younger brother obeyed the wishes and orders of the older brother. But for the last seven years in Korea, Hyo was his own boss. He wanted to work with his brother as an equal. This was not how things were. All the projects were already in progress and there was no way for Hyo to contribute his expertise. Why did he and his family move here from Korea if there was no real contribution he could make to the company?

One morning, Kwan was out in the field. Hyo took out the plans for the major highway renovation project that his father worked on before he died. Hyo liked to practice converting figures from the metric system, used in Korea, to the American system and back again. He wanted to be good at using both.

Suddenly, something was wrong. His results didn't match his father's. He tried three times with

the same results. He tried again. Finally, Hyo found the mathematical error.

The mistake was small, but could be very bad for the company. He needed to tell Kwan, but Kwan was still out in the field.

It was time for lunch. Hyo didn't feel very hungry. He really wanted to spend an hour doing taekwondo. But he had not found a studio in Denver. He knew he was getting out of shape. He walked home for lunch and thought about how to tell Kwan of the mistake.



The next day Hana and Sony, another student from Korea, went to lunch together after their English class. They drove 20 minutes to a little restaurant near Sony's apartment building.

*"We're near the big Korean grocery store, aren't we?"* asked Hana.

*"Yes. And that's my apartment building over there,"* said Sony, pointing at a blonde brick building.

At lunch, the two women talked about their backgrounds and families. After lunch, Sony drove Hana home.

That evening, when Kwan and Hyo came home, Mi Sun asked Kwan to grill hamburgers for dinner.

*"I'm tired. Hyo can do it. He doesn't have enough to do,"* said Kwan.

Mi Sun laughed, but no one else was laughing. She looked around at the adults. Everyone was stunned into silence.

Hyo said, *“Of course, I’ll be happy to grill. Where is the spatula?”*

After dinner, Hyo helped the women clear the table.

*“Hyo, this is not your job. Hana can do it,”* said his mother.

*“It’s fine, Mother. I don’t mind helping at all.”*

*“No, I insist.”*

Hyo put down the plates he was carrying and went downstairs.

In the kitchen, Hana’s mother-in-law turned to her and said, *“What has happened to you? Where is your respect for my sons? Is it because you are taking those English classes? Are they making you forget your duty as a good Korean wife? Watch out! You are being selfish. Think of your children. What kind of role model are you for them?”*

Hana listened to her mother-in-law’s tirade. Her eyes were cast down respectfully. She was glad no one could see the tears welling up in them.

*“Of course, Mother-in-Law. You are right. Please forgive me.”*

Hana turned to go. Could things get much worse?