

CHAPTER ❖ 5 ❖

September

Hana, Hyo, and the children settled into a routine. Dak Ho and Cho Hee were enrolled in school. Hana attended her English class three mornings a week. She was still looking for a pottery studio to work in.

Hyo worked from 8:00 to 4:30 at the supermarket. Then he went to the taekwondo studio for an hour. It was convenient to live so close to both of them.

One evening, Hyo came home after his workout. He was smiling.

“Tom asked me to teach the Tuesday/Thursday evening intermediate class. I won’t be home until after 8:00 those nights, but I told Tom that since it was only two nights a week, it would be alright.”

Hana had mixed feelings, but she said, *“I agree. I think you should take it.”*

Then the phone rang. It was Kwan. Hyo’s face was white when he hung up the phone.

“Kwan said I must come back to the company. He said he might report me to Immigration if I don’t. The visa that I have is for professionals. He said he

is the sponsoring employer, and that I must work as a professional at the company. The supermarket is not a professional workplace, so I can't apply for a new visa with them."

"We have no choice, then," said Hana. "I do not want to get in trouble with the American government, and I don't want to be here illegally."

"I don't want to either, but I cannot go back to work with Kwan. Maybe there is another way. We can look it up on the Internet. Maybe you can get a visa as a special artist. We have a few days since, technically, I am still on a short leave from the company."



In English class the next day, Karen, the teacher, and Linda, a volunteer, started a painting and poetry project. The morning passed quickly for Hana. For the first time in weeks, Hana felt hopeful about her art. Maybe she couldn't do pottery now, but she was able to express herself through painting.



That weekend, Hana went with Sony to an outdoor art show. The streets were crowded with people. The two women wandered around looking at the

jewelry, paintings, and pottery. Hana wanted to know where the potters worked.

“Hi, Sony. Hi, Hana. Great to see you here!”

Surprised, the women turned to see Linda in the next booth. She showed them her abstract paintings. Then Sony said, “Hana is looking for pottery workplace. Do you know place?”

“You’re looking for a studio? Hmmm. Maybe. I have a friend who is a potter. I’ll ask her and tell you in class, okay?”

“Really? Okay. See you Monday.”



On Wednesday afternoon, Mi Sun called. “*Oh, Mi Sun!*” said Hana. “*I am so excited. Linda, the volunteer in my English class, just took me to a pottery studio. One of the members is moving, and I can take her place. I have missed doing pottery so much! And Linda invited me to go to an art show opening on Friday. She has two paintings in it. Hyo can take care of the kids since it is at night.*”

Mi Sun was silent for a moment. Then she said, “*Hana, be careful. This friendship happened very quickly. Linda is an American. Americans have different values. Often they don’t take their family responsibilities seriously. You already have problems to deal with. Do not let Mother-in-Law be right about you.*”