

CHAPTER ❖ 6 ❖

September

Hana listened carefully to Mi Sun. After she hung up, she sat and thought about her words. Maybe there was some truth to what she said. Maybe Mi Sun didn't have very many American friends because it was difficult to become close to a person with different values. Hana decided to continue being friends with Linda, but to keep Mi Sun's words in mind.



Later that day, Hyo finished his work at the supermarket. He went next door to exercise at the taekwondo studio. Tom saw him come in and greeted him.

“You got a few minutes? There’s something I want to talk to you about,” said Tom. *“Hyo, I’m thinking about expanding the studio. It’s a lot for me to take on by myself. I was thinking of adding a partner. You’ve only been here about a month, but I like to follow my instincts about people. It seems to me that with your work ethic and your mastery of tae-*

kwondo, you would make a good partner. Would you like to work here with me, full time, and even invest in the business?"

Hyo was stunned. *"This is quite a surprise,"* he said.

"Let me show you some figures I've been working on," said Tom.

Tom had a good plan worked out. Hyo began to think this might be possible.

Then he had another thought. This might be his way out of his visa problems, too. Maybe Tom could apply for the visa for him. Hyo was a Korean taekwondo expert. He was essential to the expansion of the business.

He and Tom talked for more than an hour. As they discussed the plans, Hyo realized that Tom wanted an equal partner.

Finally, Hyo said, *"I'll do it. I don't have a lot of money to invest, but I can give you my time. And with all the new students and extra scheduling, we'll need an office manager. Maybe Hana would help."*

Hyo got home at 10:00 PM. He told Hana all about Tom's offer. *"Here in the U.S., with hard work, I can do something I love and build a successful business."*

Hana understood. In Korea, for Hyo, taekwondo was a hobby. It wasn't a serious profession for a grown man. Here, he could take that hobby and make it his life.

"Hyo, if we do this, we're saying we want to

stay in the USA. Is that what you want?" she asked.

"I think so. I don't think I would get this opportunity in Korea. My father wouldn't let me go to a sports school. In Korea, I'm not considered an expert. Here, I am."

Hana said, *"What about Kwan? He expects you to rejoin the engineering company."*

"I know," said Hyo. "But Tom and I found some information on the Internet about a permanent work visa for athletes. I might qualify as a taekwondo expert."



In the morning, Hyo said to Dak Ho and Cho Hee, *"We're going to start a new taekwondo business. Do you want to take classes?"*

Both the kids were delighted. Hana was tired, but she had to smile. When Hyo was in a good mood, everyone was in a good mood. This would be good for the family. How could she be the one to stand in the way?