

CHAPTER ❖ 7 ❖

Early October

Karen and Linda stood at the front of the classroom. Karen asked, “Is there anything you’d like to talk about this month? Teacher conferences? Okay. We’ll address it in our next class. We can do some role playing.”

After class, Linda told Hana, “My friend called me from the pottery co-op. She wants to know if you’re going to take the space or not.”

“Oh, Linda. I want it, but now I not sure. My husband change job. Now he work . . . works in grocery store and in taekwondo gym. Now I will work in taekwondo gym, too.”

“But Hana, what about your art? This is a great opportunity for you! You are a good artist. You can’t just give it up!”

“It is not simple decision. I must consider my family. But maybe . . . ”



On Thursday, Hana went to her children’s school. She felt nervous. Would she understand the teacher?

Mr. O, the children's English teacher, came to greet Hana when she entered the room. He was very tall. He had an easy smile and a handsome, youthful face.

"Mr. O? I am the mother of Dak Ho and Cho Hee."

"Yes, of course. Nice to meet you. I work with both of your children here every day."

Mr. O asked her to sit down. Then he said, "I was wondering if something happened at school or at home that would explain why Dak Ho's behavior has changed. When he first came to class, he was friendly and outgoing. But then he stopped participating in our discussions. Did something happen at home?"

"We moved to apartment, and . . ."

"That must be it. Change is hard, and moving is a big change."

Hana felt low after the conferences. She didn't think Dak Ho's behavior was caused by the move. She felt sure that the situation between Hyo and Kwan was the real reason.

Then Hana thought about her art dilemma. She knew what Mi Sun would say. Mi Sun would tell her that she must do the job in the taekwondo studio and forget about doing pottery. The family needed her, and that was her role. It was selfish to do what she wanted. Thoughts were swirling in her mind.

This is crazy, she said to herself. Maybe if I

write down these thoughts, it will be clear to me what I should do.

Hana found some paper and started to write in Korean.

*What should I do about the pottery co-op? I am so confused. Linda says I must do my art. Mi Sun does not agree. But I am an artist **and** I am a Korean woman. Deep inside, I will not be completely happy no matter which one I choose. I want to talk to Hyo about this. But he is so excited about the taekwondo studio. And working with Kwan is impossible. But is this the best path for the family? I don't want to work at the studio office organizing and advertising. No matter what I do, Mother-in-Law will find something wrong with me and my decision.*

That thought made Hana feel worse. She put her head down on her arms on the table and began to cry.