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THE MILLIONS SERIES PT. 2

#THEMILLIONSERIES



A MILLION
Strings

SABRINA T. RUDOLPH



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SABRINA T. RUDOLPH



INTRO

NEWS

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KANG JUNYOUNG UNMASKED: Millions' Leader Revealed as Chaebol Heir!

In a revelation that has left fans reeling, Millions' enigmatic leader Kang Junyoung has been identified as the son of two of South Korea's most influential figures. The charismatic frontman of the global K-Pop phenomenon Millions—and current CEO of InVision Entertainment—turns out to be a bona fide chaebol heir.



Speculation about Junyoung's background has swirled since the group's debut, but confirmation arrived in the most unexpected way: during a live press conference, none other than **Assemblyman Kang Jaebeom**, current Seoul mayoral candidate, announced Junyoung as his son. He was quick to add that he and his wife—Do Hyekyo, chairwoman of the powerful tech conglomerate **Do.SET**—had concealed Junyoung's identity for "reasons of privacy and safety".

While some praised the politician's candor, others questioned the timing, noting the growing global reach of **Millions** and the political advantage of aligning with a beloved idol group.

Millions, comprised of Kang Junyoung, Im Taejun, Sung Siwoo, Lee Minseo, Aron Park, Bryen Lee, and Choi Eunkyu, has captured hearts worldwide with their talent, authenticity, and the bold step of creating their own label **InVision Entertainment** after a highly publicized legal battle with former agency **EW Entertainment**. Though bits and pieces of the members' pasts have become public over time, Junyoung's family ties remained under wraps—until now.

The revelation has sparked heated debate among fans and netizens alike. Some applaud Junyoung's ability to forge his path independently despite his privileged origins. Others question whether his success—and the rapid rise of **InVision Entertainment**—was as hard-earned as it seemed.

As Millions prepares to launch their highly anticipated **world tour** and Kang Jaebeom's political campaign gains momentum, one thing is clear: Kang Junyoung has become more than an idol—he's a headline. Whether on stage, behind the boardroom desk, or under the media spotlight, all eyes will be on K-Pop's newest **chaebol prince**.

 273K

 35K

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“Don’t cry, pabo! You’re not alone. You have Tony—and you have me!”

She found him right where she’d expected—curled up behind his favorite tree, his face buried in his knees. A small wave of relief washed over her as she spotted the familiar tuft of hair. Without hesitation, she knelt down beside him and gently patted his head.

The boy’s sobs gradually faded. When he finally lifted his eyes—usually calm, distant—they were rimmed red and shining with unshed tears.

Her expression faltered. Junyoung rarely cried. Rarely showed any emotion, either. He was a curious boy—reserved, closed-off, as if mimicking the cold, silent house he came from. But now, with new tears welling up, she didn’t think twice and pulled him in a tight hug.

He froze instantly. Still, she didn’t let go.

She tightened her hold and pressed a soft kiss to his cheek. “Everything will be okay,” she whispered. “You’ll see. I’ll take care of you.”

She had no idea what had happened to upset him—he never said—but she knew what always worked when she was sad. Her mother’s warm embrace. Her mother’s kisses and quiet promises. And now, she passed that comfort on, hoping it would work for him too.

They stayed like that for a while. Long enough for his breathing to even out. Long enough for his arms to slowly, cautiously, wrap around her in return.

She smiled. He really was strange sometimes—but also incredibly cute.

“You promise?” he mumbled. “You won’t leave me?”

She giggled at the question. “Of course, I promise! You’re my best friend. And anyway, I’m only seven! I have to stay with Eomma until I find a nice boy and get married.” She kissed his cheek again before pulling back.

He scowled and quickly rubbed at the spot where her lips had landed. The rare warmth he’d shown just moments ago had already faded, swallowed up by his usual cool mask. “Tony is my best friend,” he said flatly. “You’re a girl. Girls can’t be best friends with boys.”

Her jaw dropped. “Tony is a dog!” she cried. “He can’t be your best friend—but I am the best best friend anyone could ask for!”

Junyoung huffed. There was no arguing with her. She was far too stubborn.

“Fine,” he muttered. “You can be my best friend. But if you leave me, I’ll forget you. Tony will take your place.”

She stood and pointed at him with fierce determination. “Tony will never replace me. I’m not going anywhere!”

She held out her hand. He took it, and she pulled him to his feet.

“I’ll hate you if you do,” he murmured, once they were face-to-face again.

Something about the way he said it made her pause. But then she brightened and gave him a playful headbutt. “You won’t hate me, because I won’t leave. We’re best friends forever.”

TRACK 1

GOODBYE, MY FIRST LOVE

~ Miyoung ~

It had been a long time since I’d thought about that day. Twenty-one years had passed since our first meeting.

In hindsight, I almost wanted to shake my head at my own innocence and naivety. I had decided we would be best friends before even really knowing him. I had made a forever-promise without understanding what it meant—or how hard it would be to keep.

So innocent. So naive.

“Excuse me?” a voice called, pulling me from my thoughts. I needed a moment to remember where I was. “Miss?”

Startled, I noticed the man in front of me. He looked at me with thinly veiled impatience. “We’ve arrived. That’s the company building, right?”

I turned toward the window, scanning the signs on the building across the street. A sigh escaped me as I spotted the name I was both eager and anxious to see—InVision Entertainment.

I shut my eyes for a second, then turned back to the taxi driver.

“Yes, thank you. That’s it.”

He nodded, satisfied, and gave a slight tilt of his head—his way of telling me to get out.

“Thanks again.”

I glanced at the seat beside me and quickly grabbed my most prized possession—my violin. Holding the case tightly by the handle, I pushed the door open and stepped out.

I found myself on a bustling street in front of a convenience store. Across the road, the building housing InVision Entertainment towered over me.

With an inhale, I tried to steady my nerves. As much as I wanted to cross the street and just walk in, a part of me hesitated.

This was a huge opportunity. Being hired as a violinist to perform with an internationally successful K-Pop boy group? It could open countless doors, introduce me to a new audience, and let me step outside the narrow world of classical music. Not that I disliked classical music—what violinist would? But I was just as passionate about modern genres. Pop, rock, R&B... you name it, I loved it all.

Joining InVision meant broadening my repertoire, evolving my style, and taking one more step toward the goal I’d worked so hard to achieve: becoming a world-famous violinist. But it also meant confronting the past—and the choices I had made.

Was I really ready for that? Ready to face him after all these years? My chest tightened, and my breath caught in my throat. Time could change people. Time could heal wounds. Maybe he was over it by now. I hoped—desperately—that we could find common ground again. Music had brought me here, but I was also here to set things right. We were adults now. We had both built our lives. The past was the past. And it was time to meet again.

I still had a sinking feeling that convincing him to give me a chance wouldn’t be easy. “You look like you need a boost!”

I turned, only to find an elderly man standing beside me. “Excuse me?” I asked, puzzled.

The man lifted the yellow plastic bottle with a mischievous glint in his eyes.

“An energy boost! Or what does the kid call it? A life boost!”

A little lost, I stared at the banana milk in his palm.

“Take it! Apparently, it helps!” he said, offering it to me.

I bowed and smiled politely. “Thank you, but I’m good.”

“You’re Ahn Miyoung, right?”

I blinked in surprise. “That’s right. How did you know?”

The elderly man let out a soft hum and shrugged. “I like classical music, and I recently watched you perform with the Seoul City Symphonic Orchestra.

Besides, I read the news! You’re making quite a name for yourself as a world-class violinist.”

I felt my cheeks grow warm.

Not long ago, a reporter had joined our orchestra to cover the preparations and performance of an international benefit concert.

While the main article had focused on our conductor and the orchestra's accomplishments, he'd also written a feature on the musicians. We'd all been interviewed, but I never imagined he'd turn me into the 'star' of the orchestra. Granted, the lead violinist always drew some attention, but I hadn't expected it to blow up like this.

He'd interviewed members of the audience about my performance, including politicians and entertainment industry figures: actors, singers, TV personalities. The article had collected quite a bit of praise. A photo of me playing a solo had been published alongside it, and to my surprise, I'd received an unexpected wave of compliments for both my skills and appearance. Suddenly, I was more recognized than I was prepared for.

I smiled to myself. Apparently, I was well-known enough for a random elderly man to recognize me and present me with a bottle of banana milk.

The man grinned mischievously as he went on. "Also, my granddaughter wouldn't stop talking about that video of you playing that Millions song! Those boys sure attract attention. Not sure I understand the hype. They can barely look after themselves, yet they're role models for half the country. I swear, if that kid shows up again today asking for banana milk, I'll ban him from the store. So honestly, you'd be doing me a favor by taking this last bottle off the shelf. He doesn't need to know I have more in the back."

He pushed the bottle into my free hand.

I tilted my head, confused. I was completely lost. What was the deal with the banana milk? And how were Millions involved?

Millions—the K-Pop boy group I was here to meet.

Keeping up with them had been painful, but it had also made me proud.

At first, I wanted to ignore them, but then I simply couldn't. Even if I had tried, the world wouldn't have let me. Latest by the time they released their first self-produced album, I wouldn't have been able to ignore them any longer.

The title track, *Here to Stay*, had been on the radio non-stop. The music video played on screens all over Seoul, and after the album's success, the group's faces appeared in advertisements everywhere. Half of my colleagues had fallen in love with that song and played it over and over. It was no surprise I found myself watching the MV and couldn't stop listening—to the song, and to his voice.

One day, in an empty practice room, I picked up my violin and began playing the melody. Two colleagues, who had secretly listened in, urged me to record the song and upload it to the orchestra's newly launched video channel. The video went viral, making my name—and face—more familiar than any news article ever could. It was also the reason I was here, talking to an elderly man in front of a convenience store.

After watching the video, InVision Entertainment had contacted our management to arrange a meeting. My first reaction? Panic. Would they sue me for copyright infringement? 'No, I had told myself. He would never do that. Despite his upbringing, he couldn't possibly be that kind of person. Could he?

That little voice of doubt had been silenced quickly when InVision instead proposed a collaborative performance between Millions and me.

"You're here because of them, aren't you?"

The man's voice pulled me from my thoughts. "Here because of who?" I echoed, confused.

He raised a brow. "Famous people don't just linger in front of my convenience store. Around here, folks like you are usually involved with the Millions boys. Unless you're a fan? Waiting to catch a glimpse of one of them?" He squinted at me. "You're tall, very pretty, and a musician. You're here for Taejunie! No, wait—Minseo! Or maybe you're here for Juny—"

I quickly waved him off, masking my awkwardness with a laugh.

"Sajangnim, I'm not a fan. But yes, I do have an appointment at InVision Entertainment. Please, though—it's still top secret."

He zipped his lips playfully, signaling his discretion. "Well then, good luck with your appointment! Don't forget your banana milk. It calms the nerves. Just don't drink it too often!"

I smiled and bowed. "Thank you. It was nice talking to you."

He nodded and pointed toward the other side of the street, sending me on my way.

I straightened my shoulders and crossed with purpose. This was going to be amazing. I would get to perform music. I would see him again. There was nothing to fear...

Yet with every step closer to the company building, my determination started to waver. Anxiety crept in, tightening my chest with each passing second.

What if he didn't want to talk to me? Or worse—what if our paths didn't even cross? What if they didn't hire me? And... was it just me, or were those girls in front of the building glowering at me?

I swallowed hard and schooled my features into a mask of confidence.

What was their deal? I didn't even know them! I was probably just imagining things.

When I finally reached the entrance of InVision Entertainment, I wished for an invisibility cloak. The girls—high schoolers, judging by their uniforms—were very clearly sending daggers my way. I had no idea what was going on, but I wasn't going to let them scare me off.

One of the girls scanned me from head to toe. When her gaze landed on my violin case, she quickly looked up at my face again. Her expression shifted as the defensiveness melted into something close to admiration. "You're Ahn Miyoung!"

Wow. Was I really that recognizable now?

I nodded, unsure how else to react.

She squealed and grabbed the arms of the two girls beside her, jumping up and down with excitement. "You covered *Here to Stay!*"

Not knowing how to react, I just nodded again.

"Unnie," she said dreamily, "I always listen to your cover while I study. It's so pretty and calming!"

This time, my smile came naturally. "Really? I'm happy to hear that! I hope you got good grades thanks to it."

The girl nodded eagerly and nudged her friends. "She's Ahn Miyoung! I shared her cover with you guys. I wish she'd do all of our oppas' songs. She's a rising star!"

The others gave me a quick once-over, their interest clearly piqued.

"Really? She's famous?" one of them asked hesitantly.

"Yes, really!" the first girl replied, clearly proud of her discovery.

"She looks like she could be a model," the third girl added, blushing when our eyes met.

What was going on? One second, they seemed ready to throw punches, and the next, they were the sweetest little fangirls.

Fans! Of course.

I resisted the urge to facepalm. No wonder they'd been half-suspicious, half-curious. They were fans of Millions—Millionaires.

I'd heard that fans liked to hang around entertainment company buildings, hoping to catch a glimpse of their idols. I hadn't taken it seriously. And I definitely hadn't expected this reaction when walking up to the building.

"Unnie, are you here to do more covers? Will you officially record something for Millions?" one of the girls asked, her voice full of excitement.

"I... uh..." How was I supposed to answer without giving too much away?

Saved by the bell—or rather, the sliding door.

It opened with a soft whoosh, and a tall man stepped outside. He barely spared me a glance before addressing the high schoolers. “You girls know the rules.”

Instantly, they launched into a chorus of whines and pleading. “Oppa, we won’t disturb anyone, we promise!”

The man crossed his arms. “You know InVision Entertainment doesn’t allow fans to linger in front of the building,” the man said, his voice firm but not unkind. “Besides, the members arrived a while ago and won’t be leaving until late at night. You don’t want to worry them by standing out here all day and possibly overheating under this hot summer sun, right?”

The girls pouted, eyes dropping to the pavement.

“You should run along now,” he continued. “Don’t let the members see you. They won’t be happy about this. I bet you haven’t even had lunch yet. And what about your studies? You don’t want to fail your exams, do you? That would disappoint them.”

The girls seemed properly chastised. “Please don’t rat us out, Oppa!” one of them begged. “We just wanted to make sure the Millions members are doing well. We only dropped by for a moment—we were about to get lunch, really!”

The man gave a short nod and gestured for them to leave.

They bowed politely in my direction as they passed, casting quick looks behind them until they finally disappeared around the corner.

Once they were gone, his stance relaxed. He turned to me. “Are you alright?”

I was just about to reassure him when the door behind us slid open again and a woman stepped out. “Sangbeom-shi, are they gone?” she asked.

He nodded.

The woman sighed in relief and turned to me with visible warmth in her expression.

“Ahn Miyoung-shi, right?”

“That’s me!” I answered with a quick smile.

She bowed politely. “I’m Min Seohee. I was supposed to pick you up at the front desk, but I noticed those girls stopped you. Sorry about that!”

“That’s okay! Nice to meet you, Seohee-shi,” I said and returned her bow.

Seohee glanced down the street where the girls had disappeared. “Those three show up almost every day. They’re huge fans of Taejun, Minseo, and Bryen. They’re sweet—unless you somehow cross them. Unfortunately, that part’s pretty easy.” She tilted her chin toward the man beside her. “Luckily, we have Sangbeom-shi here to keep things calm.”

The woman, dressed in business attire, must've noticed my bewilderment, because a spark of understanding flickered in her eyes. "This must all seem a little surreal. Next time, we'll have you come in through the garage. That is... if you end up working with us."

Surreal was the right word.

Running into those fans had felt like stepping onto a different planet. For the first time, it truly sank in: I was entering his world. A world of idols—loved, protected, claimed by thousands. Watched constantly. Judged endlessly.

The K-Pop world was nothing like the classical music scene.

And just like that, the weight settled back onto my shoulders and I felt the worry grow. He and I were living in different worlds—again.

"Let's head up to the office," Seohee said, gesturing toward the entrance.

"The guys are expecting you."

I hesitated for just a moment, then quickly bowed to the security guard and followed her inside.

What was there to be afraid of? Things were different now. This was a chance—a real one. An opportunity. An adventure. And hopefully... a way to get my best friend back.

~ *Junyoung* ~

"HYUNG! I can't take it anymore!"

I spun around in my chair, turning away from the mixing console toward the sudden burst of outrage that just crashed into my studio without even knocking. I shot Bryen a sharp look, but the second I actually registered his expression, my annoyance faded.

Bryen, our second youngest, born and raised under the Australian sun, usually radiated that same warmth. He was quirky, upbeat, always brimming with energy—an ideal fit for his role as one of our main rappers. But right now? He seemed utterly miserable. One breath away from crumbling. Real anger was rare with Bryen. He felt deeply, sure—but he forgave quickly. Today, though, someone had clearly crossed a line.

I hit save on the project I'd been working on and swiveled back to face him fully. "What's going on? Tell me," I said gently, offering a smile meant to calm him down.

No matter how packed my schedule was, the members always came first.

That was the job. As the leader and the eldest in Millions, it was on me to make sure every single one of them was okay.

To listen, to guide, to protect.

We'd debuted under EW Entertainment six years ago. But when our contracts ran out, we walked. None of us had wanted to stay—not after the way we'd been mistreated. Overworked, silenced, dismissed.

We took a leap of faith and founded our own label.

It was messy at first. We didn't have the money, barely had the knowledge, and we didn't even know if we could keep our group name. But the courts ruled in our favor. The seven of us remained Millions.

We'd already built something strong before EW forced us into hiatus—punishment for me questioning their choices, for speaking out. But when we restarted under InVision, the fans—our Millionaires—came through for us.

A Million Beginnings, our first album as an independent group, had been more than a comeback. It was a declaration. We topped charts, won awards, proved we were still here—and staying.

We'd fought to reach this point. And I wasn't about to let any of that fall apart—not because we pushed ourselves too hard, not because we ignored the signs we once didn't have the freedom to act on.

EW's brutal pace and treatment had nearly broken us.

Not again. Never again.

That's why I kept an eye on them all. Listened closely. Stepped in when I had to.

Of course, there was the company to consider now, too. We were building something real, and responsibilities came with that. But these six guys? They weren't just my members. They were my brothers. We'd been through everything together. We shared a bond that was more important than any company. Family had to be protected.

...Well. Maybe not every family.

But this one? I'd protect with everything I had.

.....The thought brought a dull ache to my chest.

"Hyung, look at me!" Bryen whined, pulling me from my spiraling thoughts. I pushed them aside immediately—he needed me present.

"Alright, Byungwoo-ya, let it out. What happened?" I asked, easing my tone with a steady smile.

He stomped over to the couch, plopped down with theatrical flair, and pointed accusingly at his own head. "My hair, Hyung! I can't live like this!"

I blinked, only now registering the change. The wild mint green he'd worn for weeks was gone, replaced by a soft brown. "It's brown," I said, more to myself than to him.

Bryen narrowed his eyes. “Brilliant deduction, Sherlock.”

I barely managed to bite back a laugh. “I really don’t get the drama,” I offered, careful not to fuel his dramatic fire.

With a sigh that could have rivaled a melodrama actor, Bryen sprawled across the couch and flung an arm over his face. “This lifeless shade is draining the very essence of who I am. It sparks no joy!”

“Oh, give me a break,” another voice chimed in from the doorway. Taejun, our charming main vocalist, entered the studio, followed by Siwoo.

Taejun perched himself on the couch’s armrest and gently ruffled Bryen’s hair. “You’re rocking it!”

Siwoo, our jack-of-all-trades, talented dancer, rapper and singer, sank into the chair beside mine.

Bryen batted Taejun’s hand away with a grumble. “Brown suits you, Hyung. You too, Siwoo-hyung. But me? I look like a desolate tree about to wither away.”

I glanced at the trio. He had a point—different styles, yes, but they were all rocking the same chocolate-brown hue.

“That’s poetic,” Taejun said with a smirk. “Mind if I steal that line for a song?”

Bryen didn’t even blink. “Go ahead. Nothing matters anymore. Life is meaningless. Name it ‘The Fall of Bryen’ if you want.”

That broke us. Taejun and Siwoo chuckled. I did too. Even in despair, Bryen had flair.

“I despise every single one of you,” he groaned into a cushion.

“No, you don’t,” Siwoo shot back with a grin. “You’re just color-cranky.”

If Bryen’s glare had been a weapon, Siwoo would have disintegrated on the spot.

I figured it was time to step in and redirect. “Okay, real talk. Did I miss the memo on brown being the new trend? Why the collective dye job?”

“Mr. No,” Bryen muttered, still face-down.

Of course.

I leaned back in my chair, the tension creeping in again. “Let me guess—he picked the color?”

“Not just picked it,” Bryen grumbled, sitting up now. “He enforced it. Apparently, he’s going for a more ‘refined, uniform image’ or whatever nonsense. If your rich family wants to take over our lives, could they at least hire someone with taste?”

I didn’t respond.

I couldn’t.

It had only been three months since everything changed. Since Mr. Noh—Bryen’s infamous ‘Mr. No’—swooped in and took over InVision. And the worst part? It was my fault.

I never should’ve asked my parents for help. Never should’ve given them even a sliver of control again. I should’ve known better.

Siwoo must’ve caught the shift in my expression because his gaze locked onto mine with quiet determination. “Hyung, it’s okay. We’ll figure it out. We’re a team, remember?”

His words grounded me. I nodded slowly, and a relieved smile tugged at the corners of his mouth.

Mr. Noh, with his smug confidence and relentless micromanaging, was a constant reminder of what I’d lost—what I’d willingly handed over. He was the living embodiment of my parents’ betrayal. But this time, I wasn’t fighting them alone. I had my brothers at my side. And together, we’d push back.

“Mr. No claims a grown-up, sophisticated style will attract more fans during the tour,” Bryen said, spitting the words like poison. “Apparently, the concept I pitched was too wild and inappropriate. *Bloody idiot! It was bold. It was modern. The man has the fashion sense of a soggy toast!*” His fury made him switch languages mid-sentence, ranting in English and Korean like a man possessed.

“I’m sorry, Byungwoo-ya. I’ll talk to him,” I offered, guilt blooming in my chest again. Everyone at InVision had been feeling the pressure since the takeover. We suddenly had more staff than we could deal with—assistants, consultants, image directors—all handpicked by Mr. Noh with my parents’ blank check behind him.

Taejun’s lips twitched in dry amusement. “Better ask Seohee to talk to him. She has a way of convincing him with facts and numbers. If you go, he’ll just say what he always says: No.”

I sighed, conceding with a nod. Taejun wasn’t wrong. Sure, he might’ve been utterly smitten with Seohee, seeing as the two of them secretly dated for months now, but his admiration wasn’t misplaced. Reassigned as our VP of Business after a reorganization, Seohee had managed to keep the company afloat with a steady hand and a sharp mind. She took care of the mess better than I ever could.

I’d failed at keeping my parents at bay. Failed at keeping Mr. Noh out.

Taejun suddenly stood, his voice laced with excitement. “Speaking of Seohee—she’s picking up the violinist I want for our tour! She’s phenomenal, and the orchestral remix is going to be insane. Just imagine it—strings building into the beat drop. It’s going to be magic!”

I forced the bitterness down and met his excitement with a steady nod.

His enthusiasm was genuine, and even with everything weighing us down, moments like this reminded me why we were still fighting.

From the side, something white and fast caught my attention. I leaned away just in time to avoid a crumpled paper missile. I turned to Siwoo, who was already smirking at his failed attempt.

“One day, I’ll hit you,” he said with mock menace.

“Keep dreaming,” I shot back.

Unfazed, he leaned forward. “You coming to the meeting, or do you have another one of your royal engagements? Are there champagne glasses to clink? Ribbons to cut? More headlines to star in, Your Highness?” His tone was playful, but I caught the worry under the surface.

I rubbed the back of my neck. “Don’t remind me! But no, not today. Today, I’m meeting the violinist Taejun is so in love with, and I’ll be complaining about Mr. No with Bryen. Today, I’m Junyoung—the leader of Millions and CEO of InVision. Not Kang Junyoung, heir to Do Set or son of the next mayor of Seoul.”

Bryen sat up and clapped like a child at a magic show. “Perfect! I hate Mr. No!” I smiled. “Same.”

Siwoo rolled his eyes, but his grin gave him away. “Wonderful. Let’s go find Seohee then.”

“Where are the others?” I asked, glancing at Taejun.

“Minseo and Eunkyu are practicing choreo—Eunkyu’s still struggling with a few steps,” he said with a fond shake of his head. “And Aron’s hiding in Seohee’s office. He uploaded a throwback pic of Bryen with the mint hair and edited it to look extra wild. Then he asked the fans to vote on whether Bryen should keep his colorful style to spite Mr. Noh.”

I snorted.

That was so Aron.

“Let’s just say,” Taejun added, “the results aren’t exactly in Mr. Noh’s favor. And since Seohee’s office is the one place Mr. Noh doesn’t storm into uninvited, Aron’s taken shelter there.”

Bryen shot to his feet. “I must rescue my bestie! He shall not face the evil dragon alone—not after defending beauty, truth, and love!” With a dramatic flourish, he rushed out of the studio.

We all got up to follow him, chuckling.

SABRINA T. RUDOLPH

“By the way, Hyung,” Taejun said, nudging me with his elbow, “don’t go around saying I’m in love with this violinist—especially not in front of Seohee. No way I’m letting my girl think anyone could ever compete.”

I laughed, slinging an arm around his shoulder as we walked. “Got it. No one’s in love with the violini—” I stopped mid-sentence. My steps froze.

Standing a few meters ahead in the hallway was a woman I hadn’t seen in years. A woman I thought I’d never see again.

“Mi-ya?”

The name slipped out before I could stop myself.

