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PROLOGUE 'TAXI TROUBLES'

LATE AFTERNOON - TOWN STREET RAINY

MC

(thinking)

You have to be kidding me.

Clutching my portfolio to my chest and using my free hand in a poor attempt to cover my head from the onslaught of rain, I dash down the street and look for an overhanging roof or café. Despite how terrible the day had been, it did seem like a bit of luck was sent my way in the form of a nearby taxi.

Quickly, and without much thought, I open the taxi's door and slide in.

LATE AFTERNOON - INSIDE TAXICAB

MC

It's really coming down out there, huh?

I lift my head to the rearview mirror and catch the eyes of the taxi driver. He stares at me with a quizzical, raised brow. His gaze then slowly drifts to my right. I turn, following his gaze to see that an attractive businessman had already occupied the backseat. I can feel my cheeks begin to warm from the embarrassment.

MC

I'm so sorry! It was raining so hard
I couldn't see the occupied sign on the
Taxi.

My salvation was nothing more than a mirage. I move my hand to open the door when in quick succession, a flash of lightning rips through the sky, and a clap of thunder sounds so loud that it feels like it came from the next street over. I instinctively flinch away from the window.

MC
(embarrassed)
I'm sorry but...

I slowly turn my gaze back to the businessman with a sheepish grin.

MC
...can we share?

JEREMY NAOTAKE
(annoyed)
Do as you wish.

The man waves his hand at me dismissively and quickly turns back to the documents on his lap. The man gives an audible sigh and pinches the bridge of his nose. As handsome as he was, his annoyance was palpable and a bit off-putting.

TAXI DRIVER
So where are you heading to, miss?

MC
The corner of Bleeker and Main.

The Taxi driver nods and slowly pulls onto the main road. I look down at my portfolio and give a sigh of relief. Thankfully, the portfolio seemed to be okay. I open the black, leatherbound book and rifle through my CV and writing samples. For a moment, I thought I felt eyes on me. I lift my head, turning to the man next to me who is busily looking through his own documents.

MC
(thinking)
Why does he look so familiar?

JEREMY NAOTAKE
Can I help you?

MC

(embarrassed)
O-oh, sorry! I wasn't trying to stare.

JEREMY NAOTAKE
Well, you were.

MC
(thinking)
*Maybe it would be best to just keep my
eyes averted and my mouth closed for the
the remainder of the cab ride.*

Despite his sharp words, and against my best interest, I find myself still trying to place his face. He looked rather young, far too young to be this busy with work. Maybe he worked at a hedge fund, or maybe he was the son of some big-time cooperation.

I look outside and realize my apartment building is coming up, only a block away at this point. This nightmare of a day is finally, almost over.

JEREMY NAOTAKE
I really cannot afford any further delays.

I turn away from the window and blink in shock as suddenly, and in one swift movement, the man next to me leans forward and hands the taxi driver a new address.

TAXI DRIVER
The Takoha Hotel. Yes, sir.

MC
The Takoha Hotel? That's on the
opposite side of town!

JEREMY NAOTAKE
(annoyed)
Do I need to remind you that this taxi
was already occupied when you entered it?

MC
Well... that's true, but...

MC
(thinking)
*There is no way that I will be able to
afford the taxi fare back home after
traveling across town.*

MC
Wait!

JEREMY NAOTAKE
(Intrigued)

MC
My apartment is just up ahead. How about
the taxi just slows down at the next
street, the car doesn't even have to stop.
I can open the door and just Tuck and Roll!
You won't lose even a second of your
precious time.

JEREMY NAOTAKE
(laughs)
Haha! Yeah! The girl who was too scared of a
bit Of thunder is going to "Tuck and roll" from a
moving vehicle.

MC
(annoyed)
First off, I wasn't scared, I was just startled!

MC
I am serious though. Do you know how
expensive the ride back is going to be?

MC
(thinking)
*Of course, he doesn't know how expensive
the taxi ride back is going to be. The
watch he's wearing could probably pay*

my rent for the next year. Heck, I am sure that his haircut alone costs more than my net worth.

JEREMY NAOTAKE

You're worried about the cost?

The man finally gives me his full attention. It was at that moment, with a full-on look, that I finally recognized his face.

MC

(shocked)

Wait a second, I knew you looked familiar! You're Jeremy Naotake! The Captain of the Criminal Affairs Division! Your face was just in the newspaper last week!

JEREMY NAOTAKE

(annoyed)

Well, if you know that, then you know how valuable my time is. If you're really worried about the taxi fare, I will take care of your return trip.

MC

(thinking)

This is my chance! The Captain of the Criminal Affairs Division was sitting in front of me. Maybe this taxi was a stroke of luck after all.

MC

How about we make a deal?

JEREMY NAOTAKE

(perplexed)

MC

Time is money, right? You're stuck in this cab for the next 15 minutes. Let me use this time to pitch myself to you

as a future employee in your division.
I'm a journalist, fresh out of
university. A poor, broke girl with not
even two pennies to rub together.

JEREMY NAOTAKE

(amused)

Go on.

MC

I promise I can be the best employee
that you have ever seen. And you know
what the best part is? I am 100% single.
No boyfriend to take me away from work.
I can be just as much of a workaholic as
you are, if not more if you give me the
chance.

JEREMY NAOTAKE

(amused)

An impromptu pitch meeting in the back
of a taxi. A bit unorthodox, but I won't
lie, I'm intrigued.

MC

You should be. By the time we arrive at The
Takoha Hotel, I promise that you will want to
hire me.

JEREMY NAOTAKE

And If I don't want to hire you?

MC

(Smiles)

Oh no, trust me, you'll want to hire me.