

# Chapter Four

## Leo's Lament



### Part 1

Salena's Family Room – Sims players

**S**LEEP . . . even a few hours . . . finally overtook the small band of fangirls who with the sun peeking up over the treetops, was rising to meet another day with their bias's in Blossom Town.

Jane folded her comforter neatly, glancing over to see the time, on the computer screen she had failed to shut down. It was 6:30 a.m. She was the first one up, even after drifting off around 3:00. Smiling inwardly remembering her good fortune, that HoyJi had still agreed to sit Junior that evening for she and Leo to have a quiet night at home, she stared into the screen, quietly contemplating the rigid routine she was so accustomed to following each morning at home.

Mimicking it, she began relentlessly popping things into the ‘Que’ for her avatar to do immediately upon getting up . . . showering, brushing teeth, checking appearance, finally heading downstairs to make coffee and get donuts. Junior would be screaming for breakfast soon, and another crazy day in Sims World would be upon her before she knew what was happening. She didn’t need the others playing along, just to start the day.

Sighing quietly to herself, she was determined to hurry and get ‘her own self’ ready, or she would be futzing around in Salenas’ tiny kitchenette making coffee, when the girls got up and she would miss little Junior’s whines for cereal, along with Leo’s grumbling that she wasn’t paying attention again, (just like last night).

Thirty minutes later, her thoughts focused on her ‘real’ life outside of Leo, Junior and Blossom Town, she tiptoed back through (and over), the still sleeping bodies around her, slipping down gingerly at the computer, balancing her coffee cup in one hand, plate of donuts in the other.

She often wondered what it would be like to have a family of her own . . . maybe even a feisty little three year old who rummaged through the garbage for snacks, deposited his wet diaper on the neighbors’ lawn in the wee hours of the morning and talked to his pet monkey.

But . . . in order to have that, she had to have a Leo, first. She toyed with the idea of liking someone at work like Hyoji, however if she did get on that train, her man of choice would be the only employee who stared over her head every time she passed by, and didn’t even care to know her name.

In lieu of that . . . agonizingly shy, she gave up putting herself out there and continued to withdraw . . . now relatively uninterested in relationships in general, knowing it was probably because she had watched her mom suffer through a painful divorce, and her much older brother run through women like water, never bothering to stop and take a long drink. (And, so her pathetic life story went.)

Then seemingly out of nowhere, along came KPOP, and the shared GIF on a website of a soft spoken, dark-haired Leo, clutching a toddler in his arms, a warm, possessive smile curving across his lips. Immediately she had fallen in love. And her Sims fantasy life began, where the disillusionment of her own life had ended. She knew Leo would never disappoint her. Now she was at least content, being alone.

The note she had written right after arriving, stuffed in her backpack popped to the forefront of her wandering thoughts. “NEVER SETTLE”. Maybe someday it would help her gain the courage to take a step toward happiness in real life.

“Wow, you’re up already Junior . . .” She muttered.

Reaching down to continue play, the half-eaten donut still clasped between her fingers, she knew there was only a short time left to feed, change, cuddle, dress him, and still finish cleaning up the kitchen (she didn’t want rotten food like poor Ravi had sadly contended with the day before). Her Que was filling up faster and faster, and before she realized what she had done, a ‘Challenge’ popped up and instead of hitting ‘Clean up’, she absent-mindedly hit the ‘Challenge’.

“Dammit.” She cursed softly under her breath, through a mouth full of food. “I don’t have time for Challenges. What the heck is it anyway?” Looking at the details, she had to admit, maybe it was worth taking. After all, her GOLD was to raise five kids to adulthood, and she was trying for ‘Parent of the Year’. If she could win the ‘Challenge’, Junior would get a free spot in the prestigious Preschool she and Leo had been stressing over putting him in. It was worth a try.

Letting the game play on without her, she took her coffee, and with the details rolling around in her head, lumbered upstairs, and outside into the early morning sunlight to figure out how to make it happen, and get Leo on board to help her.

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**Y**URI’S phone buzzed incessantly beside her. Snagging it sleepily, she couldn’t remember if she had set an alarm last night before dropping down on her sleeping bag or not. Staring into the screen with blurry eyes, she watched the text disappear, leaving the name of the sender.

*Mom. Shit.* And the text bubble read ‘5 NEW MESSAGES’. *What in God’s name could she possibly want? Why couldn’t she understand that this weekend was important? This wasn’t her first time to be gone for the weekend, to engross herself in her Sims obsession. Being semi-out-of-touch while playing was a given. Was it a damned emergency?* Scrolling through the last few messages they were all random comments, (that only her crazy mother would think were important).

Heaving a frustrated sigh, she stared across the sea of female bodies around her, observing them beginning to stir, stretch, yawn, and search for their own phones.

Shahrul who was already awake, sat perched against the end of the sofa, swiping her eyes with the back of her hand, looking as if she was crying. Texting on her cell rapidly, she gave up, banging it on the coffee table next to her, and rising in anger, muttered . . . “Stupid son-of-a-bitch, that’s the last time I bother to tell him anything.” And not caring who she shoved and stepped on along the way, stomped off toward the bathroom.

“What’s up with her?” Salena rolled out of the way, eyes following as her friend disappeared out of the room. “Boyfriend troubles again?” she asked, shrugging her shoulders at Yuri. “I don’t know why she puts up with him. It’s no wonder she’s so caught up in KPOP suddenly. I think he gives her a hard time about everything.”

Yuri, texting her mom quickly, heard Salena’s questions about Shahrul, but didn’t feel much pity for the sneaky girl, who had already lied more than once about not only her Sims relationship with Hongbin, but her real life relationship as well.

“Don’t know, don’t much care.” She sniffed, scooting back under her sleeping bag, attempting to warm her cold feet. “Got my own problems.”

“Like what?” Salena laid across the floor, poking her sour-faced friend in the leg. “Your mom? Brothers? Is it that bad? You don’t talk about your home life much.” Eyes adjusting to the slivers of light

streaming in through the slit in the curtains at the high windows, she squinted at Yuri questionably, hoping she would open up a little bit.

Yuri's body moved slightly under the covers as she shifted from side-to-side attempting to get comfortable.

“It's not a big deal, really. I'm getting along okay. I've got school to keep me busy, and now I have Sims and Ravi. Geez, what more could a girl ask for?”

Hiding her sad eyes from Salena, she hoped that after finally responding to her mom's plea to hurry home, because without money for a babysitter, she was the only one left to stay with her younger brother, that maybe her wretched life would just disintegrate in a puff of smoke, allowing her to meld into Sims World, have Ravi's baby and live, 'Happily-Ever-After'. *Yeah . . . like that was ever going to happen!*

“Humph, that doesn't sound very convincing.” Salena quipped.

“I said everything's fine. Can we just leave it at that?”

Yuri buried her face in the warm underside of the sleeping bag hoping that would give Salena the hint she didn't want to talk anymore.

“Okayyyy. Just trying to help.”

Her feelings somewhat bruised, and certain that Yuri was struggling at home, Salena turned her attentions elsewhere in the room. By this time, Shahrul had returned, and the other girls were chattering around them,

rolling up their blankets, sleeping bags and bedding. Seemed the only one missing was Jane.

“I smell coffee! Mmmm. That’s Jane’s M.O. Anyone seen her?” HyoJi asked, digging in her backpack for a toothbrush. “Did she sleep outside last night? I saw her go out for a little while, and it was late.”

“Leo probably kicked her out of bed when he found out she let Junior wander the streets alone.” Shahrul turned, finally chuckling, curious herself as to the whereabouts of the loner of the group.

“Shahrul. Lay off her. She’s not that bad.” Salena hoped that the dawn of a new morning wouldn’t bring more back-biting and arguing amongst the girls. If so . . . she had had enough! She would call off the rest of the weekend, and send everyone home. *Obviously KPopping in Sims World was ‘not’ for the faint-hearted.*

“I didn’t say she was. She’s just a little on the ‘strange’ side.” Shahrul, forced her eyes down to her cell phone one last time before shutting it off and burying it deep into the sides of her backpack.

“Hey . . . she’s the one with the best relationship of all of us playing. I don’t think I’d diss her too bad. Not only did she snag Leo, but she’s pregnant AGAIN. She must be doing something right. If nothing else she knows how to get him into the ‘Woo-Hoo’ bed.” Azhia piped up, willing to stand up for the absentee Jane. “Wish I could get some guy in real life to treat me the way Leo treats her. You would think she was made of glass.”

“You probably DON’T wanna talk to me about guys in REAL LIFE right now.” Shahrul barked, looking away as if she were about to bolt into the other room again.

*She knew at one point she had told them all it was ‘just a game’ but, her confidence level was at an all-time low, and despite what the others thought of her, it mattered what her circle of school friends said, and how both sets of parents would react if they all knew how she really felt about her boyfriend. Game or not, obsession or not . . . she DID need a Hongbin or a Ravi in her life. Someone fun, outgoing, and personable. All she had right now was a possessive, disruptive, asshole.*

Azhia, couldn’t help but notice that when Shahrul had started game play she had been one of the most shameless and persistent players. Now, just because of a texting war with her boyfriend, she was suddenly backing off. (Making them all look like what they were doing was silly and irrelevant.) It didn’t make sense. Pointing an accusing finger at the young woman’s face, she confronted her openly.

“Come on Shahrul. You can’t tell me you aren’t as obsessed as we are. You wouldn’t be here if you weren’t. I know about your boyfriend. You of all people should know no guy ever measures up to the ‘fantasy’.”

“So what if they don’t. It’s obvious the rest of you feel that way too, ‘cause no one but me has a steady boyfriend do they?” Shahrul snapped back, leaned into the wall at the far side of the room alone, unhappy at being challenged to divulge the truth.

“Well, I’m perfectly satisfied being alone for the most part, I just hope it won’t always be like this.” Natalia piped up.

Hearing their conversation over the music in her ears, she sat up flipping out her earbuds, wanting to be included. “I’ve only had one boyfriend, and he treated me really shitty. I’m sort of afraid to even try anymore. Even though I’m new at all this, I think I’d rather play Sims and pretend. That’s sort of lame huh?”

“I don’t know Natalia, is it? That seems to be the question of the day suddenly. Why don’t we ask our Mrs. Leo . . . Jane? She seems to be the most obsessed of us all.” Salena nodded toward the door, seeing Jane creep in quietly hoping not to be noticed.

“Ask me what?” Stopping dead in her tracks, Jane didn’t know why she was suddenly on the witness stand, but whatever it was, she didn’t care, these were her friends and she was an open book.

“Is it lame to spend so much time with our pretend husbands and boyfriends playing Sims? You know . . . not get out there in the real world to have a life or a relationship?” Natalia asked, kicking her feet randomly against the end of the fireplace.

“Lame?” Jane’s eyes rose instantly. “I have a real life, don’t we all? So why is it lame to have a fantasy life? Everyone does. And being my Sims Jane, married to Leo lets me practice being someone else. Maybe even someone better. So when I DO find that right guy in my life, hopefully I won’t be as bashful. Don’t you think so?” Turning to Salena,

the forerunner of the group, surely 'she' would understand what was trying to be said.

Salena nodded, having to agree. All of them were a tad on the 'reclusive' side in their personal lives.

"Yes of course I do. Look at HyoJi." She rolled her eyes over toward Hyo, biting her fingernails as she stared off into space, remembering her Sims kiss with Hyuk last night. "It's no secret you like a guy at work, right Hyo?"

"Yep. And bet I can finally get the nerve up to ask him out now, after confessing to Hyuk." HyoJi announced, smiling timidly. "I think it's sort of like role-playing when you're an actor or actress. Once you do it a few times, it isn't so hard. "You'll find someone Natalia. Then turning to Shahrul, she wagged a finger at the dark-haired girl, "And know what Shahrul? You should just kick your nasty piece of shit boyfriend to the curb. It's no wonder you're drooling over Ravi, AND Hongbin. Obviously, he doesn't know how to treat you."

"I know." It was hard to deny that she was right. Shahrul swung her head from one side of the room to the other seeing the nodding of heads in agreement with HyoJi.

"Well, I think we should vow NOT to give up until we find someone as amazing as our Bias's. What do you think girls?" An unusually confident Jane barked out. "I wrote on a piece of paper when we started,

‘NEVER SETTLE’. And I’m going to stick to that. There’s a Leo out there for me. I just know it. And by God I’m going to find him!”

For all her understanding only moments ago, Shahrul’s on-again, off-again, emotional roller coaster ride was already racing downhill and into oblivion.

“None of us are going to find anyone if we keep sitting here playing make believe.” Slinking back over to her computer she was convinced she had joined the ranks of what they were all suffering from . . . the disorder known as KPOP Obsession . . . in its worst form. Debilitating, all-consuming obsession. Not allowing them to act rationally on any level.

*Yes, she wanted the disgusting piece of meat she called a boyfriend to go jump in the lake, but by the same token, she knew life with Hongbin, Ravi, or any one of the other VIXX members, could very well be no different in real life. Why were they romanticizing them as if they were? Truth be told, they probably burped, farted, picked their noses, stunk when they were sweaty, and cussed up a blue streak when they were mad like every other guy in the world.*

*Then what was the draw? The voices? The bodies? The bedroom eyes urging every girl in the world to strip or be stripped? Unable to hide it any longer, she was as smitten as the rest of them. Maybe more so . . . hers was the ‘silent’ obsession. The worst kind. The promise of a childhood ‘Savior’ on a white horse taking on the form of a KPOP Idol, rushing to her side in times of stress. The current boyfriend had never been the Prince to her Cinderella. Just a jock, with broad shoulders, a toothy smile,*

*and great lips. From that . . . and that alone, their relationship had taken on a life of its own.*

*She wanted the fairy tale just as badly as the rest of them did. What girl in their right mind didn't?*

“Hell, I’m sorry.” Shahrul apologized sincerely, wringing her hands staring across the room into the wide-eyed, astonished faces of the others in front of her. “That was mean. I could sit here playing Sims to Idols all day just like the rest of you.”

“Well shit, I’d rather be doing that, than out getting rejected over and over again in the real world.” HyoJi interjected, watching fascinated as her avatar twirling merrily fawning over memories of Hyuk.

Salena rose up grinning, “Wonder if we could just WISH them all here? Wouldn’t that freak everyone out?”

“Yeahhh, what have you been smoking?” Yuri chuckled, scratching her head lazily. “This is the closest we’re gonna get to VIXX in our entire lifetime. Play like your life depends on it ‘cause when this is over it’s back to reality.” She added.

### Leo’s House – Jane and Leo

**D**INNER had been superb. The well-cooked Korean beef had hit the spot. Leo had to admit, his grilling skills were still on point. Feeling Jane behind him as he scraped the top of the grill he

couldn't help but smile. She was amazing. Except for a few minor catastrophes over the last week or so, she was a caring thoughtful mother, and dutiful, sexy, loving wife. He couldn't have done better! Even though his plate was more than full, with another baby on the way, he had to admit he was a lucky young man.

Tonight they were finally getting some well needed alone time.

“Dishes done?” he whispered, hoping she was finished with clean up so they could take their ‘evening’ to another level.

“Of course.” Snuggling against his broad back, smelling deliciously like hickory smoke, after shave and laundry detergent, Jane just wanted to be done with food and move on. “Now what?” She asked hesitantly.

“Hot tub?” He questioned barely turning around as her fingers grazed up the curve of his muscular chest. “Aue natura’l?” It wouldn't be too long and she would be too pregnant to do the hot tub. They needed to take advantage tonight!

“Mmmm, that sounds like a plan.” She agreed, squeezing him tighter. He was the best thing that had ever happened to her, whether quiet, pensive or just sexy . . . life with Leo and Junior was never dull.

“Then drop ‘um here Mrs.” He cooed, still not bothering to turn around. He knew she would comply. She loved a good suggestive adventure. “And no phones either. Hand it over.” With his palm out he snickered as she reluctantly gave up her cell, reaching for the zipper of her already too tight jeans.

“Leoooo . . . what if HyoJi calls about Junior?” She whined knowing that Leo Junior was often a force to be reckoned with.

“I’ve already told her we’re temporarily ‘incapacitated’.” Finally facing her hooded eyes, he helped tug her jeans away from her flaring hips lovingly, letting his lips graze her neck on the way down.

“Oh my God. You might as well have told her we were going to DO IT!” She screeched swatting the top of his head playfully. “She isn’t THAT stupid you know.”

“Never said she was. But, we’re covered for emergencies. She said she’d send Hyuk down here if something went wrong. She’s just down the street. Don’t panic. After all, you let the poor boy wander over there in the middle of the night alone. What could possibly go wrong with supervision?”

“Okay, okay. Point made. Can we NOT talk about that right now?” Stepping away from the crumpled jeans at her feet, she turned away from him while slipping the wife-beater (borrowed earlier), over her head. “Race ya.” She shouted, taking off across the back yard in her underwear, unhooking the back of her bra as she ran.

Leo dropped his pants alongside his wife’s taking off across the yard after her in a mad dash for the warm waters of the already steamy tub. It was no secret what ‘he’ was after tonight!

Catching her by the ends of her long hair right before she skidded to a stop at the edge, he scooted up behind her, lifting her easily and stepping down under the wall of white bubbles.

### Outside Hongbin's Apartment – Shahrul and Natalia

“I can't believe you talked me into doing this Shahrul . . .” Natalia hissed, tugging at the bottom of her friend's black shirt in front of her. “You need therapy.”

“Yeah, well if I need therapy then so do you, ‘cause you're right behind me.” Shahrul whispered back, staring up at the darkened windows of Hongbin's garage apartment from the small strip of grass between the houses.

“Are you sure he said he wasn't going to be home anytime soon?” Natalia asked, wiping her sweaty palms on her thighs as she scoped the area for any signs of an oncoming vehicle, or neighbors walking dogs.

“I texted him. He said he would be practicing until after midnight.” Shahrul scanned the tall fence, her face quirked as she contemplated whether or not she and Natalia could make it over.

“God I hope you're right. I don't know why you do such stupid stuff anyway. You had to know that writing a ‘confession’ letter to Ravi was only going to get you in trouble down the road. Now, it's laying in the middle of Hongbin's living room. So stupid.” Flicking the back of her



friends head, she backed up as an aggravated Shahrul spun around quickly, her eyes blazing.

“Listen . . . either you’re gonna shut up and come with me, or we’re both going down when Yuri finds out about the letter. I WILL tell her you knew all about it from the beginning. Hongbin and I can try to have a relationship, if you’ll just stop blubbering and help me GET TO THE DAMNED EVIDENCE that says otherwise.”



“Okay . . . okay. But, I don’t know if I can make it over that fence. And doesn’t that go into Leo’s back yard? What if they’re home?”

“OH SHIT. There isn’t a light on in the place. And it’s already 9:00. If they’re home they’re putting Junior to bed. He’s only three for heaven’s sake. Follow me, I’ll help you up . . . you can go first.”

“Why do I have to go first?”

Now Natalia was more than worried. They were climbing over a massive wooden fence, dressed all in black like a couple of damned ninjas, (that was Shahrul’s idea), with no earthly idea how to ‘break-in’ to Hongbin’s apartment to recover a ridiculous love letter that should have never been written in the first place.

“Because you talk too much.” Shahrul barked, cupping her hands to allow Natalia to step up, and grab the top of the fence.

Crossing herself and saying a tiny prayer, Natalia hiked up one leg, feeling herself being hoisted up with great difficulty, only to drop butt first on the other side, directly into one of Jane's prized flower beds.

"FUCK!" She shouted loudly, scrambling to her feet, clamping one hand over her mouth, as she realized what she had just done.

"SHhhhhh . . ." She heard from the other side. "Damn that was loud enough to wake the freaking dead."

"Sorry." Leaning into a crack in the wood, she peered into Shahrul's frowning face. "That hurt. Who's gonna help you over now?"

"I don't need help. You just go unlock the side gate for me. There's an outside stairs right inside. Go on."

Shooing her away, Shahrul took off down the length of the fence, stopping ducking behind the bushes at the side of the large gate. *It was obvious Natalia would never be good spy material. She didn't have the stomach for it!*

#### Leo's House – Jane and Leo

**“D**ID you hear that?” Jane cocked her head to one side, certain she had heard cussing over the loud din of the bubbling hot tub around her.

“Hear what?” Leo leaned his head forward, curling one arm around Jane's bare chest. With lips ready and waiting . . . he hoped she wasn't

stalling. The up's and down's of pregnancy made everything he did, a quick race to the finish line.

“I could've sworn I just heard the “F” word from right there on the other side of the bushes.” Now rising up out of the water, she paused listening. The sound of the bubbles still surged around them, drowning out anything else that might otherwise have been heard.

“I didn't hear anything.” Leo reached for her waist, dragging her back against him. “Now, where were we?” he growled seductively. “I think I was about to do this . . .”

Wheeeeeoooo – Wheeeeeooo – Wheeeeeooo –

“What the hell!” Jumping away from Jane toward the side of the round tub, Leo started to climb out disgustedly. “It's that f'ng alarm in the apartment again. I'll bet Hongbin left the window open, and that damned cat came in. Do you believe that shit?” Swinging around, he glared at Jane as if it were her fault that the alarm was going off, right in the middle of their ‘almost’ perfectly planned ‘encounter’.

“Well, be careful. Told you I heard something. You going like that?” Shrugging her shoulders, she chuckled at his naked backside, dripping water and twitching angrily. “You gotta go on the other side of the house to get to the stairs.”



She waited with bated breath to see what he would do, while the alarm kept singing over their heads, seemingly louder by the minute. If he didn't make a decision soon, the entire neighborhood would be at their front door!

“Damn.” Squinting into the dark yard, Leo spotted his jeans and underwear midway through where he had shrugged them off chasing her back toward the hot tub.

“Didn't you bring towels out?” Jane questioned him, now leaning both arms on the edge of the tub seeing if he would keep his cool or not.

“Hell no. It was sort of ‘spur of the moment’. Shit Jane. There's no one here but us for God's sake.”

Now he was getting flustered. By his own admittance he clearly had not thought through all the details. And one thing was for sure . . . without their phones to take a call from the alarm company, the allotted three minutes to stop and re-set had already passed. Now, it was time to panic.

“Get out of the tub, hurry.” Reaching down he tugged Jane from the water, dashing out to the middle of the large yard to snag their clothes. But, as she stepped up and over into the shadows, a spot light hit a swath across the grass large enough to light up a football stadium. With a naked Leo crouched smack dab in the middle, butt in the air, caught in the act of picking up his clothes.

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# Leo's Lament

## Part 2

**T**HE loud uncontrollable, boisterous laughter exploded around the family room at Jane and Leo's expense. Flushed and embarrassed, Jane stood up in front of the massive TV screen attempting to hide Leo's backside as he crouched in submissiveness to the glaring police light.

"DON'T LAUGH IT'S NOT FUNNY!" She begged the others whining . . . but sadly . . . it 'was' funny. Crumpling to the floor, clutching her sides she finally gave in to the mayhem. "Okay, okay, okay. It's hilarious." She squeaked between giggles, and snorts. "Did you see the look on his face when the light went on?"

Salena, tears forming in her eyes, covered her face in an attempt to stop herself from laughing. "Could you imagine if that happened in 'real' life? Oh God. Poor guy has enough trouble as it is. He would be in the news in a heartbeat."

As the others continued cackling about the hilarity of Jane and Leo's situation, Azhia (who had taken the brunt of their jokes when Ken stepped in fire ants at the lake) could be heard above the rest, pointing out the glaring truth that had been present in everyone's game play so far . . .

“Don’t you guys realize? It’s a ‘free will’ glitch. You can’t be naked in Sims . . .”

### Hongbin’s Apartment – Shahrul and Natalia

**T**HE window of Hongbin’s apartment was cracked slightly . . . just enough to allow the two intruders to lift it gently and slip into the darkness of the living room.

And then the ‘unthinkable’ happened. An alarm went off right over their heads, its loud piercing sound vibrating off the walls, and out the open window.

“OH SHIT! OH SHIT!” Natalia squalled, her voice exploding in surrender as she scurried over the small sofa, Shahrul directly at her heels. “NOW WHAT? I HATE YOU! OH SHIT. I’M GOING TO JAIL. MY LIFE IS OVER!”

Shahrul clamped one hand over her friends’ mouth, scanning the apartment for the keypad to the alarm. Hongbin had given her the code, but . . . typically in her haste to get on with the adventure she had completely forgotten she knew how to get in the easy way.

“Shut the hell up Natalia. I know the code. We have time.” Racing for the front door, she stopped suddenly. *Was it 4224? Or 4424? Or 2442? Fuck.* Punching all three separate combinations of fours and twos, it was clear . . . she wasn’t having any luck, and Natalia was more than freaking out.

“OH DEAR GOD! We’re waking up the whole neighborhood. I knew I shouldn’t have listened to you.” Natalia cried, wringing her hands as she curled up into a ball on the end of the couch.

“It’s fours and twos . . . something. I know it is. It’s gotta be one of these.” Shahrul stepped back, figuring they were already in trouble, she might as well turn on the light and text Hongbin, no doubt he AND Leo would have already gotten a call from the alarm company.

“I guess it’s too late.” She mumbled, staring into her cell phone at Hongbin’s contact information. “Better find the letter before everyone gets here.”

“You just go right ahead and do that ‘Miss-Criminal-Minds’ wanna be. You better hope Leo doesn’t let them haul us away for breaking and entering.” Natalia huffed angrily, biting one fingernail.

Spying the folded up piece of white paper just under the leg of the easy chair in front of her, Shahrul lunged for it, stuffing it in her pocket along with her phone.

“This is just BAD. BAD . . . BAD . . . BAD. No matter how you look at it.” Natalia clucked her tongue, sweat beginning to pour off her forehead, little wisps of her long hair curling about her temples.

“Alright already. I get it!” Shahrul shouted, arms flying about her in the air, noticing that all of a sudden the sound of tires could be heard in the driveway beneath them, as a bright beam of light shot up through the

open curtains. If it hadn't been so serious, it would have been ridiculous, (now it was perfectly clear that their time to reset the alarm was up.)

The police officer, hovered behind the car door watching the two darkened figures scurrying to get out of sight in the open window just above him. Not moving from his location and not certain what their status was, he wasn't about to take any chances.



“Got a 459 (Burglary) in progress . . .” He muttered quietly into his mic, hoping to get his partner out of his search of the back yard and back to the vehicle to help him.

“Well shit Bo, I got a 311 (Indecent Exposure) back here in the yard, an’ I think I need backup. Dude looks really unhappy right now.”



“10-4 Danny. Just hold tight. I’ll get another car out right quick.”

Calling for backup, Bo, figured if he didn't do something soon, he would lose his opportunity for that promotion he had been looking forward to, so lifting the microphone, he called to the upstairs window loudly . . .

“We know you're in there. Come out with your hands up.”

**T**HE gruff voice of a local Sims Town police officer radiated out into the quiet night air, no doubt, someone the girls even knew. Poor Natalia was mortified as she reached gingerly for the

doorknob, glancing behind her to find Shahrul. Then hands over their heads, they emerged together, squinting into the glaring spotlight.

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