

A Well-Planned Act of Desperation

Aoi walked into the bedroom, shot her husband in the head, and then sat down to drink her morning coffee. She quickly prepared her breakfast of *jok muu*—rice porridge with pork—and then glanced at her watch. *Damn*, she thought. *I'm going to be late.*

But first she had other things to attend to. Her nose curdled at the scent of urine and feces as she entered the bedroom. *So it's true*, she thought. *People really do shit themselves when they die.* She went into the bathroom and washed the blood and brains from her face and then undid the bun in her hair. Back in the bedroom, she pulled her husband's corpse into a tent bag that she had laid at the end of the bed, the blood, feces and urine smearing on the sheets as the body flopped into the bag. Aoi shook her head. *Even in death he makes such a mess!*

She dragged the improvised body bag into the restroom and then, grunting and groaning under the weight of her husband's body, pulled it from the bag and into the tub, the blood and brains spilling over the rim of the tub as she did so. After stripping off his boxers—that's all he slept in—she turned on the shower and thoroughly cleaned the body, whipping the gun wound in his head clean as well as his anus, penis and scrotum, humming as the blood, feces, and urine went down the drain. Of course, Aoi cleaned the bag, too--she had planned everything to the last detail, and she didn't want to drag around a sack that reeked of blood, piss, and feces.

At last she dragged her husband's weighty corpse out of the bathtub and back into the tent bag. As she zipped it closed, she smiled, not stopping for even a moment to indulge in one last, fleeting look at the face of the man whom she had once loved. *Now I never have to see that face again*, she thought, her heart fluttering. When she had bought the tent, she had been a happy, newly-wed bride, dreaming of their first camping trip. But Song made it clear that he hated camping. "Just go with your friends," he had said. "You know I hate the outdoors." That had been the beginning of Aoi's gradual slide into the cold reality of who her husband really was. If only it had been the end. She took off her old yoga clothes, threw them in the hamper, and got into her jogging outfit. Time to go for a drive with her beloved.

It was four a.m. and the winter moon still shined brightly as Aoi dragged the tent bag outside and towards the Honda Accord. The temperature was 10° C; it was much colder in the northern mountains of Chiang Mai than in the subtropical plains around Bangkok. Perhaps that's where it had all started to go wrong, she thought as she glanced around the neighborhood and threw open the car's trunk. What would an "uphill" girl from the North like her know about a sophisticated man from Bangkok? She quietly put the body into the trunk and closed the lid, still glancing about.

The sound of footsteps in the grass. Her heart stopped. Aoi flung around. Just a stray dog. Her heart relaxed, but then the dog started sniffing the trunk. "Go, go away!" she said, shooing the dog from the car. He whimpered and scampered away, his tail dropping between his legs. How skinny he was. *Poor thing*, Aoi thought as she got into the car. *I'll give him some food if he comes around later.*