

JiNA JEONG

Project Friendship



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Chapter 1



MISSING A FRIEND

“Hi, Halmoni!” Jina called. She had just walked into her grandmother’s house.

“Hello, Jina,” Halmoni said, giving her a hug.

Halmoni sat down on the couch.

Jina was surprised. Usually Halmoni was too busy to sit down. Whenever Jina came over, her grandmother was cooking, knitting, or gardening—anything but just sitting.

Jina sat next to her. “What have you been doing today?” Jina asked.

“Oh, this and that,” Halmoni said, waving her hand weakly in the air.

Jina waited. But her grandmother didn't say anything else.



Jina wasn't sure what to do with this quiet grandmother. "Halmoni, are you feeling okay?" Jina asked.

"Oh, yes, fine," Halmoni said.

Jina knew how to get Halmoni off the couch. "Do you have anything to eat?" Jina asked. "I'm starving."

Halmoni waved her hand toward the kitchen. "There's some kimchi jjigae in the fridge you can heat up," she said.

Jina stared. Had an alien taken over her grandmother? Halmoni never told Jina to fix her own food. She always made it for her! Plus, she knew Jina didn't like kimchi jjigae. The spicy soup was her dad's favorite, not Jina's.

“Uh, are you sure you’re okay?” Jina asked.

To Jina’s surprise, Halmoni’s eyes filled with tears.

“Halmoni!” Jina cried, taking her grandmother’s hand. “What’s wrong?”

“Oh, I’m just being silly,” Halmoni said. “It’s just that my friend Mrs. Yang is moving to Korea.”

“Oh, that’s too bad,” Jina said. She thought how sad she would be if one of her best friends moved away. “But you still have me! I’ll play with you!”

Halmoni hugged Jina. “Thank you, Jina. That is sweet of you.”

After dinner at home, Jina got out paper and a pencil. “I’m going to make a list of things to do with Halmoni,” she said to Mom and Dad.

Mom patted Jina on the head. “That sounds nice,” she said.

Jina wrote “Halmoni and Jina” on the paper.

“Hmm,” Jina said. “We could play a board game.” She wrote that down.

But playing board games was something Jina liked to do. What kind of things did Halmoni like to do with her friends?

She wrote:

Play mahjong

Watch Korean soap operas

Gardening

Now Jina had a plan.

The next week Dad dropped Jina off at her grandmother's house.

"Hi, Halmoni!" Jina said as she walked into the house. She pulled out her list of things to do. "Can we watch one of your Korean soaps today?"

Halmoni looked surprised. "I thought you didn't like my shows," she said.

Jina smiled. "It's okay. I want to watch one with you."

They sat on the couch together, and Halmoni turned on the TV. Jina watched as a man and a woman walked into an office. They stood talking. More people walked in. They talked some more.

Jina yawned. This show was so boring! There was no way it would cheer up her grandmother.

Jina kept watching. Her eyelids started to feel heavy. *I'll just rest my eyes for a second*, she thought.

Jina felt a hand stroking her hair. She popped her eyes open.

“You must be tired,” Halmoni said.

Jina blinked. “Oh, uh, no! I was just resting my eyes,” Jina said.

Halmoni smiled at her.

“Did Mrs. Yang like this show?” Jina asked.

Halmoni nodded. “Oh, yes. It was her favorite.” Her eyes filled with tears.

“Oh, Halmoni,” Jina said. Now she felt sad too.

The doorbell rang and Dad walked in. “Time to go, Jina,” he said after greeting Halmoni.

“Okay,” Jina said. She hugged her grandmother goodbye.

As they drove home, Jina thought about how sad Halmoni was. How was she going to help her feel happy again?

