



WHEN SILENCE LOVED LOUDEST

by: GINBERT N. DAVIS

"Kapag tumibok ang puso, wala ka na talagang magagawa kundi sundin ito."

It was just a line from an old love song playing on his grandmother's radio one Sunday afternoon while Gian helped her hang laundry under the Leyte sun. At the time, it sounded cheesy, like something you'd hear on AM radio before the news. He didn't think much of it. But the line stuck with him until someone came along and gave it meaning.

His name was Raffa.

Gian grew up in church. Raised by his Lola, who made sure he knew all the verses and worship songs by heart, he was the typical "church boy." Mornings were for devotionals, weekends filled with praise and worship practices and youth ministries, and summers spent at Bible camps. In a country like the Philippines, where Christianity was a deeply rooted way of life, Gian's upbringing was expected.

Raffa arrived one rainy August Sunday in Leyte. Gian remembered that day clearly: the soft hum of worship filling the chapel, the murmur of greetings at the entrance, and then Raffa walking in with a guitar strapped to his back. He was soaked from the rain but wore the brightest smile. He was introduced as the new guitarist for the worship team. Since Gian was already on keys, they were naturally paired together. It started with music, harmonies, rehearsals, and coordination, but eventually turned into something else.

They became inseparable. After every practice, they'd go to Burger Machine for a quick meal, Raffa always insisting, "Libre ko na." They shared stories, laughed at the smallest things, and over time built something that resembled comfort. Raffa began inviting Gian over for sleepovers, saying, "Layo ng bahay mo, dito ka na lang matulog." His room was small, barely big enough for two people on the bed, but he never minded. What he didn't know was how

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Gian lay awake each night, heart pounding, barely able to breathe. Raffa often hugged him in his sleep, arms draped around Gian like he was fragile and important.

That's when Gian knew he was in trouble. He tried to fight it. He tried to convince himself it was nothing, just a phase, something that could be prayed away. Every Sunday, he listened to sermons warning about "unnatural affection" and how love was meant only for a man and a woman. Gian believed it—or at least he tried. But the more he tried to bury his feelings, the deeper they sank.

It didn't help that Raffa talked about girls. He'd show photos from church conferences and camps, smiling as he asked, "Cute, 'no?'" Gian would nod and pretend he wasn't slowly falling apart inside. The boy he loved didn't love him back. And worse, he never could.

He never confessed his feelings. Not because he didn't want to, but because he was scared—scared of rejection, of judgment, of breaking the one friendship that felt like home. So he stayed quiet. He stayed close. He stayed in love.

Then college happened. Gian moved to Manila, and Raffa stayed in Leyte. The physical distance made everything feel heavier. Gian thought maybe the space would help him forget. But it didn't. In fact, it made everything feel more real. The silence between them grew. The messages became

less frequent. Still, Raffa never left his thoughts.

One night, alone in his dorm, Gian found a song, "Sagada" by Cup of Joe. He didn't expect it to hit so hard, but it did. The lyrics expressed everything he couldn't say out loud: the longing, the silence, the weight of love that had no place. Since then, he dreamed of going to Sagada. Not just for the view, but for the release. He imagined himself standing at the edge of a mountain, wind in his face, finally shouting Raffa's name. He wanted to scream everything he never got to say, telling the sky, "I loved him."

But things only got harder.

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Scrolling through social media one morning, Gian saw it—Raffa, smiling beside a girl. His arm was around her, and the caption was sweet, short, and sincere. He had a girlfriend now.

And just like that, Gian knew the door had never been open to begin with.

There was no dramatic breakdown. No anger. Just silence. A quiet ache. He didn't message, didn't confront, didn't do anything.

He simply added Sagada to his bucket list. Because maybe someday, when the ache becomes too heavy to carry, he'll go. He'll climb. He'll scream it all out. And maybe, just maybe, he'll finally be free.

He still questions God sometimes. Not out of defiance, but out of desperation. "Why would You let me feel something I was never allowed to act on?" He prays for answers, for peace, for understanding. But mostly, he prays to forget.

And now, whenever that old song plays again, he smiles bitterly.

Because he finally understands that sometimes,

Kapag tumibok ang puso, pwede mong hindi sundin ito, lalo na kung alam mong mali at masasaktan ka lang.

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