

# THE OLD WOMAN'S SECRET



The Noble Lady and the Forest Blossom

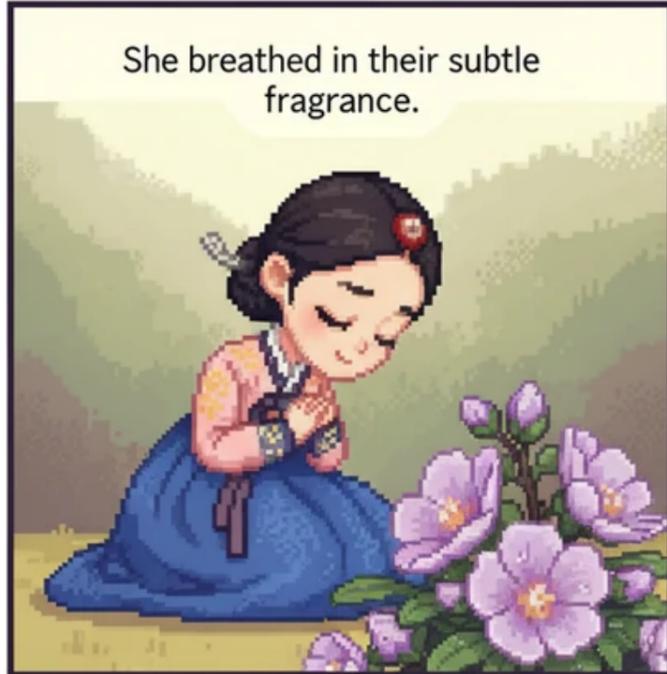
Smile Journey

A JOSEON FOLK TALE



End

Lady Yeon-hwa, dressed in a vibrant silk Hanbok of pale pink and deep blue, walks gracefully through a sun-drenched forest. The morning light catches the golden embroidery on her sleeves as she enjoys the peaceful morning air.



She pauses before a cluster of blooming Mugunghwa flowers, their petals a delicate shade of violet and white. She leans in to breathe in their subtle fragrance, feeling a deep connection to the beauty of her land.

Drawn by the flight of a colorful butterfly...



...Yeon-hwa wanders off the main path..



...and deeper into the emerald woods. The ancient trees tower above her.



...their leaves whispering in secrets the gentle breeze.



Drawn by the flight of a colorful butterfly, Yeon-hwa wanders off the main path and deeper into the emerald woods. The ancient trees tower above her, their leaves whispering secrets in the gentle breeze.



A Helping Hand

As the sun begins to dip below the horizon, Yeon-hwa looks around and realizes the familiar trail has disappeared. The forest now looks like an endless maze of long shadows and twisting roots.



A cold wind rustles the leaves, and the once-friendly forest now feels strange and intimidating. She calls out for help, but her voice only echoes back to her through the dense, silent trees.



Overwhelmed by fear and exhaustion, the noblewoman sits at the foot of a giant oak tree and begins to weep. Her tears fall onto her beautiful silk dress as she wonders if she will ever find her way home.



Suddenly, the sound of a soft footstep on dry leaves makes her look up in surprise. An elderly woman with a gentle face and a basket of forest herbs emerges from the gathering mist.



The old woman kneels beside her and offers a warm, comforting smile that reaches her eyes. She tells Yeon-hwa not to cry and explains that the forest only hides the way from those who are afraid.



Taking Yeon-hwa's hand in her own, the old woman guides her through a hidden path covered in soft moss. She moves with the confidence of someone who has lived among these trees for a lifetime, leading the way with a steady lantern.



They reach the edge of the forest just as the village lanterns begin to glow in the twilight. Yeon-hwa bows low in gratitude, but when she looks up, the mysterious woman has already vanished back into the shadows of the trees.