

❀ Katie's Jeju Island Adventure ❀

Katie had always dreamed of visiting Jeju Island.

From her little apartment in California, she would scroll through photos of Jeju's magical waterfalls, lava tubes that twisted through ancient rock, and endless fields of yellow rapeseed flowers. On her bedroom wall hung a drawing that she made of a map of the island, complete with stickers for every place she wanted to visit—like Hallasan Mountain, Seongsan Sunrise Peak, and the famous tangerine farms.

Her best friend Jenny knew this dream all too well. One sunny morning, Katie's phone buzzed with a message:

Jenny: "Jeju? Three-day break? Let's GO."

Katie's eyes lit up. She dropped her toast mid-bite and raced into her boss's office.

"Please, just three days next week," she begged. "It's my dream vacation, and Jenny and I already found flights."

Her boss barely glanced up. "Sorry, Katie. We're too busy. No time for holidays."

Katie's heart felt disappointed. But that night, as she stared at the stars from her balcony, she made a decision.

"I'm going anyway," she whispered.

Jenny didn't think. "Let's do it,"

So they booked the tickets, packed their backpacks, and boarded a flight across the Pacific Ocean.

After a long journey—with plenty of snacks and airport giggles—they finally arrived on Jeju Island. It was everything they dreamed of and more.

They hiked through forests. Watched the sunrise from a rock. Ate spicy seafood stew next to crashing waves. Picked fresh oranges and laughed when one rolled away down a hill. They even rode bikes along a beach side and made a sandcastle shaped like a volcano.

Those three days felt to fast like they were part of a magical adventure that only they could understand.

But the twist came too soon.

As they boarded the flight home, the skies became angry. A powerful storm swept across the sky, ditching flights and canceling connections. Their plane was delayed, then they had to go another way, and by the time they made it to Seoul, they had missed everything—work, meetings, and Katie's return call to her very unimpressed boss.

Back in California, Katie's voicemail blinked with one new message:

"Katie, call me back. We need to talk."

Katie sighed and looked at Jenny. "We're in trouble, aren't we?"

Jenny shrugged. "Maybe. But we lived your dream. That has to count for something."

And it did.

Because when Katie finally sat down across from her boss, she didn't make excuses. She simply said: "I followed something I've wanted for a long time. Even if I have to take responsibility for leaving, I won't regret it."

To Katie's surprise, her boss leaned back and smiled just a little.

"I went to Jeju once. Back when I was your age," the boss said. "Maybe I've forgotten what it's like to need something that badly."

Katie was still given a serious warning, but something had changed. Her dream had taken flight, and she had returned stronger, bolder, and full of stories.

And somewhere, back in Jeju, her sand-volcano still stood, watching over the waves.