

# Sang Linh

In the chapter from "Sang Linh," the narrative unfolds in a gallery setting in New York, 1997, during the setup for the exhibition "Why We Put Mirrors in Birdcages." The protagonist, who narrates with rich, introspective thoughts, reflects on a successful career while balancing family life. Her two younger sons are with a babysitter, and she cherishes moments spent with her eldest son, Duy, who helps her with installations. Duy is seen as an essential companion, and she pays him a seemingly outrageous fifty dollars a day, a rate that elicits complaints from his brothers but underscores the bond they share during this busy time.

As they prepare the gallery, Roya, the protagonist's partner, participates energetically, dedicated to the integrity of her artwork. The atmosphere is infused with music from a pop radio station, creating a backdrop for their collaborative effort in transforming the gallery. The arrival of a particular painting, "Odi et Amo," evokes memories for the narrator, whose nostalgia intertwines with a bittersweet acknowledgment of past pains and present joys, particularly in her relationship with Roya.

Tension and humor blossom in their exchanges, showcasing a loving partnership marked by teasing and affectionate banter. Roya dreams humorously about what to buy with proceeds from the show, declaring she'll get a Cadillac car door for practical reasons once the world ends. This proclamation sends them into a fit of laughter, a moment filled with absurdity that encapsulates their joy despite looming challenges.

The scene culminates in a vivid depiction of familial bonds and the art world's pressures, with Duy's responsible nature highlighted as he navigates his siblings' needs. This chapter reveals the narrator's resilience against her past struggles, underscoring themes of love, success, and the beauty found in shared laughter amidst the chaos of life and art.

Throughout the narrative, the protagonist's evolving perspective on her family's happiness and support becomes a poignant reminder of what truly matters, blending both the chaos of their work and the simplicity of shared joy in an evolving world. The narrative captures a delicately woven sense of gratitude, solidarity, and the bittersweet complexities of their artistic endeavor.