

Episode 2: New Beginnings

Intro:

Welcome to Play it by Ear, a podcast for extensive listening designed for English language learners. This is the second episode of our eight part story, Tough Love. If you have trouble understanding this story, please ask us questions on alleande.com. We have a PDF version of this conversation on the website as well. Previously on, Tough Love, Alex and Emily said goodbye to each other at the airport before Emily flew to Hawaii. Let's see what happens on their first day apart from each other.

(Emily outside of her new dorm room)

Emily: Room 804. I think this is my room.

(opens door)

Sumin: Hey! You're Emily, right?

Emily: Yeah, that's me!

Sumin: Well I'm Sumin, your new roommate! I'm so happy to see you outside of the Facebook! I already took the left side of the room, but if you want that bed, we can change.

Emily: Oh no, It's alright. It doesn't matter to me.

Sumin: Let me help you with your bags.

Emily: Thanks. It's so hot in here.

Sumin: But you said you're from Texas?

Emily: Yeah, it's hot there too, but in Texas we have air conditioning everywhere. I can't believe this room doesn't have any air conditioning!

Sumin: Yeah, but I brought this huge fan for us. In Korea most houses don't have air conditioning for every room, but we have fans.

Emily: Hopefully I'll get used to it.

Sumin: So how was your flight?

Emily: It was so long! Eight hours!

Sumin: Wow, that's how long it takes from Korea to Hawaii.

Emily: I guess they're the same distance.

Sumin: You came here by yourself?

Emily: Yeah, my parents both have busy jobs.

Sumin: Oh, Lucky! Both my parents came with me. They're at the hotel now, but I have to eat dinner with them. I wanted to go to dinner at the cafeteria and see if there are any hot guys. But we can always check them out tomorrow night.

Emily: Uhhh I can eat dinner with you tomorrow, but I planned to skype with my boyfriend after dinner.

Sumin: So that's the guy I saw on your facebook. How long have you two been dating?

Emily: Two years. He's my first boyfriend.

Sumin: Your first? That's so cute!

Emily: (hahaha) Do you have a boyfriend?

Sumin: No, there's no time to date during Korean high school. I was studying all the time. But now I'm here. I'm free to do whatever I want.

(Emily laughs)

Sumin: By the way this afternoon there's an International Student Association welcome event. Do you want to go with me?

Emily: But isn't that only for international students?

Sumin: No way! Anyone from the university can join. I heard that the president grew up here in Hawaii.

Emily: Yeah, sure. Sounds like fun. I need to explore campus anyway.

Sumin: Cool, I'm going to go to the bathroom to get ready. I can finally wear makeup since my parents aren't here.

(Sumin leaves)

(Emily's phone vibrates)

Emily: Hello?

Alex: Hey!

Emily: Alex, why are you calling? I already talked to you on the phone after I got off the plane.

Alex: Yeah, but I just finished my first class and I'm about to start work soon.

Emily: Oh, okay. How was class?

Alex: Pretty good. We just went over the syllabus, but I'm excited to take these teacher courses.

Emily: That's great.

Alex: Did you meet your roommate yet?

Emily: Yeah, she seems really fun. She just invited me to explore campus.

Alex: Ah okay. Then now isn't a good time to talk?

Emily: No, no. I can talk until she comes back.

Alex: Good. Ummm what time is it over there?

Emily: Uhh it's 10:55 am.

Alex: It's 2:55 pm here.

Emily: Hmm so what time do you start work?

Alex: 3

Emily: Alex! You need to be there. Today's your first day! You need to make a good first impression!

Alex: I know, but I miss you.

Emily: I miss you, too, but you should focus on your priorities.

Alex: You're my priority. The reason I got this job is to save money to see you.

Emily: I mean your other priorities.

(Sumin walks in)

Sumin: Ready to go?

Emily: Yeah, just hang on a second Sumin. Alex, I should go.

Alex: Alright.

Emily: Okay, well... have a good first day at work.

Alex: Love you.

Emily: I love you, too.

(transition music)

Alex: Umm hello, I'm here for my first day of training.

Nook: Ah you must be Alex. I'm Thanatnicha Thanaboonrungroch.=, but you can call me Nook.

Alex: Nook, okay. That's a really long name.

Nook: Haha, yeah, a lot of Thai people have long names.

Alex: How long have you been working at the bookstore?

Nook: This is my third year, but I'll be training you.

Alex: Okay, where do we start?

Nook: Let's just restock these books for tomorrow. The first month is crazy.

Alex: A whole month? Are you serious?

Nook: Yeah, people switch classes and make returns. It gets complicated.

Alex: So how many hours a week do you work during the first month?

Nook: Mmm around 25 hours.

Alex: 25 hours! Isn't part-time under 20 hours?

Nook: Yeah but it's so crazy so we have to work extra hours.

Alex: Do you have the work schedule? I haven't checked how many hours I'm supposed to be working.

Nook: Let me just pull it up on my phone. By the way, we can only use our phone for work purposes. Any personal use will get you in trouble. It's pretty obvious when someone is on their phone.

(pause)

Nook: Okay. So, it looks like you're working 22 hours.

Alex: My goodness.

Nook: Welcome to the bookstore, I guess.

Alex: I was hoping to work a little less so I can talk to my girlfriend.

Nook: Oh! Is your girlfriend at this university, too?

Alex: No, she's in Hawaii.

Nook: Oh, that's who you were talking on the phone with. Well at least this job will keep your mind busy.

Alex: Yeah, but I just don't want to be too busy because then I won't be able to talk to her.

Nook: I know how you feel. My girlfriend is in Hong Kong.

Alex: Oh, is it tough for y'all?

Nook: Well the long distance was hard at first, but it got easier. What has been most difficult is our cultural differences.

Alex: How are cultures different?

Nook: Well, her parents are traditional and it took her a long time to come out with the truth. Thailand is more accepting.

Alex: Ah, H=how long have y'all been together?

Nook: We liked each other for two years, but we've been together for one year.

Alex: You're really patient. That gives me hope.

Nook: Well, love is tough, but it's worth it.

Narrator:

That's the end of our second episode of Tough Love. How do you think Alex feels after listening to Nook's story? What do you think will happen to Emily when she goes to the International Student Association's event? Let us know at alleande.com. Tune in next week for the next episode of Play it by Ears' story, Tough Love.