

I Became a Villainous Character with a Limited Lifespan

- Episode 16 - 20

Episode 16

At Jae-young's question, Seung-hyun took his eyes off the sparkler's flames. Friends, huh. He had thought it wouldn't be bad to have someone to hang out with for a while.

"I guess we could be called friends, right?"

Although the fact that they had spent the night together weighed a bit on his mind, considering they were spending time together now, it seemed okay to call it that.

To the ambiguous answer, Jae-young stared at Seung-hyun for a moment, then lit the sparkler Seung-hyun had handed him. Whether they were friends or not didn't matter, so why had he asked this question?

"I was just curious, so I asked."

"Who said what?"

Seung-hyun brushed off the words he had added because of the needlessly awkward feeling and turned his eyes back to the sparkler. The sparkler's light was quite pretty, but it didn't last long. The two went to the street vendor one more time and bought enough sparklers to get sick of them, enjoying their time at the beach.

"Yawn..."

The next day, Seung-hyun woke up a bit earlier than yesterday. He had been exhausted after wandering around a lot and fell asleep as soon as he returned to the room, showered, and changed clothes, so he woke up at an ambiguous time between morning and afternoon.

"What should I do today...?"

We saw the night ocean yesterday, so should we go see the ocean during the day today? Or should we eat some food that you can only have here since we

came all the way down? Thinking that, Seung-hyun picked up his cell phone and let out a small sigh at the notifications filling the status bar.

Most of them were useless contacts. Contacts from people who had supported Seung-hyun and his father. Seung-hyun seriously considered writing something like “I really resigned, so please don’t contact me” in his status message.

After deleting all the useless app notifications and meaningless contacts, Seung-hyun checked the remaining messages.

[Secretary Lee Seok-hyung: Director. I visited your residence but you weren’t there, so I’m contacting you.] 9:47 AM

This guy visits someone else’s house in the morning and looks for the homeowner. I knew from the novel that Lee Seok-hyung was quite fussy towards Han Seung-hyun, but I didn’t know it was to this extent.

Usually, when Han Seung-hyun ordered something, he would just carry out that order no matter what it was, and there were no scenes of him proactively doing something.

[On vacation. Don’t look for me unless it’s urgent.] 10:28 AM

But Seok-hyung was also a bit pitiful to ignore. Because I had stolen his one beloved Director Han. Although perfunctory, Seung-hyun sent a clear reply and checked the next contact.

[Professor Kim: When would be a good date for your next regular checkup? I think it would be good for you to get a checkup at least once a month.] 10:08 AM

This was a necessary contact. Seung-hyun, who had been estimating dates by opening the calendar, set the next visit date and sent a reply.

‘Although it hasn’t been severe yet, if the pain gets worse, it won’t be good for me either.’

I didn’t know because the Han Seung-hyun in the novel was so lively, but this body wasn’t very healthy. It wasn’t to the point of being unbearable, but it seemed that if the condition worsened later, it might become difficult to wander around.

'I don't want that.'

I should get checkups regularly. An overseas trip may be difficult after all. Thinking that, Seung-hyun checked the next contact.

[Father: Sunday 7 PM Yeomheejung Orchid Room.] 7:11 AM

“.....”

Seung-hyun paused for a moment seeing the message with the exact matter only. Father. I knew we weren't on affectionate terms, but the content was so dry that I wondered if we were really father and son.

He moved his finger up to check the previous conversation contents. The contents weren't much different from the message that just arrived.

[Father: Monday 1 PM Suhwajung Hong Room.] 6:12 PM

[Father: Assisting the Chairman's round. Sunday Jeju Airon CC] 10:42 AM

[Father: I relayed the construction-related news through Secretary Lee, so check it and prepare countermeasures.] 3:08 PM

Messages sent to the secretary wouldn't be this business-like either. It was amazing that it was saved as 'Father' because there was nothing but business-like talk.

“Today is Friday, so....”

To make it in time, he had to go up to Seoul by lunch the day after tomorrow at the latest. But the hotel reservation was made until next Wednesday.

It wasn't that the money was a waste or that there was any lingering attachment to the destination. There was more than enough money anyway, and Busan wasn't a place he couldn't come back to. He had also resolved to meet Seung-hyun's parents at least once.

But looking at this message window, he somehow wanted to delay that meeting as much as possible. After contemplating for a bit, Seung-hyun wrote a sentence other than “Yes, I understand” or “I checked” in the dry message window.

[I don't plan to return to Seoul until next Wednesday, so it would be good if you could set a time after that.] 10:58 AM

In the first place, an appointment should be made by looking at each other's schedules, so the person who suddenly talks in an informative way is the one at fault. Thinking that, Seung-hyun sent a reply and checked the last contact. It was from the person he least wanted to get involved with.

[Managing Director Han Tae-sung: Director Han. What is the reason you handed over the project you were in charge of to our side?] 9:31 AM

Why? Because your grandfather told you to hand it over to me and leave. If I ignore it, he'll probably throw a fit saying there must be some ulterior motive. Seung-hyun sighed and started writing a reply.

[It was the Chairman's order.] 11:01 AM

[Managing Director Han Tae-sung: You're going to hand over the project you worked so hard on to me of all people?] 11:02 AM

The reply came quickly as if he had been waiting. Have you been living being deceived all your life? Seung-hyun made a slightly annoyed face and sent another reply.

[The handover will be done through Secretary Lee. Don't ask me. I'm not even a company person anymore.] 11:03 AM

[Do you like your vacation being interrupted?] 11:03 AM

Should I just block this guy too? Seung-hyun, who had been contemplating for a moment, put down his cell phone. Somehow, all the contacts he saw as soon as he woke up in the morning were unpleasant ones.

"...I'm hungry."

After sending the replies one by one, he felt hungry. Should I eat lunch at the restaurant here? I wanted to try the hotel buffet. Thinking that, Seung-hyun got up from the bed. Seung-hyun took out clothes from the styler, checked the seats using the room service pad, and reserved a seat an hour later.

"I should wash up."

Since I have an hour, I'll wash up and laze around for a bit. Seung-hyun flipped his cell phone over and went into the bathroom.

Putting his body in the warm water made him feel peaceful even in his heart. How much time had passed? Seung-hyun, who had enjoyed a leisurely bath, finished showering, came out, and rubbed his hair with a towel.

“Come to think of it, I didn't get a contact from the person closest to me.”

Suddenly recalling Jae-young's existence, Seung-hyun muttered while shaking off the water. He would think I'd be up by now since it's past 11.

Did he contact me while I was washing up? Thinking that, Seung-hyun picked up his cell phone.

“What the.”

But what appeared on the cell phone screen wasn't a contact from Jae-young.

Missed calls: Mother (2)

What's this now? Seung-hyun stared at the word 'Mother' for a long time and then erased that notification from the status bar. I don't know the details, but I had a feeling it wouldn't be a good contact.

A feeling that it might be related to the reply I sent to Father. Seung-hyun put the cell phone back as his instincts told him to and took a step to dry his hair.

“Uh...?”

But the moment he casually took a step, Seung-hyun's knees buckled greatly with a sudden dizziness and he toppled to the floor.

“Ugh... Heuk.”

They said I could have a seizure once in a while, is it now? Where did I put my medicine? Seung-hyun crawled on his knees without even noticing the pain from the impact.

Fortunately, the medicine was near the table where he had put down his cell phone, and Seung-hyun poured the medicine into his mouth with trembling hands and collapsed on the floor.

“Haa, haa...”

He had no strength in his body, but his consciousness remained. I didn't know because I had never been in pain while staying conscious, but it hurt much more than I expected.

“Ugh, heuk...”

Taking medicine didn't make it okay right away. Seung-hyun couldn't bear the pain and clawed at the floor with his short nails for a moment.

“Uwuk...”

Fortunately, the pain reliever was fast-acting. It wasn't long before he felt the pain getting a bit better, but as the searing pain near his stomach ceased, this time his knees that had hit the floor and the slightly torn fingertips hurt.

“I... I really am terminally ill. It's hitting me now.”

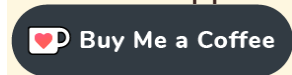
Seung-hyun barely sat up on the bed, pressing on his aching knees. Thankfully, the medicine bottle was close by. What if the seizure had come while he was taking a bath...?

When he faced the reality he had been trying to think of as nothing, he felt gloomy. Reality always seemed to hit him in the back of the head at an unexpected moment.

“Forget it. Let's not think about it.”

Seung-hyun muttered while rubbing his hurting knees. The words that were like a spell, as if comforting himself, continued for quite a long time.

You can support me here



Episode 17

“Even a ghost that died from eating has good complexion.”

It didn't take long to calm his mind. After all, Seung-hyun's life had always been like this since the accident he experienced just before being possessed. Seung-hyun, who checked the time, put on the clothes he had taken out in advance.

"11:55. They won't say anything about being a little late, and it won't take long to get there since it's in the same building."

Seung-hyun opened the door and came out in light attire. And almost simultaneously as he opened his door, the door to the next room opened.

Seung-hyun, who was about to pass by thinking it was a coincidence, discovered a familiar back of the head and let out an 'uh' sound.

"What. I thought you left already."

"Why are you here, Jae-young-ssi?"

Seung-hyun looked at Jae-young with a dumbfounded face. Why is this guy coming out of the room next to mine?

"Well, I need to have a room to stay in too, right?"

"But why is it the room right next to mine?"

“The room next door just happened to be empty.”

Seung-hyun, who was at a loss for words, slightly opened his mouth, forgetting the throbbing pain in his knees. But he soon nodded his head. It seemed he had gotten a little used to Jae-young’s behavior in just a day.

“Yes. I guess so.”

“Our destination is probably the same, so shall we go down together?”

“...Are you stalking me?”

“As a member of this hotel, there are things I notice while taking care of work matters.”

He’s lying without even wetting his lips. Next time, I should avoid Y Hotel when making a reservation. Thinking that, Seung-hyun walked side by side with Jae-young.

“Are you hurting somewhere?”

“Pardon?”

“Your walking seems a bit uncomfortable.”

Jae-young said, pointing to Seung-hyun’s legs. I thought it wasn’t that noticeable. Seung-hyun unconsciously reached out his hand towards his knee.

“Ah... I fell while coming out of the bath.”

It wasn’t a lie, although something was omitted in the middle. Fortunately, Jae-young took it lightly and quickly lost interest.

“Well, the bathroom floor is marble after all. Be careful. How did you fall?”

“Just... because.”

Although he hadn’t fallen in the bathroom, Seung-hyun didn’t bother to correct that misunderstanding. Rather, he preferred that he thought that way.

“Then a schedule with a lot of walking today might be a bit difficult.”

“It’s not to that extent.”

“No, it is. You’re limping even now.”

Is that so? I can’t really tell. Seung-hyun tried rolling his foot on the floor. He felt a slight tingling pain, but it wasn’t to the point of being unbearable.

Meanwhile, the two arrived on the 10th floor where the buffet was located. Seung-hyun, who looked at Jae-young sitting across from him with a look of ‘I knew it,’ moved to get food.

‘Oh, as expected of an expensive place... it’s completely different from the buffets that cost around 10,000 won in the early part of weekdays.’

Seafood that’s quite expensive like king crab and abalone. Sushi made by slicing the fish right there and chefs working at each station.

So many varieties of food that he was certain he wouldn’t be able to eat it all even if he ate a little of each. Seung-hyun wasn’t a big eater, so he would barely eat two or three plates at most, but it was a sight that delighted his eyes just by looking at it.

“This spot has the best view. You can see the ocean nice and refreshingly.”

As he returned to his seat with only the most appetizing items, Jae-young boasted about the view of his hotel while looking to the side. As he said, the scenery looking down was really nice from that spot.

“You woke up late. I was waiting to see what you’d have for breakfast.”

“...Are you a stalker?”

“Isn’t it also an employee’s duty to check on a customer’s condition by waking up early?”

“That employee excuse again...”

Seung-hyun shook his head from side to side and started eating. Still, it was nice to have someone to eat with.

“Did you sleep in late?”

“No. I guess... I was just a bit tired. I did fall asleep early, but when I opened my eyes, quite some time had passed.”

Unlike the previous day when he had barely fallen asleep at dawn, he fell asleep a little past 11, but perhaps because he had been out all day, he fell asleep as if he passed out and slept for about twelve hours.

“I think there would be many people looking for Han Seung-hyun-ssi. Is it

really okay to stay here for a whole week?”

“If it’s not right in front of my eyes, I can just ignore it, right? For now, the spouse of that side’s closest friend is being the most annoying.”

“There must have been... a lot of calls from family members too. Isn’t former CEO Han Taehyeop a scary person?”

Former CEO Han Taehyeop. It referred to Seung-hyun’s father. Seung-hyun spoke indifferently.

“Speaking of which, I got a call to meet on Sunday.”

“Oh my. Then you won’t be able to stay for the full period.”

“Is there a need for that? I told him I can’t go, so set a new date.”

Clang, almost simultaneously as Seung-hyun finished speaking, Jae-young’s fork fell on the plate. At the ear-splitting sound, a few people briefly looked at the two’s table but soon lost interest.

However, Jae-young’s state remained the same. Is that so surprising? After looking at Jae-young like that for a moment, Seung-hyun moved his hand again.

'He must be joking again.'

"You're kidding, right?"

"No. I told him to readjust the date to after Thursday."

When Seung-hyun answered nonchalantly, Jae-young blinked dumbly. Isn't he joking? After looking at that for a moment, Seung-hyun asked.

"Why are you so surprised? No matter what I hear, I have no intention of returning to the company anyway, and it's not like something big will happen if I don't meet right away."

"Even I, who has no interest in this field, know what kind of person former CEO Han Taehyeop is to that extent."

Although Seung-hyun spoke indifferently, anyone who knew what kind of person Han Taehyeop was would be surprised.

Han Taehyeop. He, who was recognized for his excellent nature and competence despite not being a direct descendant of the HJ family, became Chairman Han's adopted son and was famous in many ways.

Although he was so distantly related to the direct line that it was ambiguous to even call him a relative, his extremely dominant alpha nature was a characteristic that Chairman Han, a genetic discrimination, liked.

Moreover, he was someone outstanding in every aspect as if showing what an extremely dominant alpha is like. With looks that wouldn't lose even when compared to most celebrities, and abilities that matched his appearance.

The winter when Taehyeop caught Chairman Han's eye was when he was nineteen and the only one to receive a perfect score on the college entrance exam that year, which was evaluated as an unprecedented disaster.

To Chairman Han, whose insides were turning upside down because his only son turned out to be not just an alpha but a recessive alpha, the news of his distant relative's nephew was quite an interesting matter.

'The guy who will inherit my position, what does it matter if he's my biological child? If he ruins this company that I've built up...'

With that thought, Chairman Han registered Han Taehyeop into his family register. And Han Taehyeop was a person as ambitious as he was capable.

He established himself as the perfect successor to the point of completely erasing the existence of Han Kyungseok, the chairman's biological son, and Han Kyungseok gave up all expectations for his father and stopped caring about company affairs. People naturally thought that Han Taehyeop would become the next head of HJ.

At least, until Han Seung-hyun manifested as a recessive alpha.

'I heard he thoroughly hid it until he fully manifested, even though he knew there was a high probability he would manifest as a recessive.'

After Seung-hyun manifested as a recessive . Since Tae-sung entered Chairman Han's residence, just as Han Taehyeop had taken over Kyungseok's position, Han Taehyeop began to have his position as the perfect successor threatened.

What is called the foundation of HJ is none other than construction. Han Taehyeop, who couldn't feel at ease even after being promised the representative position there in advance, ended up making the worst choice.

'I heard he tried to force Chairman Han to hand over the position by pushing the corruption that someone had to take the fall for towards him, but his tail got caught and he was kicked out of that position instead.'

In a way, it was a really bold decision. To try to kick out Chairman Han in advance when Tae-sung was still inevitably lacking to succeed the entire company. If it had succeeded, it would have been a legendary story.

But he failed in that plan, and conversely, he had to take the fall for that corruption and suffered humiliation such as being in a detention center for a while.

The position of the representative of the construction company, which would become the position of the next successor, was passed back to Chairman Han. He probably intended to pass it to Tae-sung once the succession structure was completely sorted out. Seung-hyun thought as he chewed the food in his mouth.

“Although the former CEO is a ‘former’ CEO now... he still has influence in HJ, right? I heard there were quite a few people who saw the succession structure as Managing Director Han and former CEO Han rather than Managing Director Han and Director Han.”

“But now it’s a story that has nothing to do with me.”

“That may be so since you’ve completely stepped down from your position... but you haven’t cut family ties, have you?”

Family ties, huh. Seung-hyun briefly recalled the Han Seung-hyun’s family history in ‘The Law of Conservation.’ Although they appeared a couple of times, whenever they appeared, he remembered having the impression, ‘Is personality hereditary too?’

“Above all... it doesn’t seem like he would leave Han Seung-hyun-ssi alone.”

“Well... for now, it’s a vacation.”

Surely nothing will happen. Seung-hyun checked his cell phone indifferently. Unlike the two missed calls from his mother while he was washing up for a bit,

there were no calls coming in now.

'Well, it seems like he's already lost interest too.'

But when the week-long vacation ended and he returned to Seoul. Seung-hyun would think that he should have ended the bothersome talk early.

Episode 18

"What the."

When returning home, he took a plane. As soon as he arrived home by taking a taxi from the airport, what he saw was a house in a complete mess.

'Although I wasn't home, the housekeeper should have still come to manage it 2 days a week.'

But the house was in utter disarray as if someone had turned it upside down. Seung-hyun put on his indoor slippers and looked around the house, passing the messy floor.

"Whoever it was must have been quite angry."

Seung-hyun opened the bedroom door, avoiding the broken decorations. Fortunately, only the living room was a mess. Who would do something like this?

'Since it's a house with tight security, it doesn't seem likely that a complete stranger came in and out. Among the people who might know the password, someone who would do this...'

After making inferences for a moment, Seung-hyun recalled the owner of the two missed calls on his cell phone a few days ago.

'I was going to contact her again after coming up to Seoul, but I guess she couldn't wait that short while.'

Ziing. The moment he thought that, Seung-hyun's cell phone rang again. In the text window with 'Father' that had stopped just like the text he sent on Friday, a new message had arrived.

[Tonight at 8, to the main house.] 1:39 PM

This time too, it was a concise text with no personal opinion. If it's at 8, he's probably not calling to have dinner together. This time, Seung-hyun also sent a positive reply.

[Understood.] 1:40 PM

Anyway, Seung-hyun also had no intention of sitting across from them and having a peaceful meal while laughing. He just thought that, whether he liked it or not, they were a relationship tied by blood, so he couldn't just never face them.

"Oh my, what is this?"

But what should I do about this mess? While blankly staring at the living room for a moment, a voice like salvation was heard from somewhere. The housekeeper had come to work.

"...It wasn't me."

"Ah, yes..."

Although there was no need to explain, Seung-hyun unknowingly spoke to the housekeeper as if making excuses. But the housekeeper nodded her head with a face that didn't believe it at all.

'Why is she suddenly doing this?'

It was a quarterly event for an angry Seung-hyun to turn the house upside down, and although there were times when he went into his room huffing and puffing telling her to clean up, it was the first time he made such an embarrassed face.

As the housekeeper began to clean up the messy living room with familiarity, Seung-hyun, feeling a bit relieved, went back to his room.

[Jae-young Ju: Did you get home safely?] 1:50 PM

In the meantime, a text had come from Jae-young. Seung-hyun spent almost the whole week with Jae-young. They rode a Ferris wheel with an ocean view together, saw the ocean, and tried all kinds of meals at restaurants famous for being delicious at every meal.

What he felt during those few days was that Jae-young was a better person than he thought. In fact, the biggest reason Seung-hyun didn't firmly cut off Jae-young's approach was because he hated being alone.

He didn't even hope for a great relationship. He was just happy to have someone by his side. But hanging out with Jae-young was more fun than Seung-hyun had expected.

Although he couldn't coldly reject him because he disliked being alone and felt bad about drinking far past his alcohol tolerance and making a scene, he did wonder if he could really be friends with the person he had spent the night with.

'It would be better to just be partners. Being friends but having slept together. Is this okay?'

Is this not much of a problem in this world view? He had been doubtful, but as the days passed, he came to think it was a needless worry.

As if their physical relationship was just a dream, the two were plain with each other. And Seung-hyun quite liked this relationship.

[Yes. Now I'm pondering what to do for fun.] 1:51 PM

If he had been given a chance to live a completely new life, he might have felt something like romantic feelings for him. But Seung-hyun had a set end.

If his end came faster than the end of love, wouldn't that be too sad? Seung-hyun thought that somehow, romance seemed to not exist in his life.

[I guess you have to have played around a lot to be good at playing. I'm already tired.] 1:51 PM

[Jae-young Ju: How about collecting stamps at each department store since the brands are all different?] 1:52 PM

Somehow it seems like he just wants to play. Seung-hyun chuckled and continued texting with Jae-young. For now, since the timing was awkward today, Seung-hyun decided to watch dramas or laze around.

“The sun has already set.”

Time passed quickly like that, and it was time to get ready to go to the main house.

“...This family seems like the type to wear suits even when meeting as a family.”

Seung-hyun, who headed to the dressing room to change clothes, contemplated for a moment then shook his head, thinking ‘nah.’ It’s not like he’s going to a job interview, so there’s no need to dress uncomfortably.

Seung-hyun, dressed in a moderately neat outfit, headed to the garage. He, who used to admire the sight of several cars lined up that were so expensive that just seeing them on the street would make you gasp, picked up the car key that was closest at hand and opened the car door.

“Main house. Pyeongchang-dong.”

He started the engine after entering the destination into the navigation. To think the day would come when I would drive this kind of car myself. Seung-hyun grabbed the steering wheel, thinking he would die soon.

‘What will I hear when I go? I probably won’t hear anything good. I’ll just have to listen with one ear and let it flow out the other.’

Seung-hyun didn’t think much of facing his family. He just wanted to end the conversation as quickly as possible and return home.

The main house in Pyeongchang-dong and Seung-hyun’s house weren’t very far. Before long, Seung-hyun was able to enter the parking lot of the main house.

“7:56. Barely made it.”

Seung-hyun checked the time, roughly tidied his clothes, and entered the mansion. Seung-hyun’s main house had a similar atmosphere to Seung-hyun’s house.

A dry house decorated by the book, but giving off a slight feeling that no one lives there. Are the parents and child alike after all? Seung-hyun thought as he stepped inside.

“Yo, young master, you’re he...”

Slap-! With a loud sound, Seung-hyun’s face turned to the left. Seung-hyun, who couldn’t grasp the situation for a moment, blinked and slowly turned his head.

“Pathetic bastard.”

A middle-aged woman who couldn’t contain her anger and was panting heavily stood in front. At a glance, her upturned eyes quite resembled Seung-hyun’s.

“...Mother.”

“To think that what I sacrificed my one and only chance to give birth to is a bastard like you. If there is a god, he can’t be this heartless to me.”

It seemed the guess was right. After huffing for a moment, Seung-hyun’s mother turned her feet as if she couldn’t stand the sight of him and returned to her room. There was no particular mention of his mother, so he didn’t know, but it seemed her personality wasn’t much different from his father’s.

‘I heard she was unable to have children after giving birth to Seung-hyun because her body was damaged.’

The child she gave birth to by sacrificing her one and only chance. It’s a title that seems like it should be treated quite precious, but her attitude towards him was not like that at all.

Although the hand that struck his cheek didn’t hurt to the point of being unbearable, he felt a slightly stinging sensation, perhaps from being slightly scratched by long nails.

“Uh, the CEO is waiting for you inside.”

The housekeeper, who had been looking at the situation for a moment, spoke to Seung-hyun. Seung-hyun soon nodded his head at the pitifully flustered appearance.

“Let’s go.”

“Y-yes.”

It seemed like the housekeeper was trembling more, even though he was the one who got hit. Seung-hyun tried hard to ignore his throbbing cheek and followed the housekeeper.

“You’re late.”

At Taehyeop’s words, Seung-hyun unconsciously checked the time. Only about 1-2 minutes had passed since 8 o’clock.

There’s no way he couldn’t see the swollen cheek and scratches. To say “You’re late” as soon as he sees his face. Seung-hyun let out a laugh soft enough not to be heard.

“What did you call me for?”

“Have you become so stupid that you don’t even know that?”

Although he looked quite composed compared to his mother, Seung-hyun could instinctively notice. That this person was not someone who would let this situation pass with just one slap on the cheek.

“I have no intention of returning to the company.”

But even if something happens to him, would it be worse than dying? Seung-hyun spoke calmly. He didn’t want to beat around the bush because it seemed like the time spent facing this unpleasant man would only increase.

“Then what are you going to do for a living?”

Taehyeop asked, putting down the glass he was holding. He had a face that seemed to say, ‘Is there anything you can do?’

“Anyway, it’s already set in stone that the position of the next chairman will go to Managing Director Han Tae-sung. The company will run fine without me, and I just decided to stop making useless efforts.”

Seung-hyun spoke without being intimidated. He wanted to end this meaningless conversation quickly and return home.

Clang-!

But it seemed Taehyeop didn't want that.

Episode 19

The teacup thrown by Taehyeop slightly grazed Seung-hyun's ear and smashed into the wall. With a sound loud enough to make his ears sting, the shattered pieces scattered messily.

"If you don't know how to do anything, you should at least have tenacity."

Although he was pretending to be calm, the veins bulging on his forehead were clearly visible.

There was no idiot who didn't know that Han Taehyeop was still involved in company affairs behind the scenes, even though he had stepped down from the position of construction representative and was currently laying low.

'You shouldn't have gotten caught.'

The only words Chairman Han threw at Han Taehyeop when he found out about his plan were those. If his plan had succeeded, Chairman Han might have handed over the position to him without seeking revenge.

Because Chairman Han was a man obsessed with the company he had built. Seung-hyun couldn't understand him at all, but his father seemed to have similar values to Chairman Han.

"You were born as scum, so I don't have high expectations for you. But this is a long game. If you hold on without losing tension, do you think that bastard Han Tae-sung, no matter how great he is, won't show a single opening?"

While not believing in Seung-hyun at all, while not thinking at all that he could beat Tae-sung and take the successor position, he had this attitude.

'The reason Chairman Han internally picked Han Tae-sung as the successor but didn't completely kick out Han Seung-hyun must be for that reason too.'

Seung-hyun thought that and chuckled. Seeing that, one of Taehyeop's eyebrows shot up high.

"You find it funny?"

“Yes.”

Seung-hyun spoke in a nonchalant voice. He understood that he had a scary personality. But it was also a bit ridiculous.

“In the first place, you didn’t even think I could do anything, but isn’t it funny that you’re acting like you’ve left it to me now?”

“Wha, what?”

The veins bulging on Han Taehyeop’s forehead swelled as if they would burst. But again, it wasn’t something for Seung-hyun to care about.

“I can’t sit in the position of HJ’s head as Father wants, and I have no intention of playing the role of a puppet CEO in place of my ousted father either.”

“Wha, wha, what...”

“There’s nothing good for me, so why do I have to do a difficult, bothersome, and unrewarding job? I don’t understand.”

He was too lazy to explain at length. A family relationship that had already fallen apart, it wouldn’t be a big deal if he ruined it a bit more.

“You probably don’t even think of me as your child in the first place, so wouldn’t it be better to not see each other from now on?”

“Do you think you can do something after leaving the company? Do you think there will be a proper position that accepts you? At best, a recessive, a loser who was kicked out after being pushed aside by that bastard Han Tae-sung, where will they...”

Taehyeop sneered at Seung-hyun. He didn’t know what wind was blowing for him to say such nonsense, but Seung-hyun was a person who had lived only for HJ.

What company would hire Chairman Han’s grandson, whose reputation had already spread, in an important position, knowing what ulterior motive they might have?

But working at the lowest level was even more impossible. However, all of that was also none of Seung-hyun’s business.

“It doesn’t matter. I wasn’t working because I was short on money anyway, right?”

“Ha. So. Are you saying you’ll live as a loser for the rest of your life?”

Han Taehyeop glared at Seung-hyun while grinding his teeth. Although he was a child he didn’t like, he thought he at least showed some resemblance to himself when it came to work.

His abilities couldn’t even reach his toes, but at least he thought his viciousness resembled his own. No matter what happened, he had to have what he wanted, and if he couldn’t have it, he had to destroy it to feel satisfied.

But now, not to mention viciousness, there wasn’t a single glint in Seung-hyun’s eyes. He was certainly looking at Han Taehyeop, but without any tension or concentration like usual, he was just standing askew with a face that said this situation was bothersome.

“So. You have no plans. You’re going to live like trash, squandering the assets you have now for the rest of your life?”

“To call it trash-like...”

“You’re almost thirty, but you’re still dreaming.”

Taehyeop sneered at Seung-hyun. He had raised him only for HJ and the successor position, so he was too ignorant of the ways of the world.

“Right now, you may have enough leeway to afford everything you want to do and your way of living up until now. But there’s no end to money or greed. How long do you think your trash-like life will last? At most 5 years.”

“5 years, huh.”

A light sneer escaped through his teeth. At most 5 years. He probably threw it as a curse, but somehow it was no different from a blessing to him.

“That’s plenty.”

Bam-!

With a loud sound, Seung-hyun’s cheek turned again. It was the same direction his mother had hit him. The scratch from the nail stung, but being hit

itself wasn't very painful. This time, however, he felt a pain that made his head ring.

'This might leave a bruise.'

"Rather than having a son like you, I should have made at least one proper child like how Kyungseok had a child out of wedlock."

Because there were benefits from his in-laws in the political marriage, even after his wife became infertile and he found out Seung-hyun was a recessive, Taehyeop couldn't have another child.

"I don't want to see you, so get out. You've completely lost your mind. I'd rather go to the company myself..."

"Yes. Achieve your unfinished dream yourself. And the feeling of dislike is mutual. I didn't choose to become your child either."

"Han Seung-hyun!"

His cheek throbbed and hurt. Thankfully, he had taken a painkiller in advance just in case before coming. In a stressful situation like this, it wouldn't be strange for the pain to come rushing in at any time.

"I hope to never see you again. Then, goodbye."

He had been hit nicely once each by the couple, and it seemed like he had said all the necessary things, so this should be enough. Seung-hyun turned around without any lingering feelings.

Bang-! Clang!

He could hear the brutal sound of something breaking from where he turned, but Seung-hyun didn't look back. He only felt a bit sorry for the housekeeper who would have to clean up that mess.

"Yo, young master. Are you leaving?"

"Yes. Ah, tell Madam too. I'll live quietly out of sight as she wants, so tell her not to look for me."

"Pardon?"

“Then, goodbye.”

Seung-hyun left the mansion without hesitation and started the car again. Although he was tired, he felt a bit more at ease now that he had finished one task.

“When I get home... I should ice it first.”

He unconsciously brought his hand to his cheek, which felt numb and stinging. It was a thoughtless action, but a little blood was smeared on it.

“...There should be ointment and band-aids at home, right?”

It seemed like his face would bruise. Even if he somehow made excuses for the scratch, the vivid bruise on his cheek... anyone could see that he looked like he had been in some trouble.

‘I’ll have to stay inside until it fades enough to say it’s a bruise from bumping into something. Well, it’s a good thing. I should think about where to go next while resting.’

Thinking that, Seung-hyun drove the car. He didn’t notice that it wasn’t his imagination that the nearby drivers were avoiding him on their own.

“Did I leave the lights on when I left?”

But the lights were on in the house that should have been empty.

‘The housekeeper left before I went out... I must have left them on.’

Seung-hyun thought indifferently and opened the front door. However, contrary to expectations, someone was sitting on the neatly organized living room sofa.

“Oh my god.”

“Direc...tor?”

The man sitting on the sofa widened his eyes seeing Seung-hyun’s face. It’s not even his house, so why is he coming in so naturally like that? Seung-hyun let out a small sigh seeing Seok-hyung.

'Last time, I let it go because he said he found me having a seizure... but is it okay to come in and out of someone else's house like this?'

"...Did you come from the main house?"

"Yeah."

Seeing how he immediately knew where he had been just by looking at his face, it seemed like this wasn't the first or second time something like this had happened.

"This... looks like it will bruise."

"Whether I like it or not, they're family, so I thought I should talk about my resignation at least once. If it ended with one hit, I got off easy. More importantly, why are you here?"

Seung-hyun answered roughly and opened the fridge to find a cold compress. It was too cold to put directly on his face, so he thought he should find a towel or something to wrap the pack in and put the compress pack on the table.

"Director."

When he turned around to get a towel, Seok-hyung had somehow come close to him. Seung-hyun, slightly startled, took a step back.

"I thought about what you said last time."

"....."

What did I say? Seung-hyun looked at Seok-hyung, who had a serious face, and briefly tried to recall his memory. But it didn't last long. Because Seok-hyung directly pointed out what that was about.

"If what you want from me... is my body. I will give it to you."

Episode 20

"If what the director desires is... my body. I will give it to you."

'...You want to sleep with me?'

'You like me. I've decided to just do what I want to do now. It's not like I'm going to die from sleeping with you, and it's okay to do this much, right? I think you'd be better than someone else...'

That's what he had said. It was a bit embarrassing so I deliberately tried to forget about it. Seung-hyun lightly touched his forehead.

"I was a bit taken aback... but if it's what the director desires, how could I refuse to offer my body for the director's sake."

"....."

For some reason, it seemed like he smelled nice, as if he had just taken a shower. As a beta, there's no way Seok-hyung could have sensed pheromones in the first place.

'It's true that I made that suggestion... but I don't feel like doing that right now.'

Remembering the silence that followed when he said those words, Seung-hyun felt a bit awkward and pressed his lips together tightly.

"Looking at me now, do you still feel like doing such a thing?"

"Not that I'll... do it now. Whenever the director desires it."

Does this mean he's willing to give his body if desired? It was an amazing display of loyalty. As Seung-hyun tapped the heat pack with his finger, Seok-hyung silently went to find a towel, wrapped the heat pack, and held it up to Seung-hyun's cheek.

"I know you don't necessarily need me. You could find someone else if it's not me. But wouldn't I be better than someone else?"

That other person he found and slept with even before propositioning himself... better not mention that. Seung-hyun took the heat pack that was emanating a cool sensation into his own hand and sat on the sofa.

"From the moment the director picked me up, I swore that I'd be happy to become the director's dog. No, I will become your dog."

"....."

“Things like what to do when the leash comes off, how to live on... I’ve never learned or even thought about it.”

“By this time next year, anyway...”

As Seung-hyun spoke unconsciously, he saw Seok-hyung’s face looking like his heart had sunk and shut his mouth again. He had already accepted this reality to some extent, but it seemed Seok-hyung had not.

“...This is unlike the director.”

After staring at Seung-hyun for a moment, Seok-hyung said, biting his lip. Of course it’s because it’s someone else. Without giving the obvious answer, Seung-hyun said,

“They say people change when it’s time for them to die, I think it’s just something like that.”

“You were never one to give up so easily. It’s not like there have only been good things up until now, but you never gave up even once. Haven’t you always told me...”

“.....”

“That there are always opportunities until you let go, that even if your hand tears, as long as there is even a bit of strength left in your grip, you’ll never be the first to let go.”

Seok-hyung strongly clenched his fist as he said those words. Those were the words Seung-hyun had said to him when he first picked up the cowering Seok-hyung.

Seok-hyung was a young man living with and caring for his sick single mother. Although born a beta, he worked harder than anyone else to enter a good university and naturally joined HJ after receiving their support program growing up.

Unfortunately, the position assigned to Seok-hyung was as the lowest ranking secretary in Chairman Han’s secretarial office. The position itself wasn’t bad, but the problem was that it meant becoming a close aide to ‘Chairman Han’.

‘That damn old man is an extreme type discriminator...’

In this world, anyone from a chaebol or political family had somewhat discriminatory thinking, but Chairman Han was particularly biased.

Just look at how he refused to pass on the company to his own child for being an alpha and tried to adopt a distant relative as his successor instead.

But Seok-hyung was a capable new employee, and even in the secretarial office, how often would the lowest ranking employee come face to face with the chairman?

With that in mind, he was assigned to the secretarial office, but not long after Seok-hyung joined, an incident occurred where the secretarial office made a mistake that greatly angered Chairman Han.

“How are you handling work?!”

In fact, Seok-hyung wasn't very involved in that incident. At most, he was the lowest ranking employee. He was in a position where he didn't even have the authority to open such important documents. Seok-hyung had simply delivered those documents to another department without being able to check them.

But in the eyes of the furious Chairman Han, Seok-hyung, the only non-alpha in the secretarial office, seemed to be quite an eyesore.

“This is what happens when you put someone who can't even meet the standard in an ill-fitting position! To think you put someone like this in my secretarial office. Transfer him immediately. We need to fill the position with proper personnel. Tsk.”

For the chairman himself to single out a new employee in a loud voice in the company hallway bustling with people coming and going. It was the kind of incident that would become gossip fodder for the company employees in less than a day.

Which department would take in a new employee who had been properly targeted by the chairman? Of course, everyone knew it was an absurd nitpick and the problem could be solved by changing companies.

But Seok-hyung didn't have that luxury. The issue was his mother's hospital bills. After getting a job at the company, he had a bit of financial leeway and

was barely able to start expensive treatment by devoting most of his salary to it.

To receive the treatment, his body's condition had been artificially adjusted, so he couldn't stop the treatment for at least six months. He didn't have the leeway to job hunt in order to change companies.

"I apologize. Chairman, I will rectify this."

Without thinking long, Seok-hyung kneeled in the hallway and begged Chairman Han for forgiveness. But even that effort had no effect on Chairman Han's decision.

"Tsk."

Chairman Han lightly clicked his tongue and brushed past Seok-hyung. But Seok-hyung couldn't get up and sat there for a long time.

He knew Chairman Han would pass by that way when leaving work. Knowing that going into the chairman's office would only further incite his anger, he chose to do the best he could.

He couldn't hear other people's gazes or dissuasion. What was immediately important to him was his livelihood and his position. If there was even a slight possibility, he could kneel as much as needed.

And that sight caught Seung-hyun's eye. The two's meeting wasn't elaborated on much in the novel, so the details were unclear, but when reading, Seung-hyun thought it might have stemmed from a sense of kinship and similar feelings.

"There are always opportunities until you let go. Even if your hand tears, as long as there is even a bit of strength left in your grip, there will be something you can do.

'.....'

'You seem like someone who can do that, so I like you.'

Seok-hyung's mother passed away before completing the treatment, but the hand Seung-hyun held out to Seok-hyung didn't become meaningless.

Some people called him Director Han's dog due to his abnormally high loyalty, but the two didn't particularly dislike that title.

"He's a loyal dog, so even if I drop the leash, he won't bite me. I don't know about you though."

Did he say that to someone who called Seok-hyung Seung-hyun's dog to his face? Seung-hyun, recalling the original work, let out a small sigh.

The two were a very good match... but to the current Seung-hyun, there was a slightly burdensome aspect to Seok-hyung.

'Still... there's no one as good as him. Not as much as Ju Jae-young, but he's handsome, has a nice body. Doesn't seem like he'd be annoying... There is one thing that bothers me though.'

The fact that Seung-hyun was special to Seok-hyung. It wasn't something he made happen, it was like that from the beginning, but somehow he felt like he was toying with Seok-hyung and then throwing him away.

'Of course, he'd be happy to be toyed with and discarded, but I'd feel unnecessarily sorry.'

"You could only say such things when you don't know what it's like for your hand to actually tear."

"Director."

"How can you hold onto a meaningless string when you don't have the strength to grip it? You'll only hurt your poor hand more."

Seung-hyun spoke firmly and got up from his seat. It seemed he would have to think a bit more and make a decision about his relationship with Seok-hyung.

For now, he was in no condition to do anything more today anyway.

"So don't cling to something that's already over and start anew. You have the skills, so there will be places that will take you. Jeong Hyeokjae was secretly eyeing you too..."

"My only master, forever, is you, Director."

“Are you going to starve to death? You’re not that stupid.”

It may be a bit sad to be born a beta in a world where alphas and omegas exist, but he’s fundamentally a capable person who has lasted over 2 years under Han Seung-hyun. The past should be somewhat forgotten by now.

If it really doesn’t work out, there’s the option of going to Jeong Hyeokjae, who was... not quite Seung-hyun’s friend, but at least his colleague.

“I’ll rethink the proposal. But not today. You can see I look a bit ridiculous too, right?”

Seung-hyun put away the heat pack and showed his face to Seok-hyung. Without even looking in the mirror, it was clear that a bruise must have fully formed by now.

“...At least allow me to treat it.”

Seok-hyung moved his feet to familiarly find the first-aid kit in the mansion. It was a night when the scratched wound on his cheek stung sharply.