

## **I Became a Villainous Character with a Limited Lifespan - Episode 21 - 25**

### ***Episode 21***

“Ah.”

“I apologize.”

Only after finally checking his face's condition in the mirror did he realize the scratches were longer than expected. Since they were thin scratches, it seemed they would heal in a few days, but with the blue bruising and long scar marks, it was a face that looked painful just seeing it.

“It's done.”

Seok-hyung, who had meticulously covered Seung-hyun's wound with band-aids, took his hand off his face. But his gaze still couldn't leave Seung-hyun's cheek.

“How long do you think it will take to heal?”

“The scratches will probably be okay in about two days. The bruise... will likely take around 4-5 days to fade enough to cover with light makeup.”

It seemed he usually covered it with makeup when this kind of thing happened. Seung-hyun rubbed his face as he thought.

‘It would be best not to go out for a few days. It's bothersome to get unnecessary questions.’

“Did... Chairman Han do this to you.”

“Yeah. I should think ending ties at this degree is getting off easy.”

Seok-hyung clenched one hand tightly. He looked ready to rush to the main house and overturn it right now.

‘The director isn't a company person anymore anyway. So there's no more reason to endure...’

“Don't worry about it.”

As the atmosphere grew more and more ominous, Seung-hyun consoled Seok-hyung, thinking he had to say something.

“Cutting family ties can’t be that easy.”

“Those people don’t deserve to be your family. I was never interested in former Chairman Han’s unfulfilled dreams. I just...”

“I know. You did it for me.”

“.....”

“And now, the only thing that’s for my sake is making sure I don’t get entangled in more bothersome situations.”

If I’ve said this much, I hope he’ll stop thinking about me and live his own life. Seung-hyun stared intently at Seok-hyung’s eyes. In the end, Seok-hyung, unable to win against Seung-hyun, nodded.

“...Don’t worry about me. Jeong Hyeokjae said he can secure at least one position for me.”

“Yeah. You’re capable, so you’ll do well wherever you go.”

“.....”

“Don’t talk about work in front of me anymore. It’s tiring just hearing it. If you bring it up one more time, I’ll block you without a second thought.”

Seung-hyun spoke firmly. Seok-hyung reluctantly nodded. But before long, he spoke again.

“May I ask just one thing.”

“What is it.”

“...Do you really have no more ambition? Does... everything we’ve done so far lose all meaning?”

Seok-hyung’s expression looked somewhat desperate. Seung-hyun, contemplating for a moment at the face that seemed to ask if all they had done until now was meaningless, answered.

He could offer some lip service to someone who looked on the verge of collapse.

“Back then... that was the goal I lived for. Because that was the only path I could take.”

“But why now...”

“Now those things are all unnecessary. What benefit or reward would there be in painstakingly gaining the chairman’s favor.”

“.....”

“It’s enough that we ran so intensely until now. I want to rest a bit now. Really don’t ask anymore.”

Seung-hyun hoped this would be the last work-related conversation with Seok-hyung. He pressed his lips together tightly with that thought.

“...I understand. I always thought you needed rest since you ran without pause, Director...”

If only that rest had come in a different way, it might have been better to never rest. Seok-hyung swallowed the words he wanted to say and nodded.

‘So, I will take care of what remains in your stead.’

Seok-hyung, swallowing words that would shock Seung-hyun if he heard them, stood up from his seat.

“Please rest for today. If you call, anytime...”

“Yeah. I’ll call if I want to, so go back for today. I’m tired.”

Seung-hyun waved his hand to send Seok-hyung out and put the ice pack on his face again. After the storm passed and he checked his phone again, there was a text from Jae-young.

[Ju Jae-young: You said you’d take me on a department store tour, didn’t you?] 8:12 PM

[Ju Jae-young: When would be good?] 8:12 PM

He had said he would go around the large department stores in Seoul one by one to help with shopping, but the problem was he couldn't go anywhere with this face.

After contemplating for a bit, Seung-hyun slowly typed a reply.

[It will probably be next week at the earliest.] 9:56 PM

[Ju Jae-young: After saying you're not busy?] 9:57 PM

The reply arrived quickly as if he had been waiting. What should I say? He thought for a moment but soon sent a rough reply with the thought 'Do I really need to make excuses?'.  
[If you played outside for a week, wouldn't you play at home for a week too]

10:02 PM

[Ju Jae-young: Then can I come visit your house?] 10:02 PM

Seung-hyun made a troubled face. He didn't want to go out because he didn't want to show others this appearance.

[That's a bit...] 10:03 PM

[Ju Jae-young: (Emoticon)] 10:04 PM

[Ju Jae-young: Didn't you say you'd be my friend?] 10:04 PM

Seung-hyun snickered in absurdity upon receiving the crying face emoticon. Yeah, he was definitely the person Seung-hyun felt most comfortable with since becoming Han Seung-hyun.

[I'll think about whether to invite you or not once we get a bit closer.] 10:04 PM

[Work hard then] 10:04 PM

After sending a reply with a slight smile, he laid his body on the bed. He planned not to go out as much as possible until the bruise faded somewhat, except for hospital visits.

Hopefully there wouldn't be another person who suddenly came to his house like Lee Seok-hyung. And there were many ways to play at home too.

He disliked going around alone when playing outside, but there was no problem watching TV or using his phone in bed for a few days by himself.

[Ju Jae-young: Looks like I'll have to work hard.] 10:05 PM

Plus, there was one person who talked to him so he wouldn't be bored. Seung-hyun smiled slightly and checked his hospital appointment.

Next Tuesday at 3 PM. A time set a bit generously in case he overslept.

'Still, by Tuesday my face shouldn't be too unsightly.'

Seung-hyun gently rubbed the ice pack over his face and closed his eyes. It looked a bit awful but it wasn't terribly painful as long as he didn't press hard.

"I should think of it as a week of outdoor activities, a week of indoor activities."

It would be a lie to say he didn't resent being hit, but it wasn't something he was concerned about to think long. In fact, he had deliberately said things to provoke them.

Even now, there was no disagreement that Han Seung-hyun was a villain. Not everyone would act the same if put in his situation.

But Han Taehyeop and his wife likely contributed to their son's eccentric personality. So couldn't he say this much?

"Ah, I really hope I don't have any more business with them. Should I just block them now?"

Seung-hyun alternately checked 'Father' and 'Mother' in his contacts and decided to block them if they contacted him one more time before putting down his phone. It wasn't even worth thinking about.

"Rather... I didn't expect Lee Seok-hyung to come out like this."

Considering how wretched his expression was when he first made the suggestion, it was surprising that he would accept that suggestion even now.

Would he really do anything for Han Seung-hyun's sake? At first he thought it didn't matter since it was someone who liked Han Seung-hyun anyway, but now he felt a bit guilty about using such a blindly devoted person.

'A relationship where we can enjoy each other is more comfortable and nice.'

Seung-hyun closed his eyes as he pondered. He didn't want to live obsessing only over sex, but it would be quite a waste to end it after just once.

Since there was no comparison, he couldn't know if a relationship with someone else would feel the same, but well, wouldn't it be similar?

"Forget it. What can I do with this face. I should just shut myself in at home."

Seung-hyun muttered and put the ice pack on the bedside table. Now that it had come to this, he should plan what to do for the remaining time.

He had completely ended things with Chairman Han as well as Han Taehyeop, so it should be done. Seung-hyun fell asleep with that naive thought.

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"So, there's really no movement at all?"

"Yes. We've been steadily receiving updates from Busan as well, but he only engaged in activities that looked like sightseeing with Y Hotel Director Ju Jae-young, and there were no special variables."

Tae-sung rubbed his forehead at the unbelievable news. It was ridiculous enough that Han Seung-hyun was going sightseeing, but for his companion to be Ju Jae-young...

'He didn't like that I married Seon-hu. Are they planning something together? But at least... he wouldn't act in a way that would harm Seon-hu.'

"After returning, he briefly visited former Chairman Han's house in Pyeongchangdong, but hasn't left his house for several days since then."

"For now... I understand. Keep monitoring his movements and report immediately if you notice anything unusual."

"Yes, sir."

Tae-sung sent the secretary back and was lost in thought for a moment.

**Episode 22**

‘Since Han Seung-hyun won’t readily tell me what he’s thinking, would it be better to approach from another side?’

No matter how many times he asked, the answers that came back were ones that couldn’t possibly come from the Han Seung-hyun he knew. He had other words to believe – was he supposed to believe a tiger saying it won’t eat meat?

Tae-sung recalled the Seung-hyun he met a week ago. A face that couldn’t be thought of as the usual Han Seung-hyun. Not the usual face that smiled yet couldn’t hide the hostility underneath, but a face that seemed to have no interest in him at all. That appearance remained in his mind like an afterimage even after a week passed.

For a person to change to that degree, there must have been some turning point, but there was nothing like that in Han Seung-hyun’s recent daily life. It seemed more believable to say he had secretly taken acting lessons behind his back.

“Ju Jae-young. Ju Jae-young...”

It also didn’t sit well with him that the man who irked him for a different reason was involved in this story. Seon-hu’s childhood friend. An alpha who was openly treated as a fiancé until his awakening, only without a formal marriage proposal being made.

And the man who looked at Seon-hu with displeased eyes even after that marriage discussion completely fell through. Tae-sung frowned as he pictured Ju Jae-young’s face.

A meeting of two irksome people. Even considering the saying that the enemy of an enemy is a friend, it was a meeting of quite unmatched people.

“I’ll have to check for myself after all.”

Tae-sung muttered softly and gripped his pen again.

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“It’s already Tuesday.”

Seung-hyun, who had been spending a peaceful time at home regardless, stretched and got up. It was 11:30 AM. The hospital appointment was at 3, so there was still some leeway. His face had definitely improved during that time, but it wasn't to the point of saying it had completely healed.

But to this degree, he could pass it off as a bruise from bumping into something. Seung-hyun examined his face in the mirror.

"I guess alphas are really different. Strong too."

The scratch marks had already disappeared without a trace over the weekend. He wondered if applying sunscreen or something would make it better. Seung-hyun, who had been rubbing his face, soon decided to stop and grabbed his phone again.

The next course was a pool villa with a swimming pool. It was a bit cold to enjoy water activities, but he liked that there was an indoor and outdoor pool villa that operated with warm water.

'The TV was huge too. It would be perfect for watching movies.'

Seung-hyun hummed as he looked at the reservation page. He planned to pack his bags after returning from the hospital. He had already bought the things he would use during his stay for tomorrow.

There were still people looking for him, but well, there was no need to respond to each and every one, right?

Han Seung-hyun's garage had several types of cars. Seung-hyun decided to take the car with the largest trunk for his trip tomorrow. It seemed a bit much for just a 3-night 4-day schedule, but what was the point of considering practicality when playing to lift his mood.

"I don't feel like going to the hospital."

After only thinking about going out to play for a while, he really didn't want to go to the hospital. It's not like his condition would improve by going anyway.

But since he had to live with this body anyway, it was only natural that reducing the pain was better than being sick.

"I have to go..."



After rolling around for a while, Seung-hyun checked the time and got up from his seat. There was no need to pack this and that just to go to the hospital. Seung-hyun, who only took his wallet, got into the car.

“Mr. Han Seung-hyun. Please come into the consultation room.”

After checking in and waiting a bit, a nurse called Seung-hyun into the consultation room. As Seung-hyun entered, Dr. Kim greeted him while gauging his mood.

“Did anything special happen?”

“I was on vacation.”

“Have you ever experienced a seizure or severe pain?”

“Once... it hurt like it was tearing here. Fortunately, I had the medicine nearby, so I was okay soon.”

Since that day, Seung-hyun had divided the medicine, keeping some within easy reach and also transferring some to his pocket whenever he changed clothes.

“You mean you were fine as soon as you took the medicine. Other than that, have you had any special pain or done anything else? Anything else? It would be good if you tell me even trivial things.”

“Hmm. I do feel like I get tired a bit more easily than usual. I sometimes have headaches, but not to the point of being unbearable...”

“I’ll prescribe you medicine to take regularly in addition to the emergency medicine, so please take it after every meal. Medicine can’t solve the stamina issue, but it will help with headaches and seizures.”

The doctor said as he scribbled something on the chart. Seung-hyun nodded and asked,

“Then do I have to exercise to improve my stamina?”

“It’s best to refrain from intense exercise to the point of straining yourself, but simple exercise will help with stamina management.”

“What about swimming then?”

“Swimming... I don't recommend it. It's an exercise that consumes quite a bit of stamina, and there's also the possibility of having a seizure or something in the water.”

At the slightly chilling words, Seung-hyun meekly nodded, thinking he should just float around on a tube. The doctor, who had been tapping the keyboard for a moment, spoke.

“I'll schedule your next appointment for a month from now. Is there any day that particularly doesn't work for you?”

“No.”

“Then a month later... I'll schedule it for this day. That day, we'll also do a check-up together to clearly check your condition, so the hospital will send you precautions a week in advance. Please come in after checking.”

The doctor said, tapping a date on the calendar. Seung-hyun nodded and registered the date on his phone calendar.

“...You won't inform others about your physical condition, will you?”

“I guess many people ask.”

“Ahem.”

The doctor couldn't deny it and coughed. Seung-hyun asked in a nonchalant tone,

“So, did you tell them?”

“Not disclosing a patient's condition to others is a basic principle as a medical professional.”

The doctor said, glancing at Seung-hyun's bruised cheek. He seemed like a quite timid person since he was only observing every time, but he was thorough in this aspect. The doctor added a word to Seung-hyun, who thought it was unexpected.

“I will never tell, but... there are people who keep coming to see you...”

It meant, can't you just tell them directly and make it so there's no trouble? Seung-hyun slightly narrowed his eyes as he looked at the doctor's desperate face.

"Please take care of it in the future too. I can get the prescription outside, right?"

If I tell them, all that annoyance will come to me, so why would I? Seung-hyun smiled brightly and got up from his seat.

"...Then I'll see you next month."

"Yes. Take care."

Seung-hyun, leaving behind the doctor who quickly gave up, paid and took the prescription. Seung-hyun checked the medicine after receiving the medicine bag from the pharmacy inside the hospital and thought,

'A long trip would be difficult because of the prescriptions after all.'

It would take a day or two just to go to a far country, so it felt like a waste to stay for only a few days and return.

'I should travel to many nearby countries at least.'

Seung-hyun, who checked the month's worth of medicine, headed to the parking lot. He wanted to hurry home and pack his bags for the pool villa, putting aside realistic thoughts.

"Director Han Seung-hyun."

Then, someone grabbed Seung-hyun's wrist and stopped him. Whenever he heard the damn word director, he had a bad feeling. Seung-hyun turned around with an ominous premonition.

"What brings you to the hospital?"

"Isn't that what I should be asking? It doesn't seem like you came to receive treatment."

"....."

"You must be busy with company work."

Seung-hyun said, glancing at Tae-sung. Unlike himself, who was unemployed, Tae-sung must have had a lot of work to do, yet he came all the way here.

“Are you spying on me?”

“.....”

The lack of response seemed to indicate it was true. Tae-sung, who hesitated for a moment, met Seung-hyun’s eyes straight on.

“Is it related to quitting the company?”

Seung-hyun read a bit of an apologetic emotion in Tae-sung’s eyes as he said that. As the righteous protagonist, it must be a natural emotion. Seung-hyun stared down at the wrist Tae-sung was holding.

‘There’s no need to make him feel unnecessary guilt.’

Seung-hyun forcefully pulled his wrist out of Tae-sung’s grasp and said,

“I just came for a regular checkup. We’re not particularly close, since when did we care about each other to this extent?”

“Your face...”

“You know former Chairman Han’s personality. Do you think he would let me leave the company quietly?”

There was no need to hide it from Tae-sung. Seung-hyun shrugged and spoke. As if it had happened a few times before, Tae-sung shut his mouth without refuting.

“I heard you’ve been close with Mr. Ju Jae-young recently.”

“One stalker is enough. You must have a lot of free time.”

Now the one and only successor of HJ in name and reality. But it was still just the successor position, so he shouldn’t have time to idle around like this. Seung-hyun couldn’t understand Tae-sung spending time on him.

### ***Episode 23***

“Don’t get too close with him.”

“What are you to care about my personal relationships? Be good to your spouse.”

If the villain left me alone, he'd just go off and flirt with the protagonist, so why is he annoyingly following me? Seung-hyun waved his hand, speaking.

“...I don't think Director Han would give up so easily.”

“You think that by yourself. If you followed me this far, you must have seen and heard what I've been doing.”

“It's not something to judge with just 2 weeks, is it?”

Just 2 weeks he says, they were like blood. Seung-hyun shook his head, thinking Tae-sung was like a parrot.

“If that's all you have to say, I'll get going.”

“Wait a moment.”

The moment Seung-hyun tried to leave Tae-sung behind and get in his car, Tae-sung grabbed him again. He looked like he had more to say.

‘It's probably nothing important anyway.’

When Seung-hyun turned around and tilted his head as if telling him to speak, Tae-sung hesitated for a bit before speaking.

“...The chairman was very pleased with that project Director Han took responsibility for and handled.”

“Hah.”

“You may not believe it, but even if you step back from the succession competition, there's no need to abandon the work you've done and leave, right?”

“So what, do you want to have some friendly competition with me now?”

Seung-hyun, who thought it was amazing he could say such things with a face that showed no trust in him at all, recalled something and corrected himself.

“Ah, no. It's closer to wanting to keep me close and monitor me.”

He felt a bit irritated. When he said he'd quietly disappear, why couldn't he trust that and kept tiring him out, even coming up with unconvincing reasons at that.

"The chairman was pleased with that work probably because Director Han was the final submitter."

"The chairman isn't someone who lacks the discernment to praise work that I didn't do properly."

"But you know he's not one to show satisfaction for my work either."

He felt a bit annoyed about something that wasn't even his business. The Han Seung-hyun in the novel may have been embarrassed by the chairman regarding work-related matters, but he wasn't someone who received praise.

'Is his mind syncing up too? Or is he getting sensitive?'

"If you're just testing the waters, stop it. I don't care if you monitor me or whatever, but just don't appear in front of me."

"....."

"Is that all you have to say?"

"...Are you attending the founding anniversary party?"

'Indeed, no matter how much of a protagonist, I knew there was no way he could be so stupidly righteous. There was another reason.'

Seung-hyun smirked, feeling relieved instead. Tae-sung, a bit flustered by that smile, flinched.

"The founding anniversary party."

While saving the next appointment date on his phone, he had caught a glimpse of a date marked as the founding anniversary party. Was it this Friday?

"I'm not going."

"Why..."

“I don’t need to manage connections anymore anyway, and I’d rather do something more fun.”

“...Why have you changed like this? It doesn’t make sense rationally, does it?”

Tae-sung’s eyes that had been looking at Seung-hyun with suspicion the whole time were now filled with confusion. The eyes that lost hostility felt unfamiliar.

“From the moment I first entered Chairman Han’s house, you never looked at me with those eyes even for a moment.”

“.....”

“After we started facing each other in an official capacity at the company, you stopped outright picking fights, but those eyes remained the same.”

“Is being hated your preference?”

“You know that’s not what I mean. Does it make sense rationally?”

Tae-sung grabbed Seung-hyun’s shoulders, speaking. He couldn’t bring himself to believe that ‘that’ Han Seung-hyun was making such a subdued face.

He thought he must be hiding something, that he’d pretend to back down only to bother him again as if nothing happened... but seeing eyes devoid of any ill intent made him feel like he was mistaken.

Rationally, there was no way. Surely there was no way.

‘There must be a reason he’s getting close with Director Ju Jae-young too.’

But Jae-young also only went sightseeing with Seung-hyun, not showing any unusual behavior.

“Whether we liked it or not, we lived seeing each other’s faces for nearly 15 years. Unless it’s time to die, there’s no way that could happen.”

“Hah.”

Seung-hyun let out an empty laugh at his words. He seemed to truly take after Chairman Han. Even saying the right things while backing away. A laugh unconsciously slipped out.

“Just what is the reason...”

“I think I’ve said it several times already, I’ve just decided to live as I want now. I have no interest in bothersome things.”

“So what you do is just go sightseeing and laze around at home all day?”

“Just’? It’s much more meaningful than receiving stress going to a company that’s not very worthwhile even if you attend diligently.”

Seung-hyun removed Tae-sung’s hand gripping his shoulder and lightly dusted off his shoulder. He now felt it was a waste of time to deal with him.

“The founding anniversary party. I’m not going. I have no plans to attend similar events in the future either. Rest assured and enjoy your time as the next group head.”

Seung-hyun walked towards his car, leaving Tae-sung behind. This time, there was no hand grabbing him. Seung-hyun, who got into the car parked not far away, quickly started the engine and the car moved and disappeared.

“...Why did I say that.”

Tae-sung, left alone in the parking lot, muttered in a small voice. Come back to the company. He clearly had no intention of saying such a thing.

But seeing Seung-hyun’s unfitting face, he suddenly felt the need to tie him down somewhere.

‘Ah, no. It’s closer to wanting to keep me close and monitor me.’

It would be more convenient to keep him in a position that could be quickly handled rather than doing something out of sight, as he said. Even as he thought that, it felt odd.

‘As if he would disappear at any moment.’

Tae-sung unconsciously furrowed his brow. After standing there in a daze for a moment, he belatedly came to his senses at the ringing phone.



[Secretary Kim: Director. Did something happen by any chance?] 4:09 PM

It seemed to show concern but was telling him to return quickly. Tae-sung, letting out a small sigh, put his phone back in his pocket and returned to his car.

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“There were some annoying things... but at times like this, you need to shake it all off and enjoy the trip.”

Seung-hyun, who returned home, immediately started packing without thinking of anything else. Packing this and that while thinking about the trip itinerary, he could quickly forget about the bothersome person.

“Tubes, packed. Air pump, packed. Life jackets and swimsuits, packed. Sunscreen. Towels will probably be there, but just in case, one large one. Sunglasses... Oh, these look cool.”

As he packed the luggage one by one, the bag seemed to grow as if it were an evacuation bag, but it seemed fine since he would be loading it in the car anyway.

“Medicine, packed. Food, I’ll buy there. Hmm...”

Seung-hyun checked the packed luggage and double-checked the items. Excluding the things he had to buy there, it seemed everything was packed now.

[Ju Jae-young: So you’re going to Gapyeong tomorrow?] 7:12 PM

As he was blankly looking down at the luggage, his phone rang. It was a text from Jae-young. When Seung-hyun first said he was going on a solo trip, Jae-young asked if he had any intention of including him, but gave up after hearing the dates.

‘Sadly, I have a schedule this week that our madam insists I show my face no matter what, so it’ll be difficult.’

Thinking about it now, that schedule seemed to be HJ’s founding anniversary party, but Seung-hyun soon pushed the unimportant story to the back of his memory.

[I'll leave around lunchtime tomorrow] 7:13 PM

Unlike when they were forced to see each other's faces while using adjacent rooms, they only exchanged occasional texts, so some distance quickly formed again.

But there wasn't really anyone else he could have a proper conversation with, so Seung-hyun was consistently replying to Jae-young's texts within a day, even if a bit slow.

[Ju Jae-young: Will you meet with me again after you return?] 7:15 PM

[I'll think about it.] 7:15 PM

Seung-hyun pretended to slightly refuse. But contrary to his words, he had already made up his mind to play with Jae-young.

'Is it comfortable being with him... Well, since the people around me are all the same, even if I don't know how he is inside, it's comfortable to have someone treat me well on the outside at least.'

Seung-hyun nodded, thinking that. They say the one who has spent money knows how to spend it well, so wouldn't a department store tour be more fun if he knew a thing or two?

"Should I... bring my phone? I only get calls I want to ignore anyway."

Then, glancing at the neatly placed phone beside him, he contemplated for a moment. He could ignore all other contacts, but there was one that made him feel good when he received it.

"...I can just ignore them as I please."

Seung-hyun muttered like that and plugged his phone into the charger.

## ***Episode 24***

"Nice weather."

Seung-hyun took off his sunglasses after getting out of the car. Perhaps because the sun was blazing, the weather felt a bit warmer than usual.

"Oh my. You have a lot of luggage. Should I help you move it?"

As soon as Seung-hyun's car entered, a pleasant-looking caretaker came running out. The caretaker, who helped Seung-hyun unload the luggage, spoke to him.

"Will your companions be arriving later?"

"No. I'll be using it alone."

"Huh? Ah... well, that's possible too."

The caretaker, who was briefly flustered, returned to his kind face as if nothing happened and laughed. He seemed to think it didn't matter since the accommodation fee remained the same even if one person used it.

"Wow. This is the first time a guest has come alone. Honestly, I'm a bit envious. Although ours is a separate building, I sometimes think I want to spend some time alone in a place like this too."

"The facilities were nice."

"The weather will be good for the next few days, so it's perfect for using the pool. Even if the weather gets a bit chilly, the water temperature is maintained, so it's okay. Also, if you look over there, there's an indoor pool inside too..."

The caretaker chatted amiably and explained the separate building to Seung-hyun. It was a place he had seen several times through photos and reviews, but seeing it in person made his heart flutter again.

"If you need anything, please call the number attached here at the entrance. Have a pleasant time, guest."

"Yes. Take care."

After the caretaker who helped move the luggage left, Seung-hyun, now alone in the spacious building, threw himself onto the fluffy sofa. Unlike Seung-hyun's house that lacked a human touch, the beautifully decorated house felt cozy.

"What should I do first? Should I play in the water while the weather is nice? Hmm. Before that... I should buy some food first. So I can eat right away."

Seung-hyun looked at the clear sky through the front window, feeling a bit excited. Indeed, the peacefulness brought by nature was not something to be ignored.

“Nice weather...”

After blankly staring at the sky for a moment, Seung-hyun got up from his seat again. At this rate, he would end up just admiring the scenery until the sun went down.

“Meat... buy meat, and ramyeon after playing in the water. Are soft drinks enough like this?”

Let’s move right away now that I’ve made up my mind.

Seung-hyun immediately took his car out and pushed a cart around the mart, looking here and there.

He wasn’t confident he could eat it all, but wouldn’t it be better to have too much than not enough?

“Oh. This looks delicious too.”

When he put everything that caught his eye, a surprisingly large amount of food was placed in the cart. But it seemed a waste to take out even one.

‘The meals the madam makes are delicious, but sometimes...’

Seung-hyun, who had diligently packed all sorts of snacks, ramyeon, and soda that he wasn’t drawn to in the house with such a barren interior that he felt self-conscious even eating a snack, paid for the items.

“Will you be able to carry it alone?”

“Yes. I have a car too.”

“Still... ah, here. Please help this customer move the luggage to the trunk.”

Seung-hyun, who moved the luggage more comfortably than expected with the unexpected kindness, returned to the accommodation in a slightly excited state. Perhaps it was because he came to a place with good mountains and water, but the people seemed kind too.

Of course, he had to move it alone after returning, but isn't this all part of the fun of a trip?

"Now, shall we really play?"

Seung-hyun, who finished organizing everything he bought in the refrigerator, looked at the outdoor pool with an eager face. Seung-hyun, who quickly changed into loose-fitting swim trunks and a white short-sleeved shirt, inflated the tube he brought and fastened the buckle of the life jacket.

Splash-!

The water, slightly warm unlike the cool air, made Seung-hyun feel good. Seung-hyun, who immediately floated to the surface thanks to the life jacket, laid on his back and looked up at the clear sky.

Leaving behind all the bothersome people and quietly floating in a pool with no one around was more enjoyable than he had imagined.

"Ah... this is it."

Seung-hyun closed his eyes and lightly kicked his legs, enjoying the leisure. The sunny weather, the quietness with only the sound of birds, although there was another identical separate building next to him, it seemed Seung-hyun was the only one reserved for today, as no one entered even after the check-in time passed.

'Should I get rid of the Seoul house too? If I search well, it seems there would be a villa in a quiet place. No. Then it would be hard to get deliveries...'

Seung-hyun, who liked this quietness, briefly dreamed of a country life but shook his head. Seung-hyun was someone who liked living mixed in the city.

This kind of quietness and peacefulness was nice, but it was good because it was occasional. If he had to spend every single day like this, it seemed it might get a bit boring.

It didn't take that long to get here, so wouldn't it be okay to come again when someone was being annoying or when he wanted to clear his head?

"Long-term overseas trips are impossible because of the hospital. But I can still go nearby."

Seung-hyun recalled the passport he had found while rummaging through the house. It was filled with only short-term, short-term, short-term schedules as if he had only gone on business trips.

Even so, it was only to the countries he always visited. The schedule was so packed that it made him wonder if he had ever been on a trip.

“Go to hot springs, amusement parks... amusement parks are no fun alone.”

Should I hint at Ju Jaeyoung to go together? Seung-hyun was lost in thought for a moment. If he says no... should I take Lee Seok-hyung? That seems a bit boring though.

Seung-hyun pictured Seok-hyung, who would probably have the same expressionless face as usual even at an amusement park. No, he might have told him not to go to such places in the first place, saying it's dangerous to be surprised.

“Although he's the person who worries about Han Seung-hyun the most in this world... he's still burdensome.”

A family no better than none, human relationships with not a single person to call a friend was a bit of a relief for the current Seung-hyun who didn't know much about Han Seung-hyun's past.

There would be no questions like ‘Do you remember that time?’, and he wouldn't have to experience the awkwardness of forcibly pretending to be close with someone he doesn't know.

But there was exactly one person who was like a collection of those troublesome situations – Lee Seok-hyung. Should I say it felt like the burden of worrying of about five people combined into one?

“I wonder if he met Jeong Hyeokjae by now. Although he's not a particularly good person either... he didn't have the moth-like aspect like Han Seung-hyun.”

So he felt sorry for him and also wanted him to escape from Seung-hyun and live a happy life.

Jeong Hyeokjae. He was Seung-hyun's aide and also one of the villains. But unlike Seung-hyun who rushed in with a mindset of having nothing to lose, he was rational and smart.

'In the end, he subtly withdrew and contributed to Han Seung-hyun's failure.'

In a way, from Han Seung-hyun's perspective, he was a bastard, but what does it matter for something that won't happen anyway? I should find a job for the poor subordinate whose position became ambiguous because the superior he trusted and followed suddenly quit.

'At least he's someone who distinguishes where to stretch his legs and where not to, so maybe he can control Lee Seok-hyung if necessary...'

Seung-hyun thought like that and surrendered his body that had become drowsy in the warm water. He felt so languid that it seemed he might fall asleep like this.

"Wow. This place is nice. Maybe I should come here for my next vacation too."

Then, someone's voice pulled Seung-hyun back to reality. It was a voice too close to be just a passing tourist.

'...A country bumpkin making trouble?'

"Long time no see. Director Han Seung-hyun."

The moment he heard the most disliked title in an unfamiliar voice, Seung-hyun got up and turned his gaze from the sky.

Perhaps because he had been looking at the light for a long time. The person in front of him was not clearly visible in his slightly darkened vision.

"It's nice to see you enjoying your vacation so well."

His vision gradually became clearer, and the face of the man who spoke began to be seen properly. But like the voice, the face revealed under the sunlight was also unfamiliar.

However, before long, Seung-hyun couldn't help but stiffen his face. Because the man he thought he wouldn't see for the time being, the one he was just thinking about a moment ago, appeared behind the stranger. Seeing him, Seung-hyun could deduce who the unfamiliar person in front of him was.

“Jeong Hyeokjae...”

“Well, there’s no need to use titles now... but it still feels a bit awkward to be called like that.”

They say even a tiger comes when you talk about it, but did it come even just by thinking, not talking? Seung-hyun looked at Seok-hyung standing behind Hyeokjae.

‘This is why I said he’s burdensome...’

Perhaps because his peaceful time was interrupted. His face immediately frowned. Seung-hyun got out of the pool. It was warmer than the recent weather, but as soon as he got out of the water, he got cold and had to wrap his body with the towel he had prepared in advance.

“We have something to talk about...”

“.....”

Seung-hyun lightly ignored Hyeokjae’s words and picked up the cell phone he had placed next to the sun bed. Seung-hyun, who walked to the front door without hesitation, called someone.

“...What are you doing now?”

“Hello.”

Seung-hyun spoke as if he couldn’t hear what was being said next to him. A voice could be heard from the other end of the receiver, and Seung-hyun immediately spoke to the person on the other end.

“Someone who didn’t make a reservation has intruded here. I’d like you to kick them out right away.”

“...Director Han Seung-hyun?”

“Yes. They said they’ll come right away. I understand.”

Seung-hyun finished the short conversation and put down the phone. Glancing at the two people with dumbfounded faces, Seung-hyun spoke.

“What are you doing? Hurry up and get lost.”



## ***Episode 25***

At Seung-hyun's words, the two people looked at him with surprised faces. Seung-hyun tilted his head and spoke.

"They said they'll come within 5 minutes, so it would be better to leave right away before the police are called."

"Isn't it too much before we even brought up the topic?"

"The one who's too much is you for invading my rest time like a stalker without an invitation."

Seung-hyun said calmly. He was curious how they found out and came, but more than that, he wanted to chase away those uninvited guests right away.

"I'm not trying to make a bothersome suggestion. It's nothing much."

"If it's nothing much, you expect me to believe you chased me all the way here?"

Seung-hyun said with a snort. He didn't know, but it was a nonsensical thing to say.

People as free as Ju Jae-young weren't that common in this world setting. They must also be struggling to solidify their position in the company, so if they took time out of their busy schedule to come down here, it couldn't be for a simple reason.

"I thought it would be polite to talk face to face, and while I was at it..."

"It's amazing someone so well-mannered like you came all the way here."

Seung-hyun sneered at Hyeokjae who spoke in a flustered voice and wrung out the water from his shirt. He was having fun, but it completely ruined his mood.

"And you."

He immediately turned his gaze to Seok-hyung. He had a face that seemed to be a bit wary but didn't think his judgment was wrong.

“The suggestion you made before, consider it never happened. Let’s not just avoid seeing each other for work, but not see each other at all.”

“Director.”

“And please stop calling me Director.”

“What are you doing there! This is private property!”

The caretaker could be seen shouting and running from afar. Hyeokjae and Seok-hyung tried to calm the caretaker.

“We know each other.”

“I don’t know them.”

“Di...”

When Seung-hyun glared at Seok-hyung who was about to call him Director again, he shut his mouth. The caretaker looked at the three people alternately with slightly confused eyes.

‘They say they don’t, but they do seem to know each other... no.’

“Whether you know each other or not, this place is currently rented by this guest, so it’s right for the guest to do as he pleases. Get out.”

The caretaker shooed the two away, waving his hand. Hyeokjae said something and tried to persuade the caretaker, but the more he did so, the caretaker’s voice only got louder.

Seung-hyun, who was watching that, fiddled with his cell phone for a moment and then asked Seok-hyung.

“Seeing how quickly you ran here, I guess you did something to the phone.”

“...It was a safety measure. Director, you previously agreed...”

“I’m sure I didn’t agree for it to be used like this.”

Indeed, Seok-hyung was too burdensome. Seung-hyun looked at his phone for a moment and then walked back to the pool. Then he threw the phone into

the water. At the unexplained action, the caretaker and Hyeokjae, who were raising their voices and arguing, also looked at Seung-hyun.

Splash-!

“What are you doing?”

“Oh my, I’ll fish it out right away...”

“There’s no need for that.”

Seung-hyun stopped the caretaker who was about to go into the pool to retrieve the phone. There was no need to retrieve it since he didn’t drop it by mistake.

“What are you doing? Even if I don’t know the details, it’s obvious how much important data is in there...!”

“Is that any of my business?”

Seung-hyun snorted at Hyeokjae who looked angry as if it was his phone that was thrown. How much important data there was, what kind of important story was contained in it, was none of Seung-hyun’s business.

“No, rather, it’s a good thing. I don’t need any room to get involved in bothersome things anyway.”

“...Don’t do something you’ll regret. There’s no need to act in front of us, right?”

With what kind of confidence did he think that way? Seung-hyun looked at Hyeokjae pathetically. More than that, standing with a wet body for a long time made him cold even while wrapped in a towel.

“Sigh... I won’t talk anymore. Just go. Before I call the police.”

“Are you confident you won’t regret it?”

“Yes. I am.”

Seung-hyun said, waving his hand as if it was a bother. The feeling of having his precious vacation interrupted was really the worst.

'I should've thrown away the phone from the beginning. What am I trying to enjoy wealth and honor for...'

He brought a portable tablet anyway, so he could replace most things except for phone and messenger contact.

There was one person he was a bit concerned about... but he could somehow find their contact information, right? It would be fine since he'd buy a new phone as soon as he returned to Seoul anyway.

"Now, now. The guest says he doesn't like it. If you don't leave this time, I'll really call the police."

The caretaker growled and threatened Hyeokjae. It wasn't a very threatening face, but Hyeokjae reluctantly nodded, thinking he might get caught up in a troublesome situation if he unnecessarily called the police.

"...I understand. Let's go for today."

'Please get lost forever, not just 'for today'...'

When one mountain is over, there's another. Clearing one away, another appears. Seung-hyun grabbed his slightly throbbing head and shook it. The two who finally turned to leave returned to their parked car and started the engine.

"Will you really be okay without your phone? It will be inconvenient..."

"I have a tablet, and there's nowhere important to contact anyway, so it's fine. Now that it's come to this, let's just quietly focus on the environment."

Seung-hyun reassured the caretaker who had a worried face. The caretaker, who seemed to be around Seung-hyun's father's age, seemed to worry about Seung-hyun more than his real father.

'He's a kind person.'

"If you look inside the entrance here, there's a phone. It's connected to the management office. Press this and then 101 to connect. Oh my, this is the first time something like this happened... I'm sorry. I should have guarded it well."

"No. How could you have anticipated a strange person doing a strange thing? Thank you for your concern."

Seung-hyun rather reassured the caretaker. Before long, the caretaker left again, and only then could Seung-hyun enter the building again.

“The water activities... I’ll continue tomorrow. It’s not like I’m only staying for a day.”

He entered, shivering, and headed to the bathroom. It felt good while in the water, but perhaps because the air was cold, it felt twice as cold coming out of the water.

“At times like this, I should eat something delicious and forget about it.”

While showering with warm water, he thought about the ingredients he had bought from the mart a little while ago. What should he make to be delicious? He was going to sloppily get by with pork belly and ramyeon today because it was bothersome, but Seung-hyun, who got stressed out from getting unnecessarily involved, decided to cook using the most expensive ingredients.

Even so, it wasn’t much since it was all bought from a neighborhood mart, but there was still the feeling.

“I didn’t expect to be caught by annoying people even after coming all the way here. Sigh... I wish they’d give up on me.”

Seung-hyun muttered while cleaning the shrimp. He thought he wouldn’t even meet Hyeokjae, who appeared from the middle of the novel, but he ended up meeting him at a much earlier point than when he appeared in the actual novel.

Moreover, wasn’t it originally a relationship where Han Seung-hyun was subtly swayed? But he was struggling like that. Seung-hyun was lost in thought as he removed the shrimp heads.

‘He was handsome though...’

Perhaps because they were main and supporting characters in a BL novel, they were all handsome. And they were all handsome in different types.

If Han Tae-sung was a classic handsome man with a slightly irritable feeling, Ju Jae-young had a face that was prettily handsome with a sense of leisure.

Lee Seok-hyung, whose actions made him want to die of frustration, had a steadfast face that suited his personality. Short hair and a stubbornly closed mouth. A face that still showed signs of youth when you looked closely.

‘...Does the face follow the personality?’

Seung-hyun shuddered at the slightly creepy thought and shook his shoulders. What was Jeong Hyeokjae like again? Seung-hyun recalled Hyeokjae’s face, which he hadn’t properly looked at because he was annoyed.

A face that didn’t seem like a young master preciously raised in a chaebol family, but rather looked sharp. If Lee Seok-hyung had the image of a rigid model student, this side had the image of someone who probably played around a lot during his school days.

Should I say he had the image of someone who would cling to something but mercilessly throw it away if things went wrong?

“...Well, they probably designed the image with the personality in mind...”

Seung-hyun muttered, lightly rubbing his ill-tempered looking face. It wasn’t strange that the main and supporting characters were all good-looking, as it was a BL novel buff.

“It’s really amazing that you get annoyed seeing those faces, amazing.”

He shook his head. Honestly, if it wasn’t a terminal illness, he might have hoped, ‘If I do well, maybe I can get along with these handsome men.’ But he knew it was an impossible thing in this situation.

“I’m going to get a handsome face neurosis.”

He was about to get a neurosis on a point he never even thought about in his life. Seung-hyun put the cleaned shrimp aside and immersed himself in the next task.

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“How can a person change like that? Is he really terminally ill or something?”

“Please don’t say such things lightly.”

“I can’t even joke now. I’m your boss now, you know.”

Seok-hyung glared at Hyeokjae with scary eyes. It was a joke to him, but to Seok-hyung, it was a remark he absolutely couldn’t laugh off.

“Did he really lose interest? But you’re still okay with that?”

“It’s fine. It’s my personal matter.”

Seok-hyung spoke with determined eyes. He had already anticipated that Seung-hyun’s reaction would not be good. But that didn’t mean he had any intention of abandoning his plan.