

I Became a Villainous Character with a Limited Lifespan

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Episode 51

“...Are you okay?”

However, contrary to expectations, the two couldn't go anywhere after coming out and their feet were tied on the spot. It was because of Seung-hyun's rapidly worsening physical condition.

“If I take my medicine... it will be fine. Just a moment, just wait a bit until the medicine kicks in.”

After experiencing it a few times, he always kept the medicine in an easily accessible place. Jung-hoon, who was a bit skeptical, looked at Seung-hyun with slightly anxious eyes and asked.

“...I guess your health is quite poor? Since you carry medicine around.”

“It's nothing... you don't need to worry about it. It happens from time to time, but if I take my medicine well, it's fine.”

In the novel, there was never a time when Seung-hyun's symptoms weren't resolved with medicine, so it should be fine. Seung-hyun thought so and got up from his seat.

But strangely, he felt a bit dizzy. His condition had never been this bad before. If there was a time, it would be shortly after becoming “Han Seung-hyun”, when he drank without considering this body's condition.

“I definitely didn't drink alcohol...”

“Let me know when you feel better. We have plenty of time.”

Jung-hoon said with a kind face, as if not rushing. Once the prey was caught, showing an impatient side would only backfire.

“I have something I'm curious about.”

That attitude was a bit effective, so Seung-hyun ended up judging Jung-hoon as a pretty good person in a short time. Seung-hyun, who loosened up a bit, spoke to Jung-hoon first.

“Ask anything. If it’s something I know, I will answer sincerely.”

“...Do I seem that much like a first-timer?”

The question that came out was so trivial that it made him chuckle absurdly. At the question asked with a serious face, Jung-hoon asked back in surprise.

“Here... you mean?”

“Yes. Last time too, and this time, I heard that. I even did some preliminary research and looked into what actions would be natural...”

A newbie shows it from head to toe, but that part is probably the biggest reason. Jung-hoon took out a cigarette, put it in his mouth, and said.

“Putting everything else aside, Seung-hyun, you seem like the type to show what you’re thinking. Even earlier when talking about your ideal type.”

And there was no need to mention that such an aspect piques the interest of guys who can’t leave this field and look for partners. Jung-hoon thought so and exhaled the cigarette smoke.

“Ideal type... why? Isn’t it normal? Don’t most people like that kind of person...?”

“It’s not a unique ideal type, but it’s excessively specific.”

Moreover, he doesn’t seem to have noticed, but anyone who saw Seung-hyun’s face while talking about it would have noticed.

‘He said he’s not dating anyone... but seeing him make that face just thinking about it, is it a long-time one-sided love or a recently broken up lover? No. The lover with the personality he mentioned earlier doesn’t seem like the type to leave such marks...’

“Specific...?”

He seemed to be getting drunk little by little without realizing it. Shall I take him to the hotel before teasing him more? Jung-hoon roughly put out the cigarette he was smoking and placed his hand on Seung-hyun's shoulder.

"Anyway, it's not an important story, right?"

"That's... true."

Seung-hyun nodded with a slightly dazed mind. What does my ideal type matter? It's not like I can date anyway.

"I called a proxy driver, so they'll arrive soon."

What Seung-hyun was allowed was only a short-term relationship that could satisfy both sides. For example, the kind of relationship the man in front of his eyes wanted.

Seung-hyun nodded, thinking so. Before long, a man walked towards the two.

Since he walked towards the two without hesitation, Seung-hyun, thinking he was the proxy driver, kept staring at the ground without even raising his head.

But strangely, just by looking at the way he walked, he felt a sense of familiarity. These shoes too, it seemed like he had seen them somewhere.

"....."

It can't be. Seung-hyun slowly raised his head. With each little rise of his gaze, his conviction of who the person approaching was grew stronger.

"...Why are you here?"

"That's what I want to ask."

As if he had run over, he was panting a little. The urgent-looking appearance of a person who was always leisurely and playful. It was even a bit unfamiliar.

"Is he... someone you know?"

Jung-hoon, who was caught in the middle, asked awkwardly. For now, they were acquaintances, so Seung-hyun slowly nodded.

'Didn't he say he's not dating anyone? No, this... might be even more dangerous than dating.'

Jung-hoon swallowed his saliva slightly. Despite being someone he liked and seemed easy to handle, whom he found after a long time, he didn't even feel regret. That's how scary the momentum of the man in front of his eyes was.

The feeling that if he intervened, he wouldn't see a good end. Jung-hoon observed the two for a moment and quietly left with the proxy driver who had arrived.

"It's a bit awkward to do this on the street."

"...Get in. I'll take you home."

"I didn't even drink, I can go alone."

"You're saying that because you can't see your own face, but Seung-hyun, you're not in a state to drive home right now. Hand over your car keys."

At the scary face he was seeing for the first time, Seung-hyun unknowingly handed the car keys to Jae-young. It was only long after leaving that he thought about why he was so nervous.

"....."

"....."

Unlike usual, Jae-young drove without saying a single word. The atmosphere was so different that it felt like a different person from when he would talk to the point of being annoying every time.

Seung-hyun wasn't the type to initiate conversation in the first place, so there was only bleakness circling in the car on the way home without a word.

How did he know I was here? He wanted to ask, but he couldn't bring himself to speak.

The distance to home wasn't that far, but perhaps because there was no conversation back and forth, it felt much longer than usual.

The house arrived after staring out the window at the passing scenery like that. Even after arriving, Jae-young didn't get out for a long time and just stared outside still.

It was like he was cooling his anger. In the end, it was Seung-hyun who broke the silence.

"...Thank you for driving me. It's late, so now... go back."

"Go back, you say. In this situation now."

However, those words had the opposite effect, far from sending Jae-young back. Jae-young's eyes looking at Seung-hyun lit up.

"This was your business, just this?"

"....."

"What were you thinking going to such a place? If I hadn't searched for you, if I hadn't arrived there at that time..."

It was like he had witnessed a scene of his lover cheating. For a moment, Seung-hyun, who thought that appearance wasn't unpleasant, quietly looked at Jae-young.

"No reply, and when I asked around with the thought of 'what if', I heard you were at a bar known for its bad quality guys. I was worried something might happen..."

From his appearance of speaking while ruffling his hair, Seung-hyun could feel how much he was worried about him. Even while being annoyed, feeling affection was a bit unfamiliar yet pleasant for Seung-hyun.

'It's like we're dating.'

But he soon realized it wasn't something to be happy about. This situation was dangerous. As if one more step would make them a special relationship. No, even if he didn't deliberately take one more step...

"Why on earth...!"

"What's wrong with that?"

“...What did you say?”

“You’re talking as if we’re something.”

Maybe it was an opportunity. For Jae-young who keeps trying to cross the line, and for himself.

“Why did you go there, you ask? Isn’t the reason for going to such a place obvious?”

“What...”

“Isn’t it a place you go to find someone to spend the night with? I’m not a clueless kid, did you think I went without knowing?”

At those nonchalant words, Jae-young blankly stared at Seung-hyun. It was a face that didn’t properly understand what Seung-hyun was saying.

“It’s no different from the day I first met you, Ju Jae-young.”

In Seung-hyun’s voice saying it was nothing special, Jae-young failed to notice the slight trembling. The pale complexion visible under the faint streetlight, and the slightly tense look were also obscured by the words coming out of Seung-hyun’s mouth.

“I think it’s good to make it clear on this occasion, don’t act as if we’re something special. You have no right to interfere with a friend’s sex life.”

“.....”

“I was startled earlier so I couldn’t say this... but it’s a nuisance. Clearly.”

Did it sound nonchalant? Seung-hyun stared straight at Jae-young while saying words contrary to his heart. Jae-young’s expression, which Seung-hyun’s gaze reached, began to change little by little.

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“...Since we’re not something special, it’s a nuisance.”

Unlike usual, Jae-young’s voice confirming Seung-hyun’s words was low. He had a face that didn’t understand what he heard.

Seung-hyun knew too. Where his heart was headed. And also the fact that his own heart was also aimed at the same place Jae-young thought.

That's why it wasn't a pleasant thing for Seung-hyun to see Jae-young's hurt face now. But when was life ever about doing only pleasant things?

"Are you saying that sincerely?"

Jae-young asked. His attitude was that it couldn't be. He wasn't a slow-witted person, so even without saying or expressing it, he would have noticed how Seung-hyun came to see Jae-young.

So he approached without fear. Seung-hyun, who liked that appearance but kept delaying the decision, thinking if it was okay like this, if this much was fine.

But the moment he saw Jae-young's face, he knew. That he could no longer avoid it with such a complacent thought. The heart that had grown too big to be included in the small range of "this much" had become too huge to turn his eyes away.

No one would make such a face to someone who could be replaced by anyone. He didn't know how he was able to find where Seung-hyun was, but there would be no one who would do such a troublesome thing for someone trivial.

"Is there a reason it wouldn't be sincere?"

"That we're nothing to each other."

"If you didn't misunderstand, why do you keep talking about it?"

"Because... it doesn't make sense."

Jae-young took a step closer to Seung-hyun. As Jae-young approached closely, Seung-hyun, who stepped back in case he noticed his shaking expression, tried to speak again, but Jae-young stopped him.

"I told you not to say anything... but there are things you can know without explicitly confirming with words, right? I thought we had that between us."

The slightly calmer tone felt more unfamiliar than a moment ago when he seemed angry. Unlike Seung-hyun's wavering gaze, Jae-young's gaze was upright and still.

Seung-hyun inevitably took one more step back from the eyes that made him feel embarrassed just by looking. To hide his shaking heart, he had to lay the lies thicker.

"It's a misunderstanding. A nonsensical misunderstanding."

"....."

"It hasn't been that long. As I said earlier, I guess you've already forgotten where we first met."

Seung-hyun reminded Jae-young of their first meeting again. A place no different from where Jae-young found Seung-hyun a moment ago, a place only for casual encounters.

"Whoever I met there, I would have slept with them, and if that person was annoying like you, Ju Jae-young, it would have become a relationship no different from now. It's not because you're special."

At first, he thought meeting Jae-young there was misfortune. Why Ju Jae-young of all the many people in the world?

But as time passed, that thought gradually faded away. Because the time spent together was fun. The silly jokes and the relationship that became too close were nice.

"I just left it alone because I was too lazy to correct it, but I didn't know you were thinking of it this way."

Certainly, but Seung-hyun lied as if he had never thought that way. Seung-hyun wanted to become a replaceable person to Jae-young. Someone he wouldn't grieve for long even if he suddenly disappeared one day.

"As you know, I didn't live an interesting life before, right? So I wanted to live a little more interestingly from now on."

Seung-hyun maintained his nonchalant act. He wasn't confident that his poor acting could properly deceive Jae-young, so the harsh words grew longer.

“So that’s all it is. It doesn’t matter who the other person is. Sleeping together is something you can do with any passerby. Is there a need to assign meaning to that?”

The more he did that, the more clearly effective it was, so Jae-young’s face was noticeably stiffening as Seung-hyun’s words grew longer.

“You’re more naive than you look. Ju Jae-young.”

It was always Seung-hyun who was swayed by the other person’s words, but today, unlike usual, Seung-hyun was swaying Jae-young.

“...You say it’s a misunderstanding.”

Jae-young opened his mouth heavily. Seung-hyun answered without being able to meet eyes with such Jae-young.

“Yes. It’s a misunderstanding. A completely nonsensical misunderstanding at that.”

Seeing the eyes that didn’t know how to give up, it didn’t seem like he would easily end the conversation. Seung-hyun took a small deep breath and raised his head.

“I told you not to talk like that.”

At the moment when a strange atmosphere was created, Seung-hyun, who lied as if covering Jae-young’s mouth was for his sake, took a step closer to Jae-young.

“Don’t cross the line. No matter what I do, or who I spend the night with, you have no authority to control that.”

“...”

“If you can’t keep that line, it will be hard to remain even as we are now.”

Seung-hyun pretended to be calm. Even if this ended their relationship, it couldn’t be helped.

‘Even if I hate it... it’s something that can’t be helped.’

Someday, a moment will come when Jae-young thinks, "I'm glad I made that choice then." Thinking so, Seung-hyun said,

"I don't need a lover. Even if I need a lover or spouse someday, it won't be an alpha like you, Ju Jae-young, but an omega."

"....."

"Right now, it doesn't matter how I enjoy myself, but someday, I'll have to build a normal family too, right? Like Director Han, I might be lucky enough to have my child born as a dominant. If Chairman Han is healthy until then, that child could also take a position, couldn't they?"

It was said to hurt Jae-young, but with each word he spat out, the one getting hurt was Seung-hyun himself. A normal family. He didn't know he would say such a thing with his own mouth.

"You too, Ju Jae-young, will have to stop this play someday and marry a proper omega. Since Lee Seon-hu is married, you have nowhere to hold onto anymore, right?"

"How do you know about Seon-hu?"

Seung-hyun was a reader of this world, so he naturally knew that Jae-young had liked Seon-hu for a long time. However, for Jae-young, it was surprising that Seung-hyun knew about Seon-hu and his relationship.

"...Of course, I would know. Who is Lee Seon-hu's spouse?"

It wasn't a situation he couldn't handle, so Seung-hyun nonchalantly avoided the situation. He definitely wanted to do something, not wanting to think about Seon-hu, but after going around, it ended up like this again.

"It's something you can find out just by looking into it a bit, what's so surprising about it?"

Jae-young's eyes could be seen shaking severely. Lee Seon-hu is still someone who can shake Jae-young. Thinking that, it felt like his mood was sinking a bit.

"Come to think of it, since Lee Seon-hu was a recessive... you couldn't help but have less aversion to recessives."

The nasty words that flew out might have been because he didn't like those shaking eyes. Seung-hyun, who said hurtful words that he didn't need to say, even hurting himself, bit his lip.

"If I was an omega, I would have even proposed then. But what can I do? Even if I'm a recessive, I'm an alpha, and I have no intention of meeting such expectations..."

"Enough."

Jae-young cut off Seung-hyun's words. He seemed angry and also a bit sad.

"I understood, so please stop."

He got the reaction he wanted, but he didn't feel good. Now it would really end. Seung-hyun turned his gaze away from Jae-young.

"If that's all you had to say, go back now. Thanks to you, I couldn't do what I was going to do, so it cooled off."

They probably wouldn't be able to call each other by the shoddy name of friends anymore. It would be a lie to say there was no regret, but this was right. Seung-hyun acted tough until the last moment.

"Or will you do it instead, Ju Jae-young? That would be fine too."

He thought there would be no reply or a stinging reply that would give a final blow due to the hurt. As expected, there was no answer from Jae-young, and Seung-hyun turned his back on Jae-young as is.

"Thank you for driving me. If you want the things at home, I'll return them..."

"Okay."

At the answer that came even before the words ended, Seung-hyun smiled bitterly. Fortunately, Jae-young couldn't see his expression.

"I won't touch them and leave them as is, so come find them or send someone, whichever is convenient."

"No, that doesn't matter at all."

No way. Seung-hyun stopped as is without being able to look back. A shadow slightly longer than Seung-hyun's took a big step towards him.

"If I interfered, I should take responsibility."

A familiar yet unfamiliar voice tickled Seung-hyun's ears. It was the worst answer.

Episode 53

Seung-hyun turned around saying that. He thought this would be the end, but Jae-young's following words stopped his footsteps.

"If that's what you wanted, you should have said so earlier. Then I wouldn't have acted so clueless like that."

It was definitely a different tone from usual. At the cold tone without playfulness, Seung-hyun slowly turned his body towards Jae-young.

It was a face he was seeing for the first time. Even at their first meeting that he couldn't remember properly, he didn't seem to have such a cold face.

He didn't want to see a hurt face, but he didn't want to see a face like this instead either. It was truly the worst situation.

"...I guess you have no pride, Ju Jae-young."

However, Seung-hyun couldn't say kind and gentle words that could turn Jae-young's face back to normal.

He thought if he hurt him and pushed him away, he would be pushed away as is, but Jae-young rather got stubborn and came closer.

"I don't know if pride is even something to bring up, but what's that measly pride."

Jae-young, who had come close before he knew it, lowered his head to Seung-hyun. The slightly leaking pheromones made Seung-hyun shudder.

"If there's the simplest solution, there's no need to avoid it, right?"

"....."

“It’s not a difficult thing.”

He felt it was the last chance. If he turned around after hurting him with his words one more time here, it would really end then. But Seung-hyun couldn’t do that.

“...Okay. Then.”

Was this pride or lingering attachment? He couldn’t tell, but one thing was certain. The end for the two of them wasn’t now. It would definitely become a different relationship from before.

At first, he really intended to meet friends. Since Seung-hyun couldn’t drink alcohol, he unwittingly went on a dry spell, so he wanted to drink after a long time.

“By the way, I heard an interesting rumor these days.”

“What rumor?”

Making an appointment to meet wasn’t difficult, so it seemed to be going smoothly. However, the conversation with his friend made Jae-young change his steps.

“I heard you’re having fun with Director Han these days. I thought something might happen seeing you two go out together that time, but something happened on the other side?”

The light tone seemed to determine that the two wouldn’t last long.

“There are a lot of guys who want to hear your story. If you say you’re coming, they’ll make time even if they don’t have it and flock to you.”

He didn’t like that it became a topic of conversation, but it especially bothered him that this relationship was naturally regarded as a light matter. The clueless friend just continued talking, feeling excited alone.

“Even guys who aren’t interested sometimes talk about it. That Director Han wouldn’t back down so easily, so there might be something fun happening at HJ soon. Especially the stock guys.”

“.....”

“What’s good about having friends? If you know, tell me. Ah. If it’s Director Han, he seems like the type to be rough in bed too.”

“What do you know about that person?”

Jae-young chuckled. Why do people talk as if they know Seung-hyun very well? In fact, he was a person who didn’t resemble the rumors at all.

“Ah, sorry.”

It seemed he wasn’t completely clueless, as an apology was heard over the phone. Jae-young continued the conversation without saying it was okay.

“If you’re going to talk about that, I won’t go.”

“Okay. It would be nice to see you after a long time. I’ll save you a seat. I have some leftover from last time, let’s have that?”

“Yeah. It’s tiring to have a lot of people, so call a moderate amount.”

“But... I’m asking just in case, with Director Han, it’s just that, right?”

He didn’t say exactly what, but it wasn’t hard to tell what kind of relationship he meant. He probably meant a sex partner level relationship.

“Who knows.”

“...Really? No. You’re joking, right?”

“I don’t know either.”

Jae-young was definitely attracted to Seung-hyun. And he was convinced Seung-hyun also had feelings for him.

But their relationship was still ambiguous. He wanted to get a little closer, but Seung-hyun’s behavior seemed a bit different from simple shyness.

As if running away from something. Well, even so, he wasn’t avoiding him, so in the near future...

“Then it’s a bit... you know.”

“I know you’re very interested in other people’s love lives, but hearing that here and there, I’m getting sick of it.”

“No, that’s not what I meant... I heard something concerning a little while ago.”

Jae-young, noticing the awkwardness in the voice over the phone, waited for an answer for a moment. And at the answer that came back not long after, he changed his destination without hesitation and drove the car.

‘There was a guy who said he saw Director Han at the bar earlier. He was with a pretty bad crowd. If it’s just for enjoyment, it’s fine, but...’

Was it related to the overly late reply? Did he really think the bar was just a place to talk and leave?

He seems to know the world well, but there are parts he doesn’t know, so it might really be like that. No matter what, how can he think of it so lightly? With that thought, he headed to where Seung-hyun was.

When he saw him with another man, he was angry. But even then, he couldn’t think that Seung-hyun really intended to spend the night with that man.

Because Seung-hyun liked him. Even if he didn’t try to show it, the person himself already knew.

But as if ridiculing that conviction, Seung-hyun denied Jae-young’s words. What he did with Jae-young was nothing special, something he could do with anyone.

But even if it wasn’t Seung-hyun, it wasn’t a misunderstanding for Jae-young. To the point where he wouldn’t hate Seung-hyun even after hearing such sharp words.

But it’s not that he wasn’t angry, so Jae-young stopped Seung-hyun in the worst way. The result was now.

“Ah, heuuk.”

The flush that rose up to under the eyes on the pale white face made Seung-hyun look like he was crying. Seung-hyun, who had half buried his face in the pillow, didn’t like it, so Jae-young grabbed his face a little hard and turned it.

“Why? Isn’t this what you wanted to do? You shouldn’t get tired from the start.”

“I’m not, t-tired...”

Seung-hyun took a deep breath and looked at Jae-young. Although it was the second time, since the first relationship was half erased from his memory, he couldn’t come to his senses due to the excessively unfamiliar sensation.

Despite the angry-sounding tone, the touch loosening his back was soft and careful. The lotion that wet his back instead of gel was cold, he thought for a moment, but his body heated up at the strong stimulation.

Was this sensation that made the back of his neck sting what pheromones were? Seung-hyun looked up at Jae-young, twitching his waist. The face that was flushed just like his was wiping sweat while brushing his hair up.

“Ahh!”

“Well, it would be a lie to say you’re tired when this part isn’t.”

Jae-young grabbed Seung-hyun’s hips and thrust his waist hard. The erect penis swayed following his movement.

“Haa, ung. Aah!”

“I’ve never thought it’s a shame you’re not an omega. Isn’t it natural? Like this, even if you’re not an omega, you’re leaking and liking it.”

“Ahheuk!”

Every time his words were cut off, Seung-hyun ejaculated with a long moan at the penis strongly piercing the point. At the inner walls strongly squeezing his penis simultaneously with the ejaculation, Jae-young slightly frowned.

“Haa, how did you endure it all this time? If I knew you liked it this much, I would have done it for you long ago. I was clueless.”

“.....”

Even though it was just his own words coming back, Seung-hyun bit his lip slightly at the piercing words even in his dizzy mind.

“Since I interfered with what you were clumsily trying to do, I should at least do better than that.”

Jae-young half pulled out his sticky wet penis from inside Seung-hyun. He hesitated for a moment without a condom, but moved without minding at Seung-hyun’s words saying what does it matter anyway since he’s an alpha.

If he had a relationship with an omega, it might have been a bit annoying that the back doesn’t get wet, but Jae-young had no basis for comparison. Rather, the provoking words made him feel competitive.

“There’s no need to think it’s a shame that you’re not an omega. You’re accepting it well enough that there’s no need for that.”

Jae-young’s semen mixed with lotion made a mess of Seung-hyun’s back. The liquid flowing out from deep inside was sticky enough to not lose out even compared to an omega’s.

“Ah!”

Jae-young pushed the overflowing semen back inside. Seung-hyun moaned and tightened his back at the hand pressing the sensitive spot. He said he wasn’t tired yet, but in fact, he was so exhausted that he felt like he could collapse at any moment.

But he didn’t want to say it. Seung-hyun bit his lip and grabbed his hazy mind. The night ahead was still long, and the two had no intention of separating from each other.

Episode 54

“Ugh.”

Seung-hyun moaned at Jae-young’s tongue tickling his chest and gripped the sheet tightly. There wasn’t a single part of his body that didn’t feel strange.

It was ticklish to the point of frustration. As Seung-hyun tried to push Jae-young away, Jae-young slightly twisted his head while biting Seung-hyun’s nipple.

“Ah!”

“Haa. Why?”

Seung-hyun looked at Jae-young while panting heavily. Why? Is he asking because he doesn't know now?

"Enough with the chest..."

"You don't like it?"

"It feels weird. And there's no need to touch it... Ah!"

Jae-young raised his hand and pressed Seung-hyun's slightly swollen nipple, as if he didn't like it. Seung-hyun moaned again at the touch on the sensitized area.

"Your body likes it even if your words don't. Lies as soon as you open your mouth."

"It's not a lie... Really, ah!"

Far from letting go of Seung-hyun's chest, Jae-young tormented it even more persistently. Although he said he didn't like it with his mouth, his waist trembling slightly and his breathing roughening every time the weak spot on his chest was touched didn't lie.

"Aheuk. Stop. Just, just put it in. I hate this."

Seung-hyun, who couldn't bear the tickling sensation, reached out to Jae-young, thinking insertion would be better. Whichever it was, it felt strange all the same, but rather than this, he preferred something that would definitely make him lose his mind.

"Please..."

His pleading face was flushed as if he would cry at any moment. He wanted to tease him a bit more, but Jae-young was also reaching his limit.

The completely wet entrance, due to the act being repeated several times already, twitched and accepted the thickest part of the glans. Even though it had entered his body many times already, the penis entering through the delicate flesh and into his body was too much, so Seung-hyun gripped the sheet tightly.

Jae-young, who didn't like that sight, frowned. Even though it had been quite a long time since they had sex, Seung-hyun still wasn't trying to touch Jae-young as if something terrible would happen if he touched him.

He gripped the sheets so hard that they became a mess. It was as if he felt that what Seung-hyun was crumpling wasn't the sheets but his heart.

“Ah!”

Jae-young overlapped his hand on top of Seung-hyun's hand gripping the sheet and thrust his waist up hard. Perhaps because the inside had become more sensitive after ejaculating several times, Seung-hyun's inner walls squeezed his penis more strongly than at first.

“Haa, uuh.”

Jae-young, who had been thrusting his waist while tightly holding Seung-hyun's hand trying to pull away from him, sighed deeply and looked down at Seung-hyun.

Looking at his penis that had ejaculated several times and his twitching waist, he clearly seemed to be feeling it, but strangely, his pheromones were barely felt.

‘Even if it's because he's a recessive, I think his pheromones were felt more strongly when we first met than this.’

“...My pheromones.”

“Ugh!”

“Can you feel them?”

Jae-young asked, lightly pressing on Seung-hyun's belly where his penis was filled. Seung-hyun slowly blinked his eyes while panting heavily.

“Haa, haa... Yes.”

The back of his neck tingled, and his already heavy breathing became a little more unsteady. Since he wasn't an omega, rather than getting excited, it was closer to an instinctive feeling of unknowingly submitting.

But he didn't dislike it. Seung-hyun took a deep breath and said,

“It smells... refreshing.”

They said each person had a unique pheromone scent. Seung-hyun wasn't used to things like perfume, so he didn't have the words to explain exactly what Jae-young's scent was like, but he could be sure of one thing – it was a scent that made him feel refreshed and good.

“Refreshing and also cozy...”

“...I'm glad you at least like that.”

“Auk!”

Jae-young, who had muttered softly before the answer ended, started moving again. Why is he being so mean all of a sudden after asking? Seung-hyun looked up at him, twitching his hand trapped under Jae-young's.

“Haa...”

A slightly flushed face, sweat running down his forehead. It was a face that seemed somewhat impatient. Seung-hyun was the one being thrust into to the point of making his head spin, but somehow it seemed like Jae-young had a more difficult expression. Seung-hyun unknowingly moved his lips.

“It's not that I only like that...”

Surprised by the words that unconsciously slipped out, Seung-hyun opened his eyes wide. Fortunately, that small voice didn't seem to reach Jae-young.

“Ack!”

Jae-young, who had been looking down at Seung-hyun expressionlessly, bit his collarbone and let go of Seung-hyun's hand. His fleshless waist was almost completely grasped by the large hands.

“You were the one who asked me to put it in first, Seung-hyun, so don't say weak things.”

“Ah, it's too fast...”

Jae-young grabbed Seung-hyun's thigh, the only part with some flesh, briefly kissed his knee, and continued the act. Now he was really going to go crazy. Seung-hyun's waist, unable to finish his words, curved greatly.

He couldn't even properly remember when he fell asleep. Seung-hyun forcibly got up his body that felt as heavy as if something was hanging from it.

"Uuk..."

He definitely didn't drink alcohol, so why did he feel a sensation that would only be felt the day after drinking to death? Seung-hyun grabbed his head that hurt like it would shatter and staggered to the bathroom.

"Blargh."

Even though he didn't eat that much, Seung-hyun, who threw up everything he ate the day before, came out of the bathroom and hurriedly looked for his medicine bottle.

Clang-!

Perhaps because he was in too much of a hurry, he kicked something without being able to see the floor properly, causing a loud sound to echo in the quiet house.

But taking the medicine was more urgent than that. Seung-hyun, not caring about his hurting foot, found the medicine packet and poured it into his mouth. It was a fast-acting medicine, so he would be fine soon.

But for now, it was hard to even move a finger. As soon as he swallowed the water, Seung-hyun sat down on the spot. How much time passed? A large foot came into Seung-hyun's sight.

"Are you okay?"

Jae-young, who seemed to have come out after hearing the sound, met eyes with Seung-hyun. A worried face, unlike last night, a familiar face.

"You don't look well."

"It's because we did that so much yesterday."

"Who do you think you're fooling?"

Jae-young clicked his tongue as if it was absurd and sat down with one knee on the floor. The hand that touched Seung-hyun's cheek was cool.

"You have a fever... You're in a state where you can't even get up by yourself right now."

"It's fine. I'll be okay soon. Yesterday was just..."

"Don't think of getting away with excuses like a hangover. You're not in a state to be swayed by words like that right now."

"...A hangover?"

Seung-hyun raised his head with difficulty and faced Jae-young again. A hangover? He clearly only drank non-alcoholic beverages yesterday.

"I didn't drink alcohol."

"Why are you telling a lie that won't even work?"

"No, really... I only drank non-alcoholic beverages, but it was sweet."

Seung-hyun made a face like he was wronged. Only then did Jae-young, who realized Seung-hyun wasn't lying, frown.

"Did you just drink whatever they gave you?"

"...It was definitely non-alcoholic... It was sweet."

"Sigh. It's a trick used by bad guys. Masking the taste and smell of alcohol with sweetness to get people drunk. To make them out of their mind and take them away."

It was a face asking how he could not know that. Was that it? Seung-hyun blankly lowered his head and looked at his feet.

"There was a strong smell of alcohol when I got close."

"...I didn't drink much."

"Rather than that, I think you need to go to the hospital first, so get dressed."

"I'm really fine. If I just rest a bit..."

Seung-hyun, who got up from his spot by force, lost strength due to severe dizziness and almost fell sideways. Jae-young, who caught Seung-hyun in the nick of time, sighed and picked him up.

“P-Put me down.”

“You’re not in a state to walk by yourself right now. Stop being stubborn and stay still.”

Jae-young headed to the dressing room while holding Seung-hyun. Seung-hyun, for whom even the slight shaking while being held was too much, groaned softly.

“See? You’re having a hard time just being carried, but you’re being stubborn. I’ll take you to a nearby hospital, so...”

“No.”

Seung-hyun was startled and raised his head. If he went to the hospital, he would have to talk about his medical history. He absolutely didn’t want to let Jae-young know.

“I have a doctor in charge. I’ll go there... No, I’ll take a taxi, so go back.”

“No. Unlike the cold-hearted Seung-hyun, I’m not the kind of person who can leave a sick person alone right after spending the night with them.”

But Jae-young only shook his head as if he had no intention of backing down at all. The arms supporting his slightly trembling body were firm.

“...Alright. Put me down for now. You’re not going to say you’ll even dress me, are you?”

This time, Jae-young obediently put Seung-hyun down. Seung-hyun, who got dressed simply, sent a message to Professor Kim.

“Tell me right away if you get carsick.”

After a while, Jae-young, who finally got Seung-hyun in the passenger seat, started the car. Seung-hyun let out a long sigh. The medicine still wasn’t taking effect, and his condition was the worst.

Episode 55

“I clearly said no alcohol...”

Professor Kim, who was waiting for Seung-hyun, ran out as soon as he spotted him. Seung-hyun hurriedly brought his finger to his lips.

“Ah... You have a companion.”

The quick-witted Professor Kim immediately realized that Seung-hyun didn't want to inform his companion about his physical condition. He guided Seung-hyun into the examination room.

“I didn't drink it on purpose. I definitely ordered non-alcoholic.”

It was the truth, but why did it sound like an excuse? Seung-hyun made a slightly embarrassed face and lowered his head.

“Did the staff make a mistake?”

“No. It wasn't the staff... I think the other side deliberately ordered a strong alcoholic drink with a strong sweetness.”

“The other side?”

Professor Kim asked with his eyes wide open. Although it was right not to ask about a patient's private life, he couldn't just overlook the word “other side” that came out of Seung-hyun's mouth.

“...I think the person I met at the bar intended to get me drunk.”

At the word bar, Professor Kim's eyes grew a little bigger. He didn't add any words, but it was obvious what he was thinking.

“I understand you didn't drink on purpose. But... Director Han. Weren't you someone far from such places?”

“Don't they say people change when they're about to die? That can happen too.”

“...Even so, there's no need for you to abuse your body, is there?”

Professor Kim said carefully. It might be presumptuous, but it seemed like Seung-hyun needed to hear these words now.

His physical condition was definitely not good. Although it wasn't very noticeable on the outside, during regular checkups, various levels were slowly dropping.

They were minimizing the pain with medicine, but that medicine only helped reduce the pain he felt and couldn't improve his condition.

"First, I'll give you an injection prescription, so it would be good to get it with an IV before you go."

Professor Kim prescribed without a long explanation. Although he was concerned, he wasn't close enough with Seung-hyun to say more than that. He decided to focus on his job as a doctor and looked over Seung-hyun's last checkup results.

"Your rut cycle is almost here, but since your pheromone levels are very low, there's a high possibility that you won't have a rut or it will pass in the form of a short cold."

There were many other visible changes, but Professor Kim closed the chart without explaining them. If it couldn't be fixed, it would be better not to talk about it.

"Is your companion a friend?"

"A friend..."

Seung-hyun thought for a moment. He probably couldn't call him a friend anymore. It was a bit of a bitter feeling, but it couldn't be helped. Seung-hyun shook his head and answered.

"No."

"He seemed very worried, but about your condition..."

"He doesn't know. I have no intention of telling him either. I'd appreciate it if you don't tell anyone about my condition."

"Of course I won't. But... wouldn't it be good to inform your family after all?"

"Family?"

Seung-hyun let out a hollow laugh. The idea of “Han Seung-hyun”’s family worrying. It was ridiculous even though he hadn’t lived long in this body.

Professor Kim probably knew about Seung-hyun’s family too. Despite his first impression, he seemed to be a quite compassionate person.

“No. There are no exceptions. Please keep it a secret. Anyway, everyone will find out before the end of next year at the latest.”

Even if they found out, nothing would change, but even if there was a reaction different from what he thought, it didn’t seem like it would be pleasant. It seemed he had become quite synchronized with the life of “Han Seung-hyun” during that time.

“If you’re done talking, I’ll be going.”

Seung-hyun got up from his seat. He couldn’t force it if the person himself didn’t want to. Professor Kim was about to say goodbye to Seung-hyun when he remembered something and asked,

“How is Secretary Lee doing?”

“I don’t know. He’s not my secretary anymore. He got a new job, so he must be doing well.”

At Seung-hyun’s words, a troubled expression appeared on Professor Kim’s face. Seung-hyun, who thought he knew why, asked,

“I guess he came and asked about my condition.”

“...I thought it was okay since Secretary Lee knew. I’m sorry.”

Professor Kim bowed his head and apologized. Well, it would have been stranger if Lee Seok-hyung completely lost interest in Han Seung-hyun overnight.

“It’s fine.”

Since he changed his number and even moved, it would be okay to let him know that much. Seung-hyun quietly shook his head.

“Just don’t tell him my changed contact information. Secretary Lee needs to live his own life now too.”

Seung-hyun said only that and left the examination room. Although it was still burdensome to see Seok-hyung's face, he also knew what Han Seung-hyun meant to him, so it seemed right to allow that much.

"What did he say?"

Jae-young, who was waiting for Seung-hyun to come out in front of the examination room, immediately approached him. Seung-hyun stepped back from him and said,

"It's just that my condition got a little worse because the medicine I was taking didn't agree with the alcohol. I'll get an IV and go back, so you can go back now, Ju Jae-young."

"...I'll take you back when you're done with the prescription. Getting one IV doesn't mean you'll be completely fine, right?"

"I can call a proxy driver."

Seung-hyun shook his head. He had no choice earlier, but now he had to send him back.

"Why were you taking medicine? The medicine packet was on the floor earlier too. You never mentioned having an illness..."

"I'm tired. Go back."

"Is it that hard to just tell me that one thing? At least..."

"Do I have an obligation to explain my condition to you, Ju Jae-young? What are we to each other?"

Seung-hyun deliberately spoke sharp words again. Jae-young, who stared at Seung-hyun frozen for a moment, took a small deep breath and calmed his anger.

"Didn't you say we were friends? Can't I ask that much as a friend?"

"Until yesterday, you could have said that... but we can't call each other friends anymore, can we?"

Bitterness seeped into his laughter. Seung-hyun spoke without even properly looking at Jae-young.

“We’re closer to sex partners.”

Jae-young froze, unable to even answer. It was a name for a relationship he had never even thought of. Certainly, they had crossed the line too much to be called friends, but sex partners?

“Fortunately, I clearly remember this time. It was good. To the point that I regret not remembering last time. If I had, I wouldn’t have said something like friends from the beginning.”

“.....”

“Ah, it’s not too late now either. What do you think? You enjoyed it yesterday too, didn’t you, Ju Jae-young?”

At Seung-hyun’s words, Jae-young bit his lower lip hard. This was definitely a situation that wasn’t in his expectations. Seung-hyun clearly seemed to be timid and far from head-on confrontation, but he wasn’t someone who would sharpen his words this much either.

But right now, Seung-hyun was wielding words as if he only wanted Jae-young to get hurt and leave.

“Okay.”

However, Jae-young was also not normal to that extent. If Seung-hyun wanted to push Jae-young away with such a low-grade name, Jae-young wanted to stay by his side with any name.

“I was just thinking the same thing. We were lucky to connect well with each other. I’m really glad we match well, at least in this aspect.”

Jae-young didn’t think everything Seung-hyun showed him was a lie. Seung-hyun wasn’t someone skilled at acting.

Even now. Even while saying hurtful words, his wavering eyes checking his reaction, his trembling fingertips, his lightly bitten lower lip were telling him.

“Let’s do it. Sex partners. It’s not a difficult thing.”

So he wanted to stay by his side with any name. Until the hedgehog-like Seung-hyun could retract his spines and look at him properly someday. For that, it was important to not let go of the connection with Seung-hyun first.

“So, when should we schedule the next meeting? Partner.”

But he couldn't help his tone becoming sarcastic. Jae-young was also human, so he was hurt, and he wasn't mature enough to hide that wound.

“...Set it up as you please. Right now... I want to be alone right now. I'll contact you, so go back for now.”

Seung-hyun lowered his head deeply while looking at such Jae-young. There was nowhere else to run anymore.

“Go back for now.”

This was probably the best he could do today. Jae-young looked at such Seung-hyun for a moment and nodded.

“Be careful...”

Before he could even say be careful going in, Seung-hyun disappeared following a nurse. Jae-young, who watched his back for a moment, grabbed a nurse and asked,

“There's something I want to ask.”

“Yes. Go ahead.”

“That patient, is he really okay?”

“Ah...”

The nurse checked Seung-hyun's face and made a troubled expression for a moment. Then she shook her head and answered,

“I can't tell you about the patient's personal information. I'm sorry.”

The nurse lightly bowed her head to Jae-young and left. Is he really okay? He was worried, but with the relationship of sex partners, there was nothing more he could do.

Episode 56

“Umm...”

When did he fall asleep? Only the trace of the IV remained on his arm. Wake me up. Seung-hyun raised his heavy body.

“What time is it...?”

It was almost evening. He slept so long. While blankly looking at the time, a little surprised, the curtain opened.

“You’re awake.”

“Ah... I’m sorry. I fell asleep by accident.”

“You don’t need to apologize, just a moment. I’ll take your temperature.”

The nurse approached Seung-hyun and took his temperature. Seung-hyun quietly nodded his head at the words that his temperature had returned to normal.

“Professor Kim prescribed you new medicine, so you can pick it up when you’re discharged. Go home carefully.”

As soon as Seung-hyun received the new medicine as instructed by the nurse and returned home, he immediately threw himself on the bed. So many things had happened in just a day.

“...Should I move?”

This new house seemed to be cursed somehow. If he hadn’t moved here, he wouldn’t have met Seon-hu. Then...

“No. It was something I had to do someday.”

Seung-hyun shook his head. It wasn’t something he could avoid forever. It was just pushed forward a bit.

Even that, he couldn’t do properly and the relationship ambiguously continued. Seung-hyun grabbed his throbbing head and sighed.

Sex partners. It was truly a relationship he only saw in novels. He felt strange whenever he was in front of Jae-young. Was it because of pride or lingering attachment?

“...Should I block him?”

Should I just block him? Change the password and not let him come in. Seung-hyun thought so and deeply lowered his head.

“This will only be for a moment too. He’ll get tired of it soon. Even I would think it’s the worst, a person like this.”

With every word he says, he’s a jerk, only saying hurtful things, yet in the end, he can’t properly push him away and comes back to square one.

At first, he’ll hold on out of spite. But no one will stay by the side of a person like this for long.

If he wasn’t confident he could let go first, he had to act terribly so the other would have no choice but to let go. It was pathetic, but this was Seung-hyun’s best.

“Rather than that... I’m a bit concerned about Lee Seok-hyung.”

Since he was blindly devoted to Seung-hyun, it wasn’t strange that he asked Professor Kim about his well-being. The strange thing was something else.

He was too quiet. Seung-hyun was the one who clearly changed his number and even moved, but while hearing about his progress through the hospital, he showed no signs of trying to contact him.

Could it be that he’s preparing something useless behind the scenes? It was dizzying enough that he already got an absurd misunderstanding from Tae-sung, he didn’t want to add fuel to the fire.

He didn’t want to contact first. Seung-hyun hesitated for a moment and reached out his hand towards his cell phone. There was a way to check his news, even if very indirectly.

Seung-hyun searched for Hyeokjaee’s name on the portal site. Since he said he became his secretary, if he’s lucky, he might find a photo or two of them together.

As he sorted the news articles by latest, Hyeokjaee’s recent status began to appear one by one. There was nothing special, and several photos of him attending ceremonial events were posted.

Before long, Seung-hyun found Seok-hyung at the edge of a photo. It was a blurry photo with half of his face cut off, but it was enough to tell who it was.

Nothing special stood out. Did he go too far? Seung-hyun closed the search window and threw his cell phone on the bed.

‘I just wanted to play without thinking...’

Even if it was for a short time, he wanted to live without being lonely, was it too greedy? He sighed at the situation that was so entangled that he couldn’t even muster the courage to solve it.

“I have to do something. I have to do something... so I won’t have these thoughts.”

After yesterday’s failure, he no longer felt like meeting other people. Ah, I want to go away. He wanted to go anywhere, as long as it was a place where no one knew Han Seung-hyun.

But now he didn’t even have the strength to lift a finger. Seung-hyun, who was blankly staring at the ceiling, closed his eyes again. Why was he sleepy no matter how much he slept? He must have lost a lot of stamina.

He hadn’t eaten all day, but he wasn’t hungry because of the fatigue. Soon, Seung-hyun began to snore softly.

That day, Seung-hyun had a dream. Seung-hyun in the dream was healthy. His body, which always felt heavy, was light and his head was clear. A day spent without any worries was just refreshing and happy.

In that dream, Seung-hyun was with Jae-young without any hesitation. Without anxiety about the future, without feeling sorry for the other person, he easily said love and kissed.

They made plans to travel to a far country together and laughed while talking about things a few years later. Seung-hyun nodded his head without refusing any of the plans Jae-young made.

But dreams always have an end. Seung-hyun, who woke up around dawn, couldn’t move from his spot for a long time, retracing the faint memories.

“I told the bodyguards, but you need to be careful too.”

“I know. How many times are you going to say it? I’m not a kid.”

“You are like a kid. You get into trouble as soon as I take my eyes off you for a moment.”

Tae-sung tapped the cheek of Seon-hu, who made a sick face. He was a person who could go off anywhere to the point that saying he was like a kid was quite an understatement.

That aspect was good, but Seon-hu should only be careless in front of him. If he acted like this in front of others, he would get his nose cut off without even knowing it.

Is it because he only lived in goodwill that he doesn’t know people are scary? Tae-sung lightly pinched Seon-hu’s cheek.

“Han Seung-hyun is even worse than a kid if you can’t remember him after seeing him once, and at a wedding at that.”

“But... it was only once, and the atmosphere was completely different from the wedding.”

Seon-hu made an excuse while having his cheek pinched. He even secretly took out the wedding album after returning home, but he still felt wronged.

“Even so, that’s too much. I never thought you wouldn’t even know Director Han’s face properly, it’s my fault too for not knowing... but it’s better to be careful for the time being.”

“Okay...”

Seon-hu lowered his head with a deflated face. He’s really like a kid. Tae-sung left the house after emphasizing it one more time.

“But he really didn’t seem like a bad person.”

Seon-hu muttered softly while looking at the door Tae-sung left through for a moment. He knew how much Tae-sung disliked Seung-hyun. Seon-hu recalled the day a few months ago when he was anxious thinking Tae-sung had gone missing.

'I'm sorry. But you're the only one I can talk to... What should I do? If something really happened to him.'

It was a day he was so anxious that he ended up contacting Jae-young, who seemed to strangely keep his distance from him after the marriage. Having lived a life away from management, Seon-hu couldn't even imagine that the fight over succession rights could continue like that.

Was it the influence of that incident? Without knowing, Seon-hu was thinking of Seung-hyun's impression more fiercely or coldly than he actually saw.

But the Seung-hyun he met a few days ago was far from that image. The first impression made him want to take care of him, and even excluding that, he seemed like a person far from malice or greed.

Tae-sung said it was clear that Seung-hyun deliberately approached him. Can anyone fighting over succession rights put on such a perfect act?

"It's difficult..."

Seon-hu muttered and returned to the living room. He was a person who caught his attention strangely.

"But his illness can't be a lie."

Because there can't be a person who can act out their complexion and even cold sweat. Seon-hu pondered and picked up his cell phone.

With the simple thought of finding the name of the disease through symptoms, he was searching by changing keywords here and there, when he was startled by a sudden vibration and dropped his phone.

"Speak of the devil..."

Seon-hu muttered to himself. It wasn't even talking, just a brief thought. The subject of the vibration was none other than Jae-young.

After getting married, he naturally grew apart from Jae-young compared to before. The last time they contacted each other was probably that time he just recalled.

[Jae-young: How have you been lately? I'm not contacting you when you're busy, am I?] 8:33 AM

[Where would I be busy? I'm just around.] 8:34 AM

[Jae-young: There's something I want to ask, can we meet for a bit?] 8:34 AM

As soon as he sent the text, a reply came back. He doesn't usually just say his business like this, is there some urgent matter? Seon-hu recalled Tae-sung's words about keeping a low profile for the time being and pondered before sending a reply.

[It won't take long, right? Is 3 o'clock okay? I can't go far.] 8:37 AM

It should be fine since it's Jae-young, not someone else. How long have we known each other? Seon-hu naturally erased Tae-sung's nagging from his mind. He was able to think that because he had no idea Tae-sung disliked Jae-young.

[Jae-young: Okay. See you then. I'll come nearby.] 8:38 AM

This time too, the reply arrived almost immediately. What's going on that he's acting so hastily? Seon-hu tilted his head, worrying about Jae-young.

Episode 57

"Long time no see."

"Yeah, it's been a while."

The two greeted each other. For some reason, it was an awkward meeting.

'Awkward, when we've known each other almost our whole lives.'

Seon-hu was surprised by his own thought and sat down. Jae-young, whom he met after a long time, looked quite anxious.

Although they had known each other since a very young age, Seon-hu rarely had memories of seeing Jae-young like this. Was something wrong? Seon-hu asked with a worried face.

"Is something wrong? You look really unwell."

"No. It's not that."

Only then did Jae-young's expression loosen a bit. But the shadow was still there. Seon-hu drank a little of the beverage that came out for him.

"Come to think of it, it's been a really long time. When I called last time... I was sorry. It was too sudden."

"No. I didn't even do anything."

"Still... I was grateful that you even talked to me."

Seon-hu expressed his slightly late gratitude. That day, his mentality completely collapsed and he couldn't think normally.

It seemed like things would get bigger if he contacted his family, and it was the same with Tae-sung's aides not being reachable. Not knowing what to do, let alone how to wait, he cried and contacted Jae-young, who was the only person he could trust.

"I was so out of it that I couldn't even properly say thank you. I should have contacted you first."

"No. As long as you're doing well, that's enough. Rather than that... there's something I want to ask."

Jae-young, who didn't have the leisure to talk for long, cut off Seon-hu's introduction. He came out here feeling like he was grasping at straws.

"About that person, do you know?"

"Who... are you talking about?"

Seon-hu was startled by the words that flew out without even a subject because he was in a hurry. Jae-young hesitated for a moment and said,

"Have you heard anything about Seung-hyun Han from Director Han?"

"Seung-hyun Han?"

Seon-hu put down the drink he was sipping in surprise. These days, as if planned, Seung-hyun's story suddenly came from here and there. He couldn't understand what was going on.

'How does Jae-young know that person? Ah, I called him then...'

Jae-young was a friend who took good care of him, so he must have looked into what happened. He understood that much.

“Are you... acquaintances?”

But there was no need for him to ask about that person. Seon-hu carefully asked. Jae-young still had an anxious look. As if he was worried about someone.

It seemed like the person he was worried about was that person, but Seon-hu asked thinking it couldn't be.

“.....”

The silence was an affirmation. Seon-hu blinked his eyes in surprise. It was a completely unexpected combination.

“How did you get to know each other? Have you known each other for long?”

Seon-hu poured out questions one after another. Jae-young was the one who asked first, but in the situation where the subject and object were reversed, Jae-young calmed Seon-hu down.

“Have you heard anything?”

At the serious tone, Seon-hu flinched a little in surprise. From the moment their eyes met after entering here, today's Jae-young was unfamiliar in many ways.

Whenever they met, they only exchanged trivial stories that didn't need to be told. Even then, most of the time, Seon-hu would talk and Jae-young would respond appropriately to his story and spend time.

Today was different. Jae-young was showing an urgent and anxious appearance as if he was interrogating, not conversing.

“I, I don't know well.”

Seon-hu stuttered, flustered by such Jae-young. He was curious about how Jae-young and Seung-hyun knew each other, but Jae-young's mood was unusual to ask this and that.

“Just... that Tae-sung doesn't like him... and I met him not long ago.”

“Not long ago?”

“Ah, not even not long ago. It hasn’t been a few days.”

Seon-hu traced back the day he met Seung-hyun with his finger. The finger stopped without going over one hand.

“Where? How? No, what did you talk about?”

Jae-young continued asking questions without stopping. Could the reason for the delayed reply that day be here? Could it be related to the sudden change? He wanted to know something, anything.

“Just, by chance... No, it might not be by chance, he said...”

The flustered Seon-hu answered hesitantly. He thought it was a coincidence, but Tae-sung firmly said it must have been a calculated meeting, so he was confused about how to answer.

“I was walking in the park...”

“The park?”

“A few days ago, I went to the family home and was walking Leo when I met him. Before that, I saw him once at the mart too...”

Jae-young frowned for a moment at the completely unexpected place. He even doubted if he heard wrong.

Seon-hu saw Jae-young’s face and sighed softly. He had already repeated the story to Tae-sung several times to the point of annoyance, and now he had to tell it again.

“I bumped into him because I wasn’t looking properly and fell, and after that we talked briefly...”

Jae-young let out a small sigh. It was a situation that didn’t suit Seung-hyun, but considering Seon-hu’s personality, it wasn’t that strange either.

Seon-hu’s way of talking to people as if they were close friends and having conversations was familiar to Jae-young too. Seung-hyun didn’t seem like the type to reject people approaching him either.

“You didn’t know his face?”

But Seung-hyun and Seon-hu shouldn’t be strangers to each other. Even if Seon-hu was like that, there was no way Seung-hyun wouldn’t know Seon-hu’s face.

“...I only saw him once. Chairman Han doesn’t like me attending family events...”

Seon-hu said with a slightly sullen face. Hearing this from everywhere, he felt like he really became a fool.

“Moreover, the atmosphere was completely different from when I first saw him, so I didn’t know.”

Jae-young clicked his tongue inwardly. Seeing his sulky appearance, it seemed like he got scolded by Han Tae-sung. Anyway, that side also had a person he didn’t like very much.

“Moreover, on the day I first met him, he even collapsed, so I was out of it...”

“He collapsed?”

Jae-young was surprised and interrupted Seon-hu’s excuse. Collapsed, it was the first time he heard that.

But the more surprised one was Seon-hu. Jae-young was always kind, but he wasn’t someone who showed this kind of reaction.

‘Are they close...? If he was close with Jae-young, there’s no way I wouldn’t know. No, at least until the last time I called, they were strangers.’

“He, he immediately took out medicine, so it seemed like he had an illness. I don’t know well. I said a moment ago that I saw him a few days ago in the park while walking Leo. I remembered that and talked to him briefly, then Tae-sung came and I found out it was him.”

Seon-hu slowly spoke while looking at the unfamiliar Jae-young. Jae-young sank into thought without noticing Seon-hu finding him unfamiliar.

‘There’s definitely something... but he won’t tell me.’

He was only getting more anxious. He knew he was the one who liked the other person more, but unlike the confident start, now it felt like he was the only one clinging on.

Moreover, even if Seon-hu was like that, there was no way Seung-hyun wouldn't have known Seon-hu's face. Even if the meeting was a coincidence, what was the reason for pretending not to know? He couldn't understand.

"What's going on? You're only asking."

After pondering for a long time, Jae-young finally came to his senses at Seon-hu's words mixed with complaint and took his hand off his forehead.

"...I just happened to get to know him... but I don't know what kind of person he is even though I know. I thought you might know something."

"You happened to get to know him?"

"That's..."

Jae-young hesitated without answering. He was keeping an eye on him thinking he might harm Seon-hu, and he went to find him after hearing that he was spotted at his friend's bar.

It wasn't a difficult story up to that point, but he was a little hesitant about the rest of the story. How should he say it? As he was worrying, Seon-hu carefully asked,

"Are you two... dating?"

Even to the clueless Seon-hu, today's Jae-young was strange. Strange to the point of seeming like a different person. He was already looking anxious, but he was getting weirder the more he talked about Seung-hyun.

Then they're not ordinary acquaintances, and thinking that far, there was only one assumption that came to mind.

"....."

Jae-young's expression hardened. Dating. It would be nice if he could introduce them like that. The relationship between the two that Seung-hyun directly defined was something that couldn't be easily told to others.

“...No. We’re not like that.”

Could they ever be like that someday? After hearing Seon-hu’s story, he was less sure. He thought it was unpleasant that other people talked about Seung-hyun without knowing him well, but now he felt he was not much different.

“We’re not... anything.”

It wasn’t a relationship with a name he could tell others, and he had no confidence about Seung-hyun. But he still couldn’t let him go yet.

“We’re not anything.”

It couldn’t be. Even if he couldn’t be sure about what Seung-hyun was like, Jae-young knew what he wanted. Even knowing it was a foolish wish, he came to think there must be some circumstances in this matter too.

Seon-hu couldn’t ask more and closed his mouth at the face that looked complicated. In the end, the long-awaited meeting ended leaving only questions for each other.

Episode 58

“You met Ju Jae-young.”

“How do you know that too?”

“You think the bodyguard... never mind. Forget it.”

Tae-sung sighed looking at Seon-hu’s surprised face. He thought maybe it’s better for him to believe bodyguards only do guarding.

“He contacted me after a long time. Said he had something to ask...”

“He could have just called if he had something to ask.”

Tae-sung said while tugging at his necktie. He still didn’t like Jae-young. Didn’t he say they were dating Han Seung-hyun?

‘Well, I don’t completely believe it but...’

“What did you talk about?”

“He was asking about Han Seung-hyun.”

Tae-sung stopped his hand in surprise and looked at Seon-hu. Seon-hu took Tae-sung’s necktie without much thought.

“I was surprised, it was an unexpected combination. He doesn’t tell me details but I was surprised to see Jae-young act like that for the first time.”

“So what did you say?”

“I don’t know much either... I just told him what I told you. It was a really strange feeling. He always acted like he would never date in his life.”

Tae-sung thought for a moment that it was fortunate Seon-hu was oblivious. Only Seon-hu probably didn’t know how his close friend looked at him.

On the flip side, he became a little curious what side Jae-young showed in front of Seon-hu for him to see it that way.

“But it doesn’t seem to be going well. From the way he talked and the vibe.”

“Why do you think that?”

“When I asked if they were dating, he said no with a sad-looking face.”

Seon-hu said, recalling Jae-young’s expression today. They clearly didn’t seem like just acquaintances, but for someone recalling the person they liked, his face looked pained.

“It’s the first time I’ve seen him like that, it was...awkward to say.”

To Seon-hu, his friend’s change looked that way, but to Tae-sung it only painted a more suspicious picture.

‘...We have that kind of relationship.’

‘If someone heard that... they’d think you two have some grand relationship.’

‘What does a grand relationship mean?’

‘They’d think you sleep under the same blanket together.’

‘What if we do?’

Tae-sung recalled his old conversation with Jae-young. Come to think of it, he never said they were dating. He skirted around it vaguely.

‘They must be sex partners or something.’

What was his aim that he would go to such lengths? Tae-sung couldn’t even fathom it.

“It feels weird. Jae-young and Seung-hyun, I never imagined that combination...”

“Next time he contacts you, can you let me know too?”

“That’s not hard, but I’m not sure if he will contact me again. He’s strangely closed off about his own matters.”

Seon-hu shrugged. Tae-sung wondered if he should say something. After brief hesitation, he shook his head. Regardless, with time he would find out what the two were scheming. He didn’t want to scold Seon-hu from the start.

‘Even if I dislike Ju Jae-young, at least he’s not someone who would harm Seon-hu. No matter what Han Seung-hyun does, he’ll probably stop that much.’

“He may not be the person you think he is.”

“I don’t know about others but I know Jae-young. We’ve spent so much time together.”

“That bothers me a little.”

Tae-sung said while lightly tickling Seon-hu’s waist. Seon-hu twisted his body slightly at the ticklish sensation.

“What nonsense. I’m telling you Jae-young and I are like brothers.”

“Well...”

Maybe for you, but not for Ju Jae-young. But there was no need to point that out. Tae-sung nodded and headed inside.

‘I don’t know what he’s thinking but I definitely won’t let him take advantage easily.’

Tae-sung thought as he took off his outerwear.

Seung-hyun, who was the subject of many people's interest and questions, was spending time doing nothing. He had no will or energy to do anything.

'Was I too harsh to the person who was worried about me...'

He kept tossing and turning, thinking. He couldn't forget Jae-young's hurt expression as he said mean things to him.

Even if it's hard now, should I tell him that I like him too? But that I don't have much time left. Even if it's selfish, should I do that?

'No, I shouldn't. He'll find out someday anyway...'

He couldn't be unaware forever. At least after I die, he'll know. But even in the same situation, the feeling of acceptance would inevitably be different.

Rather than parting from a passionate lover, it's better to have a relationship where he can briefly grieve thinking "so that's how it was" and move on. A relationship where he can be sad for a few days and quickly return to daily life.

If it was something that effort could improve, he may not have been able to resist telling him the truth. Seung-hyun was not a foolishly kind and considerate person.

He had greed and desires too. If there was hope, he may have gambled with his remaining time. But this was a gamble with no odds of winning.

'If only it wasn't Han Seung-hyun.'

For the first time, he wanted to go back. If he went back, he wouldn't have gotten involved with Jae-young. If he hadn't met Jae-young, if he had run away so he wouldn't take an interest in him.

If he had thoughtlessly continued the friendship and instead pushed him away, he wouldn't feel like he does now. Then he could have enjoyed the extra time he was given without regrets about his short remaining time.

He wanted to return to his initial feelings. Seung-hyun thought that and let out a long sigh.

'What's so good about someone like me.'

No matter how much he thought, he couldn't understand. Everything he had said to him recently was only mean words, and he had no memories of treating him well before that either.

On the other hand, it wasn't so strange that he came to like Jae-young. Wouldn't anyone inevitably like that kind of person?

Not only his handsome, likeable appearance, but his easygoing vibe that would make anyone feel comfortable. His tall height and dominant alpha traits. A chaebol who was removed from bothersome business competition.

It was like that even excluding his appearance and background. His playful yet not crossing-the-line attitude, his kind treatment even to the person who poured harsh words on him, his worried face.

He clearly had checked that his fever had gone down completely not long ago, but Seung-hyun shook his head vigorously at the feeling of heat rising to his face again. The more he thought, the more unnecessarily complicated his feelings became.

It didn't matter how it looked to others. He didn't care if Tae-sung mistakenly thought he was setting up some grand plan, or if Seon-hu was confused about his identity.

But he wanted to be a good person to Jae-young. He wanted to become as kind as Jae-young was to him and explain the reason behind each of his actions.

After holding onto meaningless thoughts for a long time, Seung-hyun let out a deep sigh. It still didn't feel real that they had defined their relationship as sex partners, a title that made him feel strange just thinking of his name.

And the fact that Jae-young chose to stay by his side despite that somewhat insulting term.

Seung-hyun reached out and turned on his cell phone. He still hadn't been able to reply to Jae-young's text.

[Ju Jae-young: Did you get home safely?] 5:45 PM

The message window had a read receipt on it. He didn't hide that he had read it, but he didn't reply. It was because after parting like that, he couldn't gauge what he should say.

He was also a little surprised Jae-young texted first. While feeling anxious about him who didn't fear failure, he was inwardly satisfied.

'I shouldn't be like this.'

He had to let go but he couldn't. He wanted to be let go of but he was happy not to be let go. It was a contradictory situation.

After staring at the screen for a long time, Seung-hyun hesitantly sent a late reply.

[Yes] 8:12 PM

It was an insincere reply that was days late. He knew it would be seen as strange but he just wanted to do that. This much should be okay, right? Just as he was about to put his phone down awkwardly, it vibrated as if it had been waiting.

"Oh my gosh."

Seung-hyun looked down at his phone. The caller was obvious. Seung-hyun, hesitating on whether to answer or not, pressed the receive button.

"...Hello."

At least he thought he should express gratitude for being taken home. As if not expecting the call to be answered right away, there was no response from the person on the other end of the phone for a while.

—.....

"...If you have nothing to say, I'm hanging up."

—No, no. I didn't think you'd answer.

Jae-young's flustered voice came through the phone. What state of mind did he call in if he didn't even expect it to be answered?

—Are you... feeling okay?

A careful voice tickled Seung-hyun's ears. As if the quarrel at their last meeting never even existed. It was a voice that was only kind.

"...Yes."

Seung-hyun smiled bitterly, thinking he disliked that voice a little.

Episode 59

"I'm fine. It was just because the medicine I'm taking didn't mix well with alcohol."

—...There's something I want to ask.

Jae-young's voice lowered a bit. Seung-hyun seemed to know what he was going to ask. Before the question came, Seung-hyun answered.

"It's really nothing. It's just...like vitamins."

—Can you tell me exactly what it is?

But regardless of the answer, the question flew in. It seemed that he had no intention of just glossing over it.

"That's too personal, am I obligated to tell you?"

It's not that Seung-hyun only wants to say this, but there's no other way to avoid questions he can't answer.

"Mr. Ju Jae-young, you're not a doctor, nor...are you my lover or guardian."

—.....

Again, there was no answer for a long time. He wanted to refute, but what Seung-hyun said was right. With the name of sex partner, he had no right to interfere too much in the other person's privacy.

"...I just contacted you because I don't think I properly thanked you."

Seung-hyun broke the silence and said. No matter how good-natured a person is, if they are pushed away like this several times, they will inevitably feel bad.

Even though he knew, he hated that these situations kept happening. When there was no answer, Seung-hyun said awkwardly,

“Thank you for that day. That’s all I have to say...so I’ll hang up now.”

—If I ask, is it not allowed?

Just as he was about to take the cell phone away from his face, Jae-young’s voice caught Seung-hyun.

—...Since it’s just a physical relationship, of course I won’t care.

“.....”

—If Mr. Han Seung-hyun is sick, I’ll have to go through the trouble of finding the partner I barely found again.

It was as if the sound of his heart sinking could be heard. He was the one who first said it was just a physical relationship, but hearing it from Jae-young’s mouth couldn’t be more shocking.

“...You’re right about that.”

But he couldn’t show it. Saying it’s okay for me, but not okay for the other person to say it. Even thinking about it himself, it was a conscienceless thing.

“You don’t have to worry. As long as we can have sex, isn’t that enough? It’s not serious enough that I can’t even do that.”

Contrary to what he had rationally understood, sharp words popped out of his mouth again. Even though he thought it was childish, he couldn’t help it.

“Isn’t that what being partners means?”

—...Yes.

It was a conversation where only the loser loses. It would be better to hang up early. Seung-hyun thought so and said,

“So let’s stop talking about this.”

—...Why did you meet Seon-hu?

Then, an unexpected question flew in this time. How does Jae-young know that? Seung-hyun couldn't answer right away and hesitated.

“How do you know that...”

—I heard from Seon-hu.

“You met him?”

—Yes. You also know what kind of relationship I have with Seon-hu, don't you?

Outwardly, they were friends, but Seung-hyun knew that the feelings Jae-young had for Seon-hu were not something like friendship.

It may not be the case now, but it wouldn't be easy to erase in an instant someone you've liked for nearly 20 years.

‘Why did they meet? The two had hardly met since Seon-hu got married, until Seung-hyun was running around. Maybe...’

Being too tired of only pushing him away, did he try to think that this is what love was like by looking at the person he really loved?

—...Anyway, since that kid is also your family, I asked if there was anything he knew.

But as if Jae-young had noticed Seung-hyun's worries, he reassured him again. The complicated feelings calmed down as if nothing had happened with those words.

—...Why did you approach that kid?

However, this conversation was not over yet. Seung-hyun still had a situation to resolve.

“It was a coincidence. ...That's right. If Mr. Ju Jae-young's family home is here, I should have thought that Mr. Lee Seon-hu, who was close to Mr. Ju Jae-young since childhood, would also live in this neighborhood, but I don't know what I was thinking, I couldn't think of it at all.”

In fact, he was aware of what he was thinking about. Seung-hyun was in a state where he couldn't think of anything else because his eyes were stolen by Jae-young.

He couldn't say that much, but expressing the part Seung-hyun wanted to hide in a roundabout way, he continued the story.

"As you've heard, we just ran into each other by chance. It happened to be a day when I wasn't in good shape, so I got help from Mr. Lee Seon-hu...and that's it. We parted ways like that."

—.....

"And the meeting in the park was not a planned encounter either. I just went out for a walk in the park in front of my house. The dog running up to me isn't within the expected range, is it?"

Seung-hyun let out a small sigh at the words that grew long like an excuse. Why can't we get out of this story? I'm a little tired.

—I don't doubt that the meeting was a coincidence. I was the one who suggested you move here, and that kid originally likes to wander around. What I want to ask is...

That excuse wasn't necessary for Jae-young. He didn't think Seung-hyun's meeting with Seon-hu was a calculated move from the start.

It was Jae-young who recommended Seung-hyun to move here and suggested the park in front of the house. Seon-hu likes to wander around so much and is not a person who moves in a planned way, so there could be as many chance encounters as possible. But...

—...I don't think Mr. Han Seung-hyun wouldn't have recognized Seon-hu's face.

But it clearly felt strange that Seung-hyun didn't recognize Seon-hu's face and went along with his nosiness.

Let's say Seon-hu did, but did Seung-hyun not know Seon-hu's face? Even Jae-young, who has no interest in management rights, knows that Seung-hyun hated Tae-sung so much that he despised him.

But Seon-hu said Seung-hyun acted like he didn't know him. So it felt familiar, but he thought it was just a feeling.

—I want to hear the reason for that.

Jae-young was curious about the reason. There's no way Seung-hyun wouldn't know who Seon-hu's spouse is and who his friend is.

If there was some reason why he pretended not to know Seon-hu, he wanted to know what he was thinking. It's not that he wanted to blame him.

Because now Jae-young is completely out of his mind for Seung-hyun. It seemed like he wouldn't be able to let go of his hand no matter what reason he heard.

But if he knew the reason, if he knew what he wanted, wouldn't there be something he could help with?

'I'm really out of my mind.'

Jae-young smiled bitterly and waited for an answer. There was no answer from Seung-hyun for a long time. Was he thinking of an excuse? I wish he would answer honestly.

How long had the silence passed like that?

"Everyone talks as if they know me very well."

Seung-hyun said with a smirk. Whoever he talks to, whatever he talks about, it always comes back to this logic in the end.

People talked as if they knew 'Han Seung-hyun' very well. Well, the actions of Han Seung-hyun in the novel were truly typical of a villain, so at first he thought it was nothing strange.

But the longer he lived as Han Seung-hyun, the greater the injustice grew. It was like that as he got to know him closer than anyone else, who was only portrayed as a villain.

Discrimination against the fervent alpha, contempt from family. Was there any way he could survive without developing his abilities?

The only thing he could do was to cling to it, but in the eyes of others, it only looked like a miserable and pathetic appearance, which was sad.

Because Han Seung-hyun is not the main character. He's not the protagonist who can make people's hearts at ease just by looking at him and can lead to people's understanding by introducing each situation in detail, but a villain.

If Han Seung-hyun's past had been dealt with a little more weightily, if it had been described why he wanted to solidify his position so desperately, the readers' reaction might not have been so cold.

Seung-hyun didn't understand 'Han Seung-hyun' at that time either, and had no intention of doing so. He was a character he tried not to look into deeply, but now he couldn't. Because Han Seung-hyun is himself now.

"I don't know myself well, but they talk as if they see right through me perfectly. Everyone does that. What kind of person am I that you think I would naturally recognize Mr. Lee Seon-hu and plot something?"

In fact, their guesses may have been justified in some ways. But the injustice piled up and piled up, so now he couldn't even distinguish where 'Han Seung-hyun's life ended and where 'Ahn Seung-hyun's life began.

"I don't know about company stuff. I'm not interested in Executive Director Han Tae-sung either. I'm even less interested in his spouse. Do I have to memorize the faces of people I'm not interested in?"

—.....

"You can't believe it, of course. But that's the truth. I didn't know Mr. Lee Seon-hu's face. If I had known, I wouldn't have exchanged a word with him, and even if I had to faint on the spot, I wouldn't have received help."

It wasn't something to vent to Jae-young about. But maybe because he was the only one who was seeking understanding. The sorrow that had once burst out poured out without stopping.

Episode 60

"While thinking that would be the case, why are you asking? If you can confirm it without asking, you should. Do you have to hear it from my mouth to feel good?"

Jae-young was just silently listening to Seung-hyun's words. Seung-hyun continued speaking without even having time to think about what that silence meant.

"Do you all think I'm a monster obsessed with work, with no humanity? I don't like that kind of life. That's why I left everything behind, isn't it? I absolutely hate getting involved in troublesome things and even if it's not, I don't want to get involved with other people. No matter what answer you want, this is my answer."

To others, whether they misunderstood or not, he would have given up the conversation without trying to clear it up. Whether they thought of him as a monster, a cold-blooded or pathetic fool with no blood or tears, he didn't care.

That's why he gave up talking to Taeseong early on. After all, if it's long, they'll know what useless worries he had in a year at most.

"...So don't worry. I have no intention of harming Mr. Lee Seon-hu."

But it was different for Jae-young. Seung-hyun sighed after a long outpouring. He probably won't believe it either. He didn't say it thinking he'd believe it.

Still, he wanted to talk. Even if it's a story that doesn't make sense to the listener, wouldn't it make sense to the speaker? Rather than ending it without any effort, he wanted to pour it out like this.

In one corner of his heart, he might still be hoping. If he was special to Jae-young, just as Jae-young was special to him, then maybe he would give a different answer from others.

'That's a foolish thought.'

Seung-hyun thought so and smiled slightly. It was fortunate that Jae-young couldn't see his face now. If his face was seen, wouldn't he be considered a really strange person?

—...That's not why I asked. I...

Jae-young's tone felt cautious. What would he say, no matter what answer comes back, it would be back to square one. Even though he thought so, Seung-hyun, who couldn't let go of a little hope, didn't hang up the phone.

—...Are you at home?

Jae-young asked. Seung-hyun didn't answer, nor did he hang up, just quietly looking at the screen where the call was still connected.

Actually, he was afraid of what kind of answer would come back. Even though he thought it was natural for a bad answer to come back, he hoped the answer he thought of wouldn't come back.

How long had it been like that? A tear that had quietly flowed down at some point fell from his cheek to under his chin.

The phone was still not disconnected, but there were no words coming over. Seung-hyun stared at the quite long call time and hung up the phone.

A new life with a limited period, did he take it too lightly? If it was going to be like this, it would have been better to die at once. Seung-hyun thought so and wiped his tears.

But sorrow, once it bursts, does not easily subside, and tears continued to flow silently.

“...?”

Then, the sound of a door opening was heard from a short distance away. No one is coming. The surprised Seung-hyun got up from his seat, opened the door and came out.

“.....”

When he opened the door, it was Jae-young, whose face was slightly flushed as if he had run over. A tear that hadn't been wiped away fell to the floor with a plop.

“Why are you crying?”

“...I don't know either. Why am I crying...”

Seung-hyun was flustered and rubbed his still damp cheeks. That's right, it was something he knew and thought was natural, so why was he so sad?

“Don't cry. When Mr. Han Seung-hyun cries... I don't know what to do.”

Jae-young took a step closer to Seung-hyun. Seung-hyun lowered his head and asked.

“Why. Because I’m not someone who would do that, because it’s different from what you knew?”

“...I don’t know much about Mr. Han Seung-hyun. I don’t think I know him well.”

Seung-hyun flinched at Jae-young’s words. A slightly trembling voice made Seung-hyun unable to move.

“Just by experiencing a little, I could tell he was different from the rumours. I... don’t know much about Mr. Han Seung-hyun. So I wanted to hear it directly from you.”

“If it’s about Mr. Lee Seon-hu...”

“I didn’t ask because I was worried about Seon-hu. I never thought the day would come when I would say this in my life... It’s been quite a while since I thought about Seon-hu.”

Seung-hyun slowly raised his head and met Jae-young’s gaze. The terribly shaking eyes let him know that he wasn’t lying.

It was the face of someone who was surprised that sincerity leaked out without being able to release it.

“More than Seon-hu, I’m more concerned about Mr. Han Seung-hyun’s affairs. To the extent that the things I thought about Seon-hu feel like a distant past, no, to the extent that I don’t even think about that time.”

“.....”

“I asked because I wanted to hear it directly from Mr. Han Seung-hyun. It wasn’t to confront you or to get angry.”

“...Those words.”

Seung-hyun bit his lip slightly with a bit of a choked up feeling. It sounded like he would understand everything, and he wanted to put his hopes on Jae-young who was asking about him.

“No matter what I say, it sounds like you’ll believe me.”

At Seung-hyun’s words, Jae-young stiffened a little. The moment Seung-hyun was about to take a step back from him, thinking it was too much expectation after all, Jae-young pulled Seung-hyun.

“Don’t cry. If Mr. Han Seung-hyun cries... I don’t know what I can do for you.”

Was I crying again? Seung-hyun blinked, nestled in Jae-young’s arms. A large hand began patting his back as if to comfort him.

“It’s not that you don’t know what to do?”

“...I want to do something, anything... for you, but I don’t know what I can do for Mr. Han Seung-hyun.”

Seung-hyun smirked at the slightly strange words. Even with that smile, Jae-young couldn’t be reassured and hugged him tighter as if Seung-hyun would disappear.

“I believe you. Whatever Mr. Han Seung-hyun says.”

“...!”

At the following words, this time Seung-hyun froze like that. It was something he wanted to hear, but thought he wouldn’t be able to hear.

“In a state like now, I’ll probably believe it even if you say you made soybean paste with red beans. I think it’s strange even to me... Really, it is.”

“.....”

“Is there anyone who knows how meaningless rumors are as much as I do? No, is that too arrogant of a thought?”

Seung-hyun slowly shook his head. There are many people who know ‘Han Seung-hyun’, but the only person who knows Seung-hyun now is Jae-young. Without noticing that small movement, Jae-young continued the story.

“I came because I wanted to believe, I wanted to believe whatever you say. I know I have no right to do this to you. Because I’m not Mr. Han Seung-hyun’s friend or anything. Still...”

The hand that was patting his back stopped. Jae-young, who couldn't figure out what to say, said in an unconfident voice,

"To Mr. Han Seung-hyun, I may be just a sex partner, but to me, Mr. Han Seung-hyun is..."

"No, you can't."

Seung-hyun hurriedly raised his head and cut off Jae-young's words. Even without hearing it, he knew, but still, he couldn't hear these words.

If he heard those words, he wouldn't be able to pretend not to know anymore, even if it was just for show, and he wouldn't be able to hold onto Jae-young.

No matter how much he thought about it, even if he thought it was a selfish decision, Seung-hyun still liked Jae-young and needed him.

Just by his drooping voice, he would come running to find him, and even in a situation that was hard to understand, he would say he would believe whatever I say, how could he not love this warm embrace?

However, saying I love you could only be a sentence that ends this relationship. Seung-hyun shook his head desperately and said,

"Just don't say those words. Please."

Anyone else would surely click their tongue, saying they're sick of the unkind attitude that doesn't even give a reason, but Jae-young was also far from normal thinking.

A lot of the composure and belief that everything will be fine has disappeared, but one thing. He was sure he didn't want to let go of this relationship.

"...Okay."

Jae-young nodded without saying more. He was curious about what he was so afraid of that he desperately tried not to hear the words I love you, but if he could stay by his side just by not saying those words, he could refrain from asking.

'But rather than being anxious alone, it would be nice to share the anxiety even a little.'

Now he just didn't want to make him, who was so timid, tremble with anxiety. He wanted to be by his side, even if it meant getting into that gap.

It was okay even if he was called by a name he didn't want, or by a relationship he never thought of.

"I won't say it. If Mr. Han Seung-hyun tells me not to say it, I won't say it for the rest of my life."

"....."

"So stop crying. Your fever will rise again."

In the end, the two who could not properly express their anxieties or push each other away were the same. Jae-young hugged Seung-hyun and comforted him for a long time even after his trembling subsided.

The evening of the two people who had the same heart and the same anxiety, but in the end could not fully understand each other, was passing by like that.