

## **Blackfield 191**

Chapter 191.1: You Want To Go, Don't You? (2)

Not much happened on Sunday. Kang Chan simply had a cup of tea with Seok Kang-Ho and headed straight home.

The next day, the funeral for Choi Seong-Geon and the soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the last operation was held. After discussing it with Kim Hyung-Jung, they decided to hold it after Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook went to work.

“Drive safe,” Kang Chan told his parents.

“You stay safe as well,” Yoo Hye-Sook said.

“We'll be back,” Kang Dae-Kyung added.

After seeing his parents off, Kang Chan put on a shirt and a suit and left the house.

*How nice would it have been if all of us survived?*

As soon as he walked out of his apartment building, he found Seok Kang-Ho and Woo Hee-Seung waiting for him.

“I'll take that car to the funeral,” Kang Chan said.

“We'll be right behind you,” Woo Hee-Seung replied.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho got in Seok Kang-Ho's car.

“Here, have some.” Seok Kang-Ho offered Kang Chan the coffee that he had bought earlier before hitting the road.

“Our lives here are definitely different than the ones we had in France,” Seok Kang-Ho commented.

“You're right, but wouldn't it be more accurate to say that back then, we never met anyone we could grow attached to? We didn't get along with anyone—not even our commanders.”

“You're not wrong.”

Still drinking coffee, they merged into the highway.

“Are you done preparing to leave for France?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“What's there for me to prepare? I plan to go there with only the clothes on my back and return as soon as I can anyway.”

“Phuhuhu.”

Seok Kang-Ho began to drive faster.

“Don't strain yourself to go on operations while I'm away,” Kang Chan said.

Seok Kang-Ho glanced at Kang Chan.

“I know you well enough to know that you probably won’t back out of operations, but being a commander is different. I’m trusting you with the men because you’ve changed. Otherwise, I would have done everything I could to stop you from taking care of them as well,” Kang Chan continued.

“Awh, You’re worried about me?”

“You want to get hit?”

Snickering, the two took out cigarettes and put them in their mouths. They then lowered the window and lit their cigarettes up.

“Phew. Only you, Smithen, Gérard, Ambassador Lanok and I know about our reincarnation secret. Ambassador Lanok didn’t fight alongside us in our previous lives, and that bastard Smithen has done nothing but stay on the sidelines. How disheartened do you think I’d feel if I heard that you died while I was in France?” Kang Chan asked.

“Will you only feel disheartened?”

Kang Chan only smirked in response. He then drank the cold coffee.

*Would I only feel disheartened?*

Even he couldn’t guess what he would do if he heard that Seok Kang-Ho died in an operation while he was in France.

Kang Chan rested his arm on the window and looked outside.

“Are you thinking of working in the intelligence field?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“Yes. No matter how I look at it, getting out of this won’t be easy because of how messed up the situation has become. If I’m going to end up working in this field, then it’s better to get in front of it and making it work for me rather than falling behind and chasing after it. General Choi and the others probably wouldn’t have been killed if we were stronger. If I decided to work in this field earlier, we probably wouldn’t have lost such good men.” Kang Chan had another sip of his coffee. “We both know that one of us is going to die someday if we keep going on operations. That’s why I plan on making sure everyone knows that if they mess with us, nothing will be able to stop us from killing them.”

Seok Kang-Ho nodded. “I’m going to make the team stronger while waiting for you, so don’t worry and just focus on getting back home safely.”

“You’re the one I’m most uncertain about!”

“Hey! Like you said, I’m not the same Dayeru you knew in the past!”

For some strange reason, Kang Chan snickered and laughed about otherwise unimportant and useless things whenever he was with this fucker.

“I noticed something a while back, Cap,” Seok Kang-Ho said.

“What is it?” Kang Chan turned to look at him and immediately noticed that he was serious.

“Ever since we went on the operation in Mongolia, your capabilities have changed every time we went on an operation. I didn’t think much of it at first, but then I noticed that the skills you showed in the operation in France and when we went to kill Jang Kwang-Taek were completely different. There’s a chance that the Blackhead is behind all that too, so...”

“Are you worried about the Blackhead’s side effects or something?” Kang Chan asked.

Seok Kang-Ho couldn’t answer.

“The change in my skills, your huge appetite, and the speedy recovery of the people I gave a blood transfusion to could all be its side effects. Even so, we can’t really do anything about it, can we? It’s not like we can just go around telling people that we reincarnated during an operation and then ask them to treat us because we are experiencing side effects,” Kang Chan added.

“You’re right.”

The two talked about a couple more topics as they drove. After a while, they finally reached Jeungpyeong.

When they arrived, they found six military police lined up on each side of the barricade at the entrance. The cops briefly inspected their IDs before letting them pass. They had an extra barricade on the mountain path that led to the makeshift city, and in the parking lot, twelve hearses were parked and waiting.

When Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho got out of the car, Kim Hyung-Jung, the adjutant, and Kwak Cheol-Ho came out of the barracks.

Seeing the barracks again reminded Kang Chan of Choi Seong-Geon and their fallen brothers—especially the one who kept running even after he broke his finger.

“Thank you for coming.” The adjutant stood in front of Kang Chan with bloodshot eyes, then continued, “We plan to hold the funeral in front of the barracks that the General usually stayed in.”

The adjutant pursed his lips to hold back his tears.

Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kim Tae-Jin also came out after Kwak Cheol-Ho and Kim Hyung-Jung.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho silently bowed in greeting.

“I think we can start now that everyone’s here,” the adjutant said.

“What about their families?” Kang Chan asked.

“They arrived earlier. They’re saying their final goodbyes now.”

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho arrived about thirty minutes earlier than they were supposed to.

Starting with Jeon Dae-Geuk, all of them went around the barracks and walked to the yard that was across from Choi Seong-Geon’s office.

Choi Seong-Geon’s portrait was on a platform that was covered in white chrysanthemums, and the fallen soldiers’ lined both sides of Choi Seong-Geon’s portrait.

Kang Chan stopped in front of the portraits of the deceased.

*Why are you smiling like that, General? Why do you all look so happy?*

How could this man smile so brightly when he ran all night with a broken finger only to die after getting to eat nothing but a C-ration the next morning?

“Phew.” As Kang Chan exhaled softly to control his emotions, Jeon Dae-Geuk approached him and stroked his back.

“Let’s go. We should let them go now,” Jeon Dae-Geuk said.

*I wouldn’t have come here if I knew it would feel like this!*

Kang Chan never got to say a proper goodbye like this to the chicks whom he had failed to save in Africa, so he didn’t expect that this moment would make him choke up.

Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kang Chan walked to the front.

The soldiers whom Kang Chan didn’t see in front of the barracks were sitting with their families.

When Kang Chan’s party sat down with Jeon Dae-Geuk, the funeral ceremony started.

People saluted, had a moment of silence, recited eulogies, and paid tribute to the memories of the deceased. Through it all, Kang Chan never looked away from the portraits.

When the time came to offer flowers and burn incense, a young woman holding the hand of a child laid white chrysanthemums and soon burst into tears. An old couple then burned some incense, wiping their tears on their wrinkled faces as they did.

“Oh god, you good-for-nothing child!” an elderly woman cried. She grasped tightly onto one of the platforms[1] and stroked the portrait on top of it.

“What about Eun-Mi, honey? Don’t leave us, please!” another woman cried.

Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kang Chan’s turn soon came. As they headed toward the platform, Kwak Cheol-Ho approached them.

“Please give this to the General.” He held out Jang Kwang-Taek’s hat to Kang Chan. He looked as if his tears would fall from his red eyes at any moment, but he managed to endure it through gritted teeth.

“This is the General’s final journey. I don’t know about anything else, but I think it’s only right for you to be the one to give this to the General,” Kwak Cheol-Ho continued. Even though he didn’t blink, a tear rolled down his cheek and fell.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho, you should give that to the General yourself. That’s what he would want,” Kang Chan replied.

Kwak Cheol-Ho stopped breathing to not burst into tears. His lips curved to a deep frown as his face grew redder.

Kang Chan laid the white chrysanthemums on the platform and then burned out some incense.

*I’m sorry, General. ‘I’m sorry I couldn’t keep you all alive.*

Kang Chan gritted his teeth.

*I’m going to France to do whatever it takes to become powerful enough to stop anyone from messing with my people again. I never want to have to seek revenge ever again because others hit us first.*

After Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kang Chan stepped back, the commander of the guards of honor—who had been standing in a line—solemnly walked over.

“Attention!” the commander yelled.

As commanded, the guards seamlessly got into position.

A trumpet player played the Taps[2].

“Present arms!” the commander yelled.

*Clank!*

“Fire!”

*Ta-ang!*

“Fire!”

*Ta-ang!*

“Fire!”

*Ta-ang!*

Three volleys were fired for the dead.

Displaying utter discipline with their movements, eight ceremonial guards marched over with Choi Seong-Geon’s coffin. They then slowly lowered it on a platform that was as high as their waists.

The guards’ commander held up a badge version of the South Korean flag and put it near the top of the coffin. He then struck it downward.

*Bang!*

*Swoosh!*

The ceremonial guards opened the flag and spread it over the coffin.

This was it.

From this moment forth, all of Choi Seong-Geon, including his memories of living for South Korea and the special forces, would no longer be found anywhere but in military records and the hearts of those who loved him.

Afterward, they did the same for the soldiers' coffins.

*Bang! Swoosh!*

Whenever a coffin was brought out, the painful cries of the soldier's family would echo.

Although these men chose to serve their country, their families wouldn't have wanted their son, husband, or father to be sacrificed.

Chapter 191.2: You Want To Go, Don't You? (2)

Kang Chan sat by the access road of the makeshift city.

Seok Kang-Ho, Kim Hyung-Jung, and Kwak Cheol-Ho were next to him. Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kim Tae-Jin waited for them in the office.

This was why it was scary to genuinely care about people.

Kang Chan didn't know how much time had passed.

"Mr. Kang Chan, we should leave now," Kim Hyung-Jung said. If it wasn't for him, Kang Chan wouldn't have moved from his position at all until the sun went down.

When they went down the mountain path, the soldiers sitting in front of the barracks stood up.

Kang Chan looked at each of them. "I'll be out of the country for a short while. While I'm away, you better focus on becoming the strongest special forces in the world."

With dark expressions, the soldiers focused on him.

"Let's make sure nobody will ever be able to mess with our people again. Become so strong that you can kill whoever or whatever organization dares hurt those we care about," Kang Chan continued.

"When are you coming back?" one of the men asked.

"In six months."

"We won't stop training until death comes for us. We're going to make sure we share our combat experiences with the others." Kwak Cheol-Ho answered with determination.

Kang Chan nodded. "I can trust you all, can't I?"

"The results you'll return to in six months will answer that."

That marked the end of their conversation. He never had to say a lot whenever he was talking to them.

“Do any of you have cigarettes?” Kang Chan asked.

Kwak Cheol-Ho took out a cigarette, and Yoon Sang-Ki held up his lighter. All of them began to smoke as if something bad was going to happen if they didn't.

Afterward, Kang Chan headed into the barracks. Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kim Tae-Jin greeted him.

“Would you like some coffee?” Kim Tae-Jin offered.

“Yes please, if there's instant coffee.”

The adjutant made and served Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, and Kim Hyung-Jung some coffee.

“Do you feel a bit better now?” Jeon Dae-Geuk asked Kang Chan.

“Yes.”

Jeon Dae-Geuk reached over and patted Kang Chan's shoulder.

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The moment Kang Chan got home, he tried his best to brush off his emotions.

He wasn't trying to forget them, but he didn't want to go around with glinting eyes like when he failed to save one of the chicks back in Africa. Hence, he engraved his feelings in his heart instead, firmly solidifying his resolve to never let something like this happen again.

He ran like crazy the next morning. Fortunately, that helped him relieve a bit of his frustrations.

“Haah. Haah.”

In the past, Kang Chan's capabilities dramatically increased whenever he lost a chick or crew member. He would always think, ‘If only I focused a little bit more,’ and, ‘If only I fired first.’

Those thoughts made him grit his teeth and pounce on his enemies.

Kang Chan bent over and put his hands on his knees. As he gasped for breath, someone approached him and held out a bottle of water.

Kang Chan glanced up, finding Woo Hee-Seung standing in front of him. He wordlessly took the bottle of water and drank it.

“I heard that the soldiers have started to train,” Woo Hee-Seung said.

“You even report things like that?”

“Kwak Cheol-Ho called me earlier. He was worried that you went home before you could process your emotions yesterday and told me to tell you that we're going to complete our training. We won't ever give up, so you shouldn't worry.”

*Damn it! Why is this place full of people who were hard to come by even once every two years back in Africa? They should just be selfish and cold so I wouldn't have to care about them.*

“Our team leader, Choi Jong-II, called me as well. He told me to be prepared to die if even a small problem occurs because we failed to guard you properly. It seems he called all of the agents assigned to you and told them the same thing,” Woo Hee-Seung added.

“He’s worrying about the wrong people,” Kang Chan commented, then laughed heartily. People like them made him want to do his best to make South Korea a powerful country.

“Have you had breakfast yet?” Kang Chan asked.

Woo Hee-Seung smiled as if he just heard a funny joke.

“Find out if any of our fallen soldiers’ families need any help,” Kang Chan ordered.

The morning and evening winds were quite cold now, so he quickly cooled down.

“I’ll look into it.”

Kang Chan nodded in response. He then headed up to his apartment.

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As part of his routine, Kang Chan showered and had breakfast with his parents.

Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook had just recently gone back to work, so they still seemed worried and slightly excited about it.

“Is something wrong? You don’t look so good,” Kang Dae-Kyung told Kang Chan.

“I probably just over-exhausted myself earlier while I was working out.”

“Channy! You can get sick from over-exerting yourself! You have less than ten days before you go to France, you know!” Yoo Hye-Sook scolded.

“I’ll be more careful.”

Being with people whom he loved made life quite nice.

“Right! Channy, before you go to France, why don’t you invite Michelle over for lunch or dinner?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“You want me to invite Michelle over?”

“Yes. I’d like to thank her and return the favor for buying us cake a while back.”

“She told me a few days ago that she’s planning to have a vacation abroad with the DI employees and outsourced talents once the drama has ended. I doubt she’ll find the time to eat with us,” Kang Chan replied, quickly nipping her suggestion in the bud.



Yoo Hye-Sook seemed upset about it, but he had no choice but to do it since Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook looked as if they were starting to make their own conclusions about his relationship with Michelle.

“You just got back to work after quite some time off. Aren’t you two tired?” Kang Chan asked.

“Not at all. I actually like being back in the office probably because I get to go outside again after being indoors for so long,” Yoo Hye-Sook said.

After having breakfast, Kang Chan and Kang Dae-Kyung cleared the table and washed the dishes.

“Drive safe,” Kang Chan told his parents.

“We will, Channy!”

“We’ll be back.”

Kang Chan only had a few days left to say goodbye to his parents and see them off to work. He would certainly see them again once his training in France was done. Nevertheless, ever since he reincarnated, he had only been with them for six months, yet he already had to be away from them for the next six months.

*Will things become awkward if I leave home for that long?*

Kang Chan was on his way to his room when his phone rang.

Lanok really had a knack for calling him at the right time.

“Hello?”

- Mr. Kang Chan, Ethan has asked me to check your schedule. Do you have some time to spare tomorrow?

“Yes. I’m free all day tomorrow, so please feel free to choose the best time for you.”

- I’ll schedule a meeting with him tomorrow, then. British people don’t know the depth of food, so let’s have tea at around four in the afternoon. Ethan is a wicked man, so it would do us good to just listen to what he had to say.

Lanok sounded as if he was smiling as he spoke on the phone.

“Please let me know once you have agreed on a time.

- You should still come to the embassy at four.

“Noted.”

Kang Chan didn’t know why Ethan wanted to meet with him but thought that it probably wasn’t to talk about a very heavy topic. He could just be planning to talk about what happened in France and then boast about how he helped Kang Chan rescue Lanok.

*Why are Vasili and Ludwig being so cautious around Ethan, though?*

Kang Chan decided to get an answer to that during his meeting with him tomorrow.

*Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—.*

*Who is it now?*

Kang Chan looked at his phone.

“Michelle? What’s up?”

- Channy, the drama is ending today, so we plan to watch the finale together and have dinner after. Are you free to join us?

“Wouldn’t it be uncomfortable for everyone, especially the outsourced talents, if I join you guys?”

- Even if that were the case, the President should still come. We can just have a light meal with the outsourced talents, then head to another restaurant with our employees after. Our drama’s ending today, so please spare us a bit of your time today. Our employees are looking forward to seeing you again, you know.

*It’s not even nine yet. Why is Michelle already confirming whether I’ll be able to join them or not?*

Either way, he felt as if he had to do this for them. After all, he would be going to France in a couple of days.

“Alright. Text me the time and location once everything has been finalized.”

After hanging up, Kang Chan sat on the living room sofa.

Due to strange twists of events, the company that he created to make it easier for French agents to come to South Korea turned into one that actually made dramas. He didn’t really want to look after it, though. Considering how troublesome it was becoming for him, he thought it wouldn’t be bad to entrust the entire company to Michelle instead.

He found no need to rush doing that, though.

Although he now had a dinner appointment, he still had all morning and afternoon to spare. During moments like this, his go-to activity was meeting up with Seok Kang-Ho.

Kang Chan immediately picked up his phone and dialed a number.

- Want to have some tea?

Seok Kang-Ho answered the phone without even saying, “hello,” now.

“When do you want to meet?”

- I’m putting on clothes right now.

“You’ve been naked all this time?”

Kang Chan heard Seok Kang-Ho laughing and then snorting from the other end of the line.

*Jeez, this dirty bastard!*

“I’ll see you at the entrance of the apartment.”

Kang Chan quickly hung up.

The training would only take six months, yet Kang Chan still found himself continuously examining his surroundings ever since this morning. It was as if he would be going away for far longer.

#### Chapter 192.1: The Gentleman's Suggestion (1)

Kang Chan met Seok Kang-Ho around nine-ten in the morning.

It was still too early for the cafe in Misari to be open, so the two headed to Yangpyeong instead. Kang Chan could feel his uneasiness alleviate a bit now that he was with Seok Kang-Ho.

They soon arrived at a cafe on the mountain to the right of a river, allowing it to offer quite a stunning view. Seok Kang-Ho pushed the brakes and turned on the hazard lights, but Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee were nowhere to be seen.

“You gonna ask them to join us?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“They're assigned to outer perimeter security, so they probably can't join us either way. Let's call them over when we get to the duck restaurant later instead. Actually, let's invite everyone in the outer perimeter team to eat with us,” Kang Chan suggested.

For some strange reason, insignificant matters kept bringing a smile to their faces. Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho sat at the table near the front yard and turned their chairs toward the river. Now that Kang Chan had thought about it, he had lived such a busy and tumultuous life for the past six months that moments like these had felt like luxuries.

Seok Kang-Ho ordered two cups of coffee from the waiter who came downstairs. He then pulled out a pack of cigarettes and offered one to Kang Chan. After lighting them up, they began to smoke.

“You have that weird look in your eyes again. Are you feeling uncomfortable? Is your heart starting to race?” Seok Kang-Ho questioned as the waiter served them their order.

The two took a sip of their coffee before continuing their conversation. Although the coffee scent they caught a whiff of was amazing, the taste was somewhat disappointing.

“Well, just the usual. We keep getting tangled up with difficult situations lately that it's surpassed my expectations. I'm just worried that it won't be any different this time,” Kang Chan replied.

Something was certainly troubling Kang Chan. Much to his dismay, however, he didn't know if it was his gut or if he was just uneasy about leaving Kang Dae-Kyung, Yoo Hye-Sook, and Seok Kang-Ho by themselves.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho discussed dinner plans and about meeting Ethan, the representative of the UK's intelligence bureau. They then got in the car and hit the road again.

They decided to have lunch at a roasted duck restaurant near a beautiful stream. Kang Chan tried to convince all the agents to join them, but only Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee showed up. Nevertheless, the four of them still enjoyed a hearty meal together.

Aside from Michelle sending him a text message that informed him of the name, phone number, and address of a restaurant in Gangnam, nobody else contacted Kang Chan that morning.

After drinking some makgeolli, Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho laid out a blanket by the stream and took a nap. When they woke up, they had some coffee and headed back up to Seoul.

*Can I take Seok Kang-Ho with me?*

Kang Chan felt a bit disappointed and bittersweet about having to spend six months away from Seok Kang-Ho. However, he felt too embarrassed to express how he truly felt.

“Catch you next time. What are you going to do in the evening?” Kang Chan asked Seok Kang-Ho.

“I’m going to eat dinner,” Seok Kang-Ho replied with a straight face.

The two exchanged a brief laugh and soon parted ways.

Kang Chan went home, showered, and rested for a while. He then changed into fresh clothes to go to the restaurant that he promised Michelle he would go to.

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When Kang Chan entered the restaurant, the drama and broadcasting staff were already seated in one section of it.

“Boss!” Michelle exclaimed, noticing Kang Chan first.

“Mr. Kang!”

The employees, actors, and staff approached and greeted him one by one. They were all welcoming him with expressions of joy and excitement. Kang Chan felt glad that he came.

Michelle stood by his side to introduce the directors, writers, and actors from other companies who had played important roles in the drama. There were a lot more people than Kang Chan expected.

“Great job with the drama,” Kang Chan told them. Then, he sat down between Michelle and Lim Soo-Sung and watched them do their thing.

The gathering consisted of people with strong personalities, but the atmosphere was still warm and easygoing. A part of it probably had to do with the good ratings for the drama, which created a sense of relaxation and happiness among them.

Kang Chan drank several shots of alcohol that the middle-aged actors offered him. As he did, Michelle stood up and clinked her beer bottle with a spoon.

“Attention, please!”

*Clink! Clink! Clink! Clink!*

She seemed a bit out of place because her blonde hair and blue eyes didn’t really match the Korean company dinner setting.

“I am proud to announce that our president has invited all the actors who appeared more than three times this season and the director of each department to Thailand!” she exclaimed.

“Whoohoo!”

Applause and cheers erupted.

The restaurant continued to serve them meat and alcohol. After a while, Eun So-Yeon approached Kang Chan.

“Would you like to have one more glass?” she asked.

It was hard to say no.

“Good work,” Kang Chan told her.

“I should thank you and Director Michelle,” she replied.

Eun So-Yeon seemed to have matured during the short time they worked on the drama. One probably couldn't ask for more than doing something they loved and achieving success on top of that. Kang Chan was glad. Even though the ultimate goal of a company would almost always be financial gain, creating a result that brought happiness to everyone was also quite important.

A few trainees came running over when Eun So-Yeon left, having been waiting for their chance to talk to him.

“President Kang! Thank you so so much!”

Afterward, the stylists, makeup artists, and road managers approached Kang Chan.

“You're happy with your work, I hope?” Kang Chan asked.

“Of course!” they all replied.

Even their female accountant came over to Kang Chan with a face flushed from beer.

“Are you sure you should be drinking?” Kang Chan asked jokingly.

“I'm not a minor!” she said back.

Kang Chan accepted a glass from her with a smile and poured some for her in turn, which was a first tonight.

They respected and admired him so much that the non-DI employees couldn't help but look at Kang Chan with intrigue.

“Channy, I'm going to be leaving in a few moments,” Michelle whispered into Kang Chan's ear, reading his expression.

*She seems really good at reading the room too.*

After about twenty minutes, Michelle signaled at Kang Chan with her eyes. Everyone was already quite tipsy and buzzed by now.

Lim Soo-Sung and Kim Jae-Tae followed them out of the restaurant.

“I’ll leave wrapping the night up to you, Mr. Kim,” Michelle said.

“I understand. Please don’t worry and have a good night,” Lim Soo-Sung reassured her. After exchanging goodbyes, she went back inside with Kim Jae-Tae.

“Can we have another bottle of beer?” Michelle asked.

“Sure, let’s do that,” Kang Chan agreed.

It was still before ten, so Kang Chan nodded, wanting to do something for her for the hard work she did.

Since they were both intoxicated, they took a taxi to Apgujeong-dong instead of driving. Michelle seemed to be a regular at the place because the bartender greeted them with a smile and even took them to a table in the corner.

Kang Chan liked the music and, above all, the fact that he could smoke freely.

“Thank you,” Kang Chan told Michelle.

*Click!*

Michelle grinned and clinked her beer bottle against his. Kang Chan once realized again that noisy environments weren’t for him, but after taking a sip, he felt more at ease.

Michelle, who was wearing a black suit and white blouse, offered Kang Chan a cigarette.

*Click.*

Kang Chan lit the cigarette for her with his lighter.

“Haah. Michelle, there’s something I have to tell you.”

Michelle bit her lower lip as her eyes widened.

Sensing that Michelle misunderstood what he meant and was probably thinking of something inappropriate, Kang Chan quickly added, “I’m thinking of going to France for about six months for training.”

“Training?” Michelle repeated.

Kang Chan nodded in response. Michelle tilted her head.

“Can I come with you?” Michelle asked.

“No, you can’t,” Kang Chan replied.

Kang Chan took a sip of his beer and put the bottle on the table when Michelle suddenly got up from her seat and shifted her body to sit on Kang Chan’s lap. She was positioned slightly higher than Kang Chan’s gaze, given that she was sitting on his legs.

*Peck.*

Michelle lightly kissed him, then gazed into his eyes.

“Sounds like you found what you want to do?” Michelle asked.

“Yeah,” Kang Chan replied.

*Peck.*

She kissed him for the second time.

“Hug me,” she ordered.

Chuckling, Kang Chan embraced Michelle. Michelle hugged him back as tightly as she could with her arms around her neck.

“I’ll have to learn how to wait now, won’t I?” Michelle mused.

Was he supposed to tell her that she didn’t have to wait for him?

Michelle lifted her gaze and stared intently at him.

“You didn’t forget about making time for me, did you?” she asked.

“I remember I agreed to make time to meet everyone. And it’s about time you get off, no?” Kang Chan responded.

Michelle smiled as if she found his response amusing. After a brief moment, she lowered her head toward Kang Chan.

“Whoo!” the onlookers cheered loudly for the two.

Michelle was probably somewhat upset. Kang Chan didn’t refuse her, but he didn’t accept her advances either. When she lifted her head, her expression swiftly told him that his guess was right.

“Let’s stop here,” Kang Chan said.

“All right,” Michelle agreed.

*Does she not have any pride?*

She came off of him, acting like she was unaffected, and took a sip of her beer.

“Where will you be staying?” she asked.

“I don’t know yet. Ambassador Lanok said he would take care of it, so I think I’ll know once I get there,” Kang Chan replied.

“Can you still call home?”

“They told me I’m free to take and make calls except during special occasions.”

Michelle then took in a deep breath.

“I’m going to go straight into the production of the next drama. The public now knows and can easily recognize Eun So-Yeon and the other actors, so they have to take advantage of this opportunity. Oh, right! If So-Yeon accepts all the advertisement offers she got, we’ll get a profit of over two billion won.”

Money was easy to earn in this industry. That was probably why so many children endured the harsh life of trainees.

“I’ll look after the company and watch over the building, so just focus on being safe, Channy. And I don’t care about the girl you love since I know her, but don’t bring back any other girls,” Michelle said firmly.

*Jeez! Michelle looks like a Barbie doll, but she never stops talking like this.*

“You won’t have time to meet with Cecile and Cindy, will you?” she asked.

“I can set tomorrow or the day after aside to meet with them,” Kang Chan replied.

Michelle nodded. Every time Michelle’s blonde hair bounced around, the men who were staring at her gulped. Kang Chan found it funny.

Chapter 192.2: The Gentleman’s Suggestion (1)

Although Kang Chan came home late, that didn’t mean that he would skip his workout. Thinking about leaving for France soon made him feel as if time was passing far more quickly.

“Channy! You received a call yesterday—did you hear?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“What was it about?” Kang Chan asked.

Yoo Hye-Sook’s face filled up with excitement as they sat at the table for breakfast.

“The college! They said that for as long as you decide on your major, they can immediately arrange a leave of absence for you. But if you can’t, then you just have to enroll within five years,” she explained.

Kang Chan noticed a subtle hint of hope in Yoo Hye-Sook’s eyes. He needed help from Kang Dae-Kyung the most during moments like this.

Kang Chan shifted his gaze to his father.

“Your mother wants you to pick your major before you head to France. That way, you’ll already be enrolled in the university before going to training,” Kang Dae-Kyung said, interpreting what Yoo Hye-Sook was trying to say.

Kang Chan turned his gaze back to see Yoo Hye-Sook sheepishly smiling.

“I just thought it might be easier for you if you enrolled in college before you leave. It’s the same as other people enrolling and then going to the military...” she trailed off.

“Okay, I’ll do that,” Kang Chan declared.

“Really?”

He didn’t have any reason not to anyway. It wasn’t that difficult, and it would make her happy.



“Your mom was so worried yesterday about how we could convince you,” Kang Dae-Kyung told Kang Chan.

“I was not!” Yoo Hye-Sook protested.

“We’ve been living together for almost twenty years. I know you,” Kang Dae-Kyung said with a grin.

Even if he couldn’t keep up with his classes or didn’t end up going to class because he didn’t want to bother his classmates, Kang Chan thought simply enrolling in the university wouldn’t be that much of a problem.

“What about your major though, Channy? What do you want to take?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“I was planning to major in physical education, but I’ll think about it for a little longer. I’ll tell you my decision in the evening,” Kang Chan replied.

“Okay, sounds good,” Yoo Hye-Sook replied.

They finished breakfast about ten minutes later than usual, so their morning became a bit busier. Kang Chan helped Yoo Hye-Sook put away the side dishes and then did the dishes himself.

“I’ll see you later. Have a good day and be safe, Channy,” Yoo Hye-Sook said as she reached out and hugged him.

“She’s acting like a daughter, isn’t she?” Kang Dae-Kyung joked as he met Kang Chan’s eyes.

Kang Chan didn’t mind. Yoo Hye-Sook holding him tightly felt like a reward from the world for all his hard times throughout his two lives.

“Take care of yourself, Father,” Kang Chan said.

At some point, Kang Dae-Kyung’s patting touch on his head or shoulder had become more natural. Whenever Kang Dae-Kyung patted him, he would always look into Kang Chan’s eyes.

The love of a father and that of a mother were definitely different.

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Kang Chan had nothing in particular to do during the day. Since he had gone all the way to Yangpyeong yesterday with Seok Kang-Ho, he didn’t want to call him again.

*Buzz, buzz, buzz. Buzz, buzz, buzz. Buzz, buzz, buzz.*

Kang Chan picked up the phone and answered the call with a smile.

“What?” he greeted.

- What are you up to? Your appointment isn’t until four this afternoon, right? Let’s have lunch together, then.

Although Dayeru acted tough, rugged, and aloof, he sounded just as upset about being apart from Kang Chan.

“When will you come out?” Kang Chan asked.

- I’ll see you at the apartment entrance.

“I’ll be there in a bit,” Kang Chan said.

Kang Chan saw the guy every day. They had meals, drank tea, and even went on operations together. Nevertheless, he was happy to see him again today.

Kang Chan gathered the documents about the building and headed out.

He and Seok Kang-Ho had some tea and stuffed themselves at a luxurious Japanese restaurant. By the time their waiter served dessert, Kang Chan was already so full that he couldn’t move.

“Why do you look so serious today?” Seok Kang-Ho asked as he ate a piece of fruit with a fork. Surprise was evident in his eyes.

“I was just curious about how much I have to eat if I want to eat like you,” Kang Chan jokingly snarked.

“Pft, that’s such a waste of time!” Seok Kang-Ho chortled.

“You wanna die?” Kang Chan shot back.

If it wasn’t for this guy, the world probably would have been really dull. They stumbled out of the Japanese restaurant and headed to the embassy.

“Keep this for me,” Kang Chan ordered as he put the documents he was holding into the glovebox of the passenger seat.

“What are those?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“Documents for the building. Hold onto them for me while I’m gone,” Kang Chan told him.

“Got it,” Seok Kang-Ho replied in a breezy tone.

“Just to be safe, I included my stamp, seal, and other related documents. I also wrote down my lawyer’s contact information,” Kang Chan added.

“What do you mean ‘just to be safe?’” Seok Kang-Ho asked stiffly.

“Just keep the documents safe, okay?”

“That’s too bothersome. I’ll leave them as they are, so you better return quickly and take them back,” Seok Kang-Ho firmly replied.

At around two-thirty, they remembered the cafe in front of the embassy. They headed to it and stayed for over an hour to wait for Kang Chan’s appointment.

A few minutes before four, Kang Chan said, “I’ll see you later.”

“I’ll wait for you here,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

“Why?”

“Ambassador Lanok has dinner plans anyway, doesn’t he? So let’s have dinner together.”

“Just go back home. I’ll call you when I’m done,” Kang Chan assured him.

“Fine,” Seok Kang-Ho obediently responded and then left.

They had always acted brusquely with each other until now, Kang Chan probably wouldn’t have felt upset even if he were in Seok Kang-Ho’s shoes.

Kang Chan scanned his surroundings and entered the embassy. Once inside, an agent guided him to Lanok’s office.

*Click.*

“Mr. Kang Chan,” Lanok greeted him. He then extended an arm to gesture to the man who was standing on the other side of the table “This is Ethan, from the United Kingdom. Ethan, this is Mr. Kang Chan.”

“It’s nice to finally meet you. I’m Ethan,” Ethan greeted as he extended his arm forward.

“Kang Chan,” Kang Chan briefly replied.

The two shook hands.

Ethan was short, stubby, and had a shining bald spot in the middle of his scalp. However, his eyes and lips conveyed a strong sense of stubbornness. Deep down, Kang Chan thought that the world of intelligence seemed filled with people who had tough eyes.

“Please have a seat,” Lanok suggested. Once they were all seated, he opened and showed Ethan a cigar case. Ethan took one of the cigars inside.

*Click.*

The end of a cigar had to be cut with a cigar cutter before lighting it up, which also took quite some time.

As they lit their cigars, Kang Chan took a sip of his black tea.

“Mr. Kang Chan,” Ehtan addressed Kang Chan in his rough French. “I’d like to begin by apologizing for the events that transpired in France. As a gesture of goodwill, the Prime Minister will be visiting South Korea soon. We will also be making substantial concessions in the economic and cultural aspects of South Korea’s relationship with the United Kingdom.”

“Thank you for the help you provided with the incident involving Ambassador Lanok,” Kang Chan replied. The tone he used wasn’t submissive but wasn’t too overpowering either.

With everything out of the way, it was time to get to the point. However, Ethan seemed to be having a hard time bringing it up.

Lanok didn’t rush him, and Kang Chan wasn’t in a hurry either. They didn’t have to wait that long anyway.

After about a minute of assessing the atmosphere and rotating the cigar in his hand, Ethan tapped off the ash in his cigar.

“The United Kingdom has completed the subterranean shock device,” he finally opened.

His delivery was monotonous. Even so, Lanok still let out a sigh that sounded more like a groan.

“I’m sure you’re both already well aware of what it is, so I won’t get into details. We replaced the two missing energy sources from Blackhead with cetinium and denadite. As a result, we were able to conduct two successful experiments.”

*What’s he talking about? Did they really intentionally cause earthquakes?*

Kang Chan recalled the news report about an earthquake occurring in the sea some time ago and turned to Lanok for a moment before redirecting his gaze.

“Russia, the United States, and France are the only countries that are close to knowing about this, but one of the missing energy sources is inside you, Mr. Kang Chan. Other countries have probably caught wind of it, but they likely only have a faint inkling of what’s happening,” Ethan continued.

“Then what is it that you want, sir?” Kang Chan tactfully asked.

They had already switched out the energy sources from Blackhead with something else, hadn’t they?

Kang Chan just wanted to be done with this boring conversation.

“We have lost control of the subterranean shock device,” Ethan informed him.

Kang Chan tilted his head. Ethan proceeded to give them an intricate and twisted explanation, but in a nutshell, he was just saying the machine was broken.

“There is no way to stop it. At the rate it’s going, the United Kingdom, the eastern United States, Russia, France, and Japan will all disappear from the map,” Ethan revealed.

Kang Chan was so shocked that he subconsciously shook his head from side to side and let out a loud sigh.

Thoughts flashed through his mind. Kang Chan first felt relieved that South Korea wasn't among the affected countries but then wondered, 'What will happen exactly?'

It didn't take long for him to answer his own question.

'A lot of people are going to die.'

Kang Chan picked up a cigarette and raised his gaze. Lanok had a stiff look in his eyes.

Chapter 193: The Gentleman's Suggestion (2)

*Chk chk.*

Ethan extinguished his cigar as Kang Chan lit up his cigarette.

Ethan was essentially saying that the UK needed someone to turn off the switch, but he probably wasn't telling them this because they didn't have the hands to do that.

Silence dominated the room again. Kang Chan couldn't understand what Ethan was trying to say. Unfortunately, Ethan didn't add anything else, and Lanok didn't even try to join the conversation.

"Ahem!" Ethan cleared his throat and looked at Lanok, seemingly asking for help.

*Does this sly snake also know something about this? The grim look in his eyes a moment ago made it seem like this was his first time hearing about it as well.*

"Ethan, don't try to play tricks and just tell us what you want," Lanok sharply replied as if he was reading Kang Chan's mind.

"What we need right now is the Blackhead's energy," Ethan continued.

Kang Chan looked straight at Ethan as he extinguished his cigarette.

"You definitely have one of the energies. The satellites can even detect it. That's why I'm asking for help."

"What would you have me do?" Kang Chan asked.

"The researchers have differing opinions about securing the energy," Ethan answered, observing Kang Chan's reaction. "However, having you stand near the cetinium, one of its current energy sources, is our best bet."

Kang Chan couldn't help but smile, finding Ethan's request absurd.

"Mr. Kang Chan, the UK is desperate," Ethan added.

"So you're telling me to stand in the spot of the cetinium while you extract the energy out of it?" Kang Chan asked.

"That's why we're hoping to use a different method."

"And what would that be?"

“It’s to leave the cetinium as it is and combine the energy inside you with the machine.”

Kang Chan couldn’t understand what he meant.

“Mr. Kang Chan, a horrible disaster will fall upon four countries if we don’t stop this,” Ethan warned.

“You mean you didn’t even bother making contingency plans if something goes wrong with your weird machine and little experiments? Even if I cooperate, we still can’t guarantee good results, can we? What if this fails as well? Am I just going to come out as a burnt barbeque or charcoal?” Kang Chan asked, rendering Ethan speechless.

Seemingly out of habit, Ethan turned to Lanok.

“Let’s adjourn this meeting. I’ll think about it,” Kang Chan replied.

If Ethan was telling the truth, then a catastrophe would sooner or later strike four different countries, killing quite a lot of people. He was essentially forcing Kang Chan to sacrifice himself for the greater good even though he had no part in making or coaxing them into creating such a horrible machine.

*He’s telling me to sacrifice myself to save a lot of people even though I only have one life?*

This was something completely different from him risking his life on operations.

As Kang Chan shook his head, Lanok pressed his nose bridge with his thumb and index finger. “Are you threatening us now that the situation has spiraled out of control, Ethan? The intelligence bureaus warned you against it multiple times, but you still created the subterranean shock device and even experimented with it. Now you’re threatening us that you have Russia and France—my country—in its target?”

“We wouldn’t have had to do this if France didn’t make a Hadron Collider, Lanok,” Ethan replied.

“Answer wisely—if Russia and the United States agree, nuclear missiles can fall like rain on the United Kingdom.”

“It’s too late now, Lanok. If we blow up the subterranean shock device now, it will go completely out of balance. We have no idea how far the impact of the energy’s explosion will reach.”

Lanok looked at Ethan so expressionlessly that Kang Chan couldn’t see any emotions in his eyes. Right now, Lanok was scarier than when he was angry.

“You should head back for now. Mr. Kang Chan and I will be heading to France in ten days, so we’ll inspect the facility after that.”

“You can’t be there while we’re inspecting the facility, Lanok,” Ethan replied, but Lanok’s silence seemed to have waned his confidence. “Fine, but I hope you hurry. Every second counts.”

“Go back to the UK,” Lanok repeated.

Ethan stood up from his seat like an obedient child and held out his hand to Kang Chan, who stood up after him. “Mr. Kang Chan, I look forward to you making a wise decision.”

He then left Lanok’s office.

*What? Is he telling me that I’m not wise if I don’t risk my life for this absurdity?*

Kang Chan felt as if he just met someone who insisted that he pay for their debt instead.

“Can you sit down with me for a moment to discuss this matter?” Lanok asked.

“Of course, Mr. Ambassador.”

As the two sat down, Kang Chan noticed that Lanok was smirking in strange way, which made him also seem dumbfounded.

“Mr. Ambassador, is what Ethan told us actually credible?” Kang Chan asked.

Lanok simply looked at Kang Chan while picking up a cigar.

*Damn it! Ethan was being honest!*

Kang Chan softly inhaled.

*Chk chk!*

After lighting up his cigar, Lanok did the same with the cigarette that Kang Chan held up.

“As the United States and Russia competed with each other for developing a laser that can be launched from satellites, my country and the UK competed in creating a way to cause an impact underground,” Lanok said.

“So you’re saying that the Hadron Collider is going to play that role in the end?”

“No.” Lanok straightforwardly answered Kang Chan’s question. “The Hadron Collider is only a research facility. My country just leaked information that it can also cause an earthquake to suppress the use of the subterranean shock device that the UK is developing.”

Kang Chan wasn’t sure if Lanok was telling the truth or not, but it didn’t really matter, so he chose to believe him for now.

“Let’s proceed with your training while I confirm with the DGSE if what we heard today was true or not. We can decide on what to do after that. Ethan is blackhearted, so the UK could be the only country that’s going to collapse,” Lanok continued.

Everyone related to intelligence bureaus seemed evil to Kang Chan. South Korea's National Intelligence Service could be slow to develop because people like Kim Hyung-Jung, who were too good-natured, were part of it.

After taking another sip of his tea, Kang Chan stood up from his seat.

"Don't think about it too much, Mr. Kang Chan," Lanok said.

*He should've lightened up first before telling me that.*

Kang Chan left the embassy feeling very uncomfortable. That dickhead annoyed him so much.

*Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—.*

While walking, Kang Chan took out his phone and looked at it. Someone was calling him, but he wasn't familiar with the number.

*Ethan isn't trying to play a trick behind my back, right?*

Kang Chan answered the call for now.

"Hello?"

- It's Eun So-Yeon, Mr. President.

"Hey. What's up?"

*We just saw each other yesterday, so why is she calling me? Did something happen?*

- We're going to have dinner among ourselves tonight. We promise not to be loud, so I was hoping... to invite you if you don't have other plans tonight."

She sounded nervous.

From the other side of the phone, Kang Chan heard a trainee saying, "Please tell him that we really want him to come."

Kang Chan glanced at the time on his phone. It was about five-twenty in the afternoon.

"What about Michelle?"

- The director and general manager already had prior appointments. The makeup artists, road managers, wardrobe stylists, and others are here with us. I know you're busy, Mr. President, but can't you spare us some of your time?

How could he say no to Eun So-Yeon nervously asking him to join them for dinner? The trainees and other staff members would be with them anyway.

"Where should I go?"

- We're going to go to Zelkova, the restaurant at the Yeoksam-dong intersection.

Kang Chan could hear people cheering on the other end.

"Okay. I'll be there."



He didn't see any reason to avoid them. He didn't have plans for dinner yet anyway, and she asked so nicely. The meeting earlier disoriented him, but it wasn't enough to stop him from having dinner.

Kang Chan hailed a taxi and called Michelle.

- Ello?

“Michelle?”

- One moment, please. Don't hang up.

*Why is she talking in French again?*

It seemed Michelle was going somewhere.

- Channy, I spoke in French because I was in a meeting. Anyway, how can I help you?

“So-Yeon called me about having dinner with the other actors and the staff. I'm thinking of going.”

- I was actually thinking of calling you. I was worried since General Manager Lim and I wouldn't be there. Make sure you make them comfortable, okay?

“Alright.”

Kang Chan hung up, then blankly looked out the car window.

*How could they cause an earthquake that could erase four countries from the face of the earth if things go wrong? Those bastards!*

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Kang Chan attended the dinner to feel better and because he hadn't gotten the chance to properly talk to the DI employees and actors yet. After all, other people could get the wrong idea if they saw a high schooler acting like these people's senior.

Seeing the employees of the restaurant glancing at the trainees made Kang Chan smirk. To think they were just sweating in the hot practice room not too long ago.

They ate the meat they ordered like kids.

Kang Chan mostly asked the wardrobe stylists, makeup artists, and road managers questions, but he also listened to what the trainees had to say from time to time.

“Mr. President, we'll be starring in another drama soon!” one of the trainees told Kang Chan.

“Already? But Michelle just told me that she'll start preparing to produce another drama.”

“We're going to be in multiple dramas at the same time now!” The trainee clapped out of happiness, reminding Kang Chan of when they jumped up and down at the practice room in excitement.

“Please eat this,” Eun So-Yeon picked up meat with her chopsticks and put it on Kang Chan's personal plate.

One's position certainly made them who they were.

Playing the lead role in a drama seemed to have softened Eun So-Yeon, but it also appeared to have boosted her confidence.

Perhaps it was because Kang Chan was around, but Eun So-Yeon treated the trainees the same way as she did before, and the trainees also showed no reserve around her.

“Mr. President! We want to go to karaoke,” one of the trainees said.

*Do they want to become singers now that they have become actors?*

Smiling, Kang Chan looked at the female accountant. “Do you want to go?”

“Yes! Please come with us!” Her face was so red that it seemed as if she drank all of the alcohol by herself.

After some time, a road manager went out and booked a large room in a karaoke bar. The rest then headed over and ordered beers. Not even five minutes later, the craziness began.

They had a lot of fun, perhaps because they had a talent for singing as well.

“Thank you,” Eun So-Yeon told Kang Chan.

Kang Chan didn't hear what she said because of the loud music, so Eun So-Yeon carefully leaned closer and repeated, “Thank you!”

“You already thanked me yesterday!”

“Can I still contact you whenever I'm having a hard time?”

Kang Chan just nodded. They all had their own trouble to deal with, but he didn't mind helping her out whenever she needed him.

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After sending home the delighted employees, Kang Chan returned to his apartment and sat at the bench, which he hadn't done in a while.

It was a few minutes past eleven already.

Michelle called him about meeting up right before he reached his apartment, but since he already told her that he would be meeting her with her friends anyway, he decided to pass tonight.

*An earthquake, they say?*

Ever since Kang Chan parted ways with Lanok, he hadn't stopped thinking about the damn word 'earthquake.'

The satellites had detected Kang Chan, but they hadn't found Seok Kang-Ho yet. If so, then the energy inside him was probably weaker.

The only people aware of it were Lanok, Smithen, Gerard, and Sharlan. Kang Chan didn't even know if Sharlan was still alive in Loriam's basement.

*Cetinium? Is it relate to Uranium?*

Kang Chan knew that there was a secret behind his reincarnation, and he had also heard that it was related to the Blackhead. Still, he didn't expect that he would have to stop a fucking earthquake.

Kang Chan looked around him and laughed. This bench had witnessed quite a lot of things.

*Doesn't Kim Mi-Young miss me, though? What will she say if I tell her that I'm going to France?*

Kang Chan examined his surroundings, then stood up to go home. Sitting on the bench left him completely open, making the agents' jobs harder.

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Kang Chan started the next day the same way. He worked out, had breakfast, and saw Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook off.

"Drive safe," Kang Chan reminded.

"I'm sorry, Channy. We still have to go to work today. We've taken time off from tomorrow onwards, though," Yoo Hye-Sook said.

"You don't have to do that. I'll only be away for six months."

"Will you be able to have dinner with us this weekend?"

"Of course."

After sending off Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook, Kang Chan plopped onto the sofa.

All that was left for him to do was eat with Michelle and her friends and attend the school festival. Afterward, he planned to just spend the weekend at home since his flight was on Monday.

Kang Chan turned on the TV and watched the news.

*I should meet up with Seok Kang-Ho for now and tell him about what I heard yesterday...*

*Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—.*

He could already guess who was calling him.

Kang Chan walked to his room and held up the phone on his desk. Seok Kang-Ho's name was on the screen.

"What's up?"

- Got any plans today?

"No."

- Come out. Let's go to school."

"Our school?"

Seok Kang-Ho's suggestion flustered Kang Chan as much as his suggestion to go out for drinks in the morning.

- They need me to check a document that a substitute teacher made. You don't have anything to do at home anyway, so come with me instead.

*Should I see Mi-Young at school?*

- Are you going to stay at home?

"I'll come. I was actually planning on hanging out with you anyway since I've got things to tell you. What time will we head over?"

- I'm in front of your apartment building already.

*Isn't it a bit early?*

Still, if he was going anyway, it was better to go with Seok Kang-Ho now.

After hanging up, he blankly stood in front of his closet.

*Should I wear my school uniform or can I just wear a shirt and a suit?*

Kang Chan spent some time thinking about it before finally going with the latter.

He felt strangely excited. By the time he walked out of his apartment building, Seok Kang-Ho was already in front of it, standing beside his car in a shirt and a suit. If anyone who didn't know Seok Kang-Ho saw him, they would have likely thought of him as a gangster.

"It's nice to see you dressed up," Seok Kang-Ho said. Smiling, the two got in the car and drove off.

"I'm feeling excited," Kang Chan commented.

"Phuhuhu."

Kang Chan's heart fluttered as he remembered everything that had happened so far, starting from the day he first went to school.

"Let's have a cup of coffee before going to school," Kang Chan said.

"Sure."

Seok Kang-Ho parked the car in front of the cafe at the intersection.

After ordering and getting their coffee, they sat on the terrace. It was so early that most of the tables weren't taken.

Kang Chan first told Seok Kang-Ho about his meeting with Ethan yesterday, which made Seok Kang-Ho understandably look dazed.

"So the Blackhead released an energy?" Seok Kang-Ho asked.

"From the sound of it, yeah."

"And that energy was passed onto us?"

"The energy inside me also seems a bit stronger than the one in you, considering the Satellites only detected the energy I carry."

“Did we absorb the energy based on our personalities?”

Kang Chan took a sip of his coffee. That wasn't something he could respond to.

“What's your plan, then?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“As Ambassador Lanok suggested, I'm going to France for now and only act once I've seen how things go. I'm going to contact you immediately if I think we're going to have a problem, so you should give this some thought as well.”

“Wouldn't that be dangerous?”

Kang Chan answered with a sigh.

“This world is full of crazy fuckers, huh,” Seok Kang-Ho commented.

“I still can't believe what Ethan and Lanok said.”

“Damn it! I don't know about that man named Ethan, but Ambassador Lanok isn't the type to lie. Thinking about it now, we can't tell Manager Kim about this or that we reincarnated.”

“Either way, we have to think about this carefully before we do anything,” Kang Chan said.

“Alright.”

Their conversation lasted roughly an hour.

Kang Chan stood up and left with Seok Kang-Ho. They arrived at the school at around ten-thirty.

Seok Kang-Ho drove along the school's wall and parked where he could. The two then walked toward the main gate.

*Since I'm already here, I should have pork cutlets for lunch... No! I should have lunch with Kim Mi-Young!*

When Kang Chan saw the main gate, the strange excitement he felt earlier surged through him again.

He saw kids playing football, heard loud noises, and looked at the tall building that Kim Mi-Young would be inside of.

However, when they entered the school gate, the first thing Kang Chan saw was the entrance of the athletics club room.

Chapter 194.2: Things Never Go As Planned (1)

Moon Ki-Jin followed after Kang Chan with a happy face. They were currently standing in front of the athletics club room.

Students who came out to eat lunch walked past Kang Chan as they stole glances at him as if he was some sort of a celebrity.

Kang Chan kept his eye on the entrance where the third-years were coming out. After a while, he smiled widely. Neatly cut bangs, doe eyes, and slim cheeks that had lost baby fat. He could easily spot her even from afar.

The other students just kept staring at him.

Wondering what the fuss was all about, Kim Mi-Young turned her head, her eyes widening upon seeing Kang Chan. Although he was standing some distance away from her, he still saw her eyes becoming bigger.

“Oh, Noona’s coming over,” Moon Ki-Jin remarked.

But Kang Chan had already seen her approaching before Moon Ki-Jin informed him.

Kim Mi-Young quickly walked over to Kang Chan and just stood there, shocked that he was really right in front of her. She couldn’t even say a word.

“We should go and eat lunch,” Kang Chan suggested.

“Yup,” Kim Mi-Young blankly replied.

*She probably missed me.*

Or at least that was what the emotions that Kim Mi-Young’s eyes showed. Kang Chan now felt glad that he had come here.

“What brings you here?” Kim Mi-Young asked, still looking flustered.

“I said I was going to come over and eat lunch with you, didn’t I?” Kang Chan replied.

The two—no, the three of them, including Moon Ki-Jin, walked together. Students kept sneaking glances at them as they made their way to the school cafeteria, which Kang Chan found quite strange.

“Did you come because of me?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

“Yup,” Kang Chan replied.

“Hehehe,” Kim Mi-Young let out her signature laughter when she saw Kang Chan’s smile.

“How are your studies?” Kang Chan asked.

“I’m enjoying myself,” Kim Mi-Young replied.

They reached the end of the line for the school cafeteria.

“Sunbae-nim!” Cha So-Yeon exclaimed as she came running over. The other students in the athletics club walked over one by one to greet him. Ironically enough, the students who were in Kang Chan’s class weren’t able to muster the courage to say hi to him.

“Sunbae-nim, your outfit is really nice today,” Cha So-Yeon remarked.

“Really? I’m wearing this because I have an appointment after lunch today,” Kang Chan responded.

“Is that the same outfit you wore at the conference a while ago?”

The hospital had already torn apart and thrown away the clothes he wore back then, but there was no need to tell them that. After waiting for quite some time, they finally got to enter and sit down at a table.

Michelle was usually the one drawing the attention to them, but today, the cafeteria was quiet because everyone was staring at Kang Chan. Even the cafeteria ladies were straining their necks to glance at him.

“Enjoy your lunch,” Kang Chan told Kim Mi-Young.

“Yup! You too!” Kim Mi-Young replied brightly.

She was finally back to the Kim Mi-Young he knew.

Kang Chan couldn’t help but think that coming to school today was the right move.

Kim Mi-Young’s exams were right around the corner. Since Kang Chan would be able to make calls anyway, he probably didn’t have to tell her that he was going to France, which would only make her worry.

“Have you decided on your major yet?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

Kang Chan looked up at Kim Mi-Young in confusion, wondering what she was talking about.

“For college. Are you going to choose international relations?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

Kang Chan doubted he would be able to follow the pace of the classes if he chose that major.

“I was thinking of majoring in physical education,” Kang Chan replied.

“I thought you said you wanted to be a diplomat.”

It sounded as if Kim Mi-Young’s goal was to major in international relations.

“What about you?” Kang Chan asked anyway.

“I’m going to take the same major you do,” Kim Mi-Young replied.

They would have to enroll in different years by one year at the most. He didn’t want to mention going to France because he really didn’t want to stir up any trouble.

“All right. Let’s do that,” Kang Chan agreed.

“Really?” Kim Mi-Young brightened up.

“Yes.”

They chatted about various topics as they ate but soon left the cafeteria and sat at the stands.

“Can we use your car for a day after my exams are over?” Kim Mi-Young asked.

Cha So-Yeon and Moon Ki-Jin were seated a reasonable distance apart from them, allowing Kim Mi-Young and Kang Chan to speak more comfortably.

“I imagine myself going for a drive every day after my exams are finished. Christmas is coming soon, too,” Kim Mi-Young said.

Should Kang Chan tell her about going to France? If he burst her bubble and brought her unnecessary worries, would he mess up her exams?

“We only have a bit of time left, huh.”

Kang Chan couldn't bring himself to tell her. Kim Mi-Young could come and visit him in France once her exams were over anyway.

*They grow up so fast.*

When Kang Chan looked at her from the side, she looked as if school uniforms no longer suited her.

“Good luck on your exams,” Kang Chan encouraged her.

“Yeah!” Kim Mi-Young replied, turning to look at him. “You'll come see me the day before the exam, won't you?”

“Hm?” The question took him by surprise.

“As per tradition, you have to buy rice cakes and tissues for me,” Kim Mi-Young said.

“I will,” Kang Chan responded.

Could he buy rice cakes in France?

Their conversation hadn't even lasted that long yet, but time passed by so quickly.

“I'll go back in now,” Kim Mi-Young finally said.

The look she had in her eyes as she hesitated was the same as when she asked him to hold her that one time.

“Study hard,” Kang Chan encouraged her.

“I will.”

It was now time for her to go back and for Kang Chan to go to the French embassy to meet Lanok. Cha So-Yeon and Moon Ki-Jin left first, and Kim Mi-Young chased after them after turning back to look at Kang Chan a few times.

*Why couldn't I tell her that I was going to France and that I missed her?*

That wasn't like him at all.

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Kang Chan arrived at the French embassy feeling as if he was going straight into a serious operation after finishing a pleasant meal. At least he was refreshed.



Following the agents, Kang Chan headed upstairs. Lanok welcomed him in.

“Why don’t we sit down first before we talk?” Lanok offered.

Once Kang Chan took the seat that Lanok offered him, Raphael prepared the same tea, cigars, and cigarettes that they always provided.

Glug.

Lanok had a heavy expression as he poured Kang Chan a cup.

“We just received a report that Ethan is likely telling the truth,” Lanok began.

To Kang Chan, that just sounded as if Lanok was telling him that the likelihood of him dying had just increased.

“The DGSE is currently investigating the potential consequences of destroying the subterranean shock device,” he continued.

“If Ethan really is telling the truth, then he probably wasn’t lying when he said it would be difficult to predict the outcome of this situation, was he?” Kang Chan grimly asked.

“That would be correct,” Lanok replied with a nod.

*What in the world is Lanok thinking?*

Kang Chan couldn’t help but be most curious about it.

“Mr. Ambassador. What are your thoughts on this?”

“Hmm,” Lanok mused.

It wasn’t easy to give a straightforward answer. Kang Chan understood that. Nevertheless, he still had to give him one.

“For now, we will make a decision after inspecting the UK’s facilities,” Lanok said.

“Do you think that will change anything?”

Lanok lifted his cup of black tea and looked at Kang Chan. “The first case we have to consider is what happens if you die. In that situation, we won’t be able to determine where the energy inside you would go.”

*How would they even prevent the earthquakes if I died in one of the previous operations?*

“And what I’m about to say next is probably something only you and I will understand. If we were to extract the energy from your body while you are still alive, we have no idea what kind of phenomenon that could cause in you. Even so, this isn’t something we can tell the UK or the DGSE about.”

Lanok picked up a cigarette and offered it to Kang Chan.

*Click.*

It was common courtesy to wait for the other to light up their cigarette first.

“That’s why we should first conduct an inspection. We have to determine whether they are trying to kill you to acquire the energy or if they can extract the energy from you while you are still alive. Once we’ve answered that, we also have to find out how much energy they can get from you,” Lanok continued.

Would they have enough time to consider all of that?

Kang Chan extinguished his cigarette and then sipped some of his tea.

“Mr. Kang Chan, if it’s alright with you, what do you think about leaving the country tomorrow?” Lanok asked as if he was reading Kang Chan’s thoughts. “Our highest priority is preventing the earthquakes if we can. However, I don’t intend to force you into a one-sided sacrifice. Please trust me on this.”

Lanok looked Kang Chan directly in the eyes as he spoke. Kang Chan would rather fall for Lanok’s lie than suspect the sincerity in his gaze.

“If, as Ethan said, an earthquake occurs, it will claim the lives of at least a hundred million people. It’s impossible to determine the other casualties and economic losses that everyone will suffer as a result. Unfortunately, the majority of the people who will die are innocent civilians,” Lanok added.

Kang Chan let out a long sigh. Things never went as smoothly as he hoped. Why did life have to be so complicated and difficult? But there was one last question that Kang Chan wanted to hear the answer to.

“Mr. Ambassador,” Kang Chan began. He had one last question in mind that he needed an answer to. “If I have to die to save the lives of a hundred million people, what would you do?”

Asking the question made Kang Chan realize that it wouldn’t be farfetched for one to never have an answer to it. Surprisingly, however, Lanok spoke up without a moment’s hesitation.

“If you have to kill a hundred million people to save me, what would you do, Mr. Kang Chan?” Lanok asked, his eyes glinting sharply.

Although Kang Chan was the one to ask the question, Lanok put him in the position to answer it himself.

“That’s the kind of person you are to me,” Lanok said firmly.

*Well, guess I’ll have to go. Looks like I’m gonna be leaving the country tomorrow after all!*

Seeing Kang Chan smirk, Lanok smiled in a way that reminded Kang Chan of a court jester’s mask.

Chapter 195.1: Things Never Go as Planned (2)

Kang Chan and Lanok decided to meet in front of the Nonhyeon Station at five tomorrow morning so they could leave together. They then agreed to call each other if there were any changes to their plan.

It was four in the afternoon right now.

Kang Chan found it ridiculous, but he immediately thought of Seok Kang-Ho before Kang Dae-Kyung, Yoo Hye-Sook, and Kim Hyung-Jung came across his mind.

*Who should I call first?*

Kang Chan took out his phone and called Kang Dae-Kyung first.

- Hello?

“Father, it’s me, Channy. Are you free to talk?”

- Yeah. What’s wrong?

“I’m on my way out of the French embassy right now. I called because I’m thinking of departing tomorrow if that’s okay with you.”

Kang Chan heard Kang Dae-Kyung sigh loudly.

- Your mom is going to be very upset.

“I’m sorry.”

- Is this already final?

“I can probably delay it for about a day, but if I can, I’d like to accept their request and leave as soon as possible.”

Kang Dae-Kyung stayed silent for a moment, seemingly reluctant to answer.

- Will you be able to have dinner with us at least?

Kang Chan felt quite conflicted as he listened to Kang Dae-Kyung.

“Yes. Should I head straight to your office before you two leave work?”

- Let me get back to you on that. Is that alright with you?

“I’m sorry, Father.”

- It’s okay. I’ll call you later.

Kang Chan hung up. He couldn’t help but think that his parents were having a hard time handling him. However, he had to keep his emotions and work separate.

Kang Chan called Kim Hyung-Jung and informed him about his situation—that he was going to depart tomorrow. They then decided to meet at Samseong-dong.

At times like this, calling Woo Hee-Seung was the most convenient. Kang Chan used the radio to contact him, got in the car, and immediately headed to Samseong-dong.

Seok Kang-Ho was the only person left whom he had to call.

The call rang three or four times before Seok Kang-Ho finally picked up.

- Hello?

“My meeting is done. I’m on my way to the office in Samseong-dong now. I might have to leave for France tomorrow.”

Woo Hee-Seung glanced at Kang Chan.

- You’re leaving tomorrow?

“Yeah.”

- Alright. Should I head to Samseong-dong as well?

“Yep.”

When Kang Chan hung up, he suddenly remembered a bunch of people—Jeon Dae-Geuk, Kim Tae-Jin, and even Oh Gwang-Taek.

“Are you really leaving tomorrow?” Woo Hee-Seung asked.

“Yes. I think so, at least.”

*Has he been preparing something?*

Kang Chan organized his thoughts as he stared out the window.

By the time he reached Kim Hyung-Jung’s office, Seok Kang-Ho was already inside waiting for him.

“What happened?” Seok Kang-Ho asked Kang Chan.

“Ambassador Lanok requested that I leave with him tomorrow.”

Seok Kang-Ho’s eyes widened but eventually grimly nodded.

Kang Chan couldn’t really give them any more details on the matter since he gave Seok Kang-Ho his word that he would keep the situation in the UK between them for now.

“The section chief is a bit too far to make it on time, but Kim Tae-Jin is already on his way here,” Kim Hyung-Jung said as an employee brought over coffee.

“Manager Kim, about college — I was wondering if I can get admitted into the Department of Political Science and International Relations and then get an official leave of absence from school.”

“You have nothing to worry about. The Department of Political Science and International Relations, right?”

“Yes.” Kang Chan answered as he thought of Yoo Hye-Sook and Kim Mi-Young at the same time.

*Beep beep beep.*

While they were talking, Kang Chan heard a signal.

Kim Hyung-Jung immediately headed outside. After some time, he came back inside with Kim Tae-Jin right behind him.

“What happened?” Kim Tae-Jin asked Kang Chan after greeting Seok Kang-Ho with a brief nod. “Everyone was looking forward to getting a chance to have dinner with you and the section chief.”

He sounded quite upset, but Kang Chan didn't hate it.

“Is there anything we can help you with, at least?” Kim Tae-Jin wondered.

“Not really. I think I'm all set now.”

“Either way, it's difficult to predict what's going to happen.” Kim Tae-Jin momentarily stopped to glance at Seok Kang-Ho. “Tsk! What should Mr. Seok Kang-Ho do? He has to be upset.”

“What made you think so? On the contrary, I'm going to take this opportunity to act like I'm the king without having to worry about anyone's mood. It's going to be amazing, especially since we can still meet up and drink sometime,” Seok Kang-Ho said.

“I'd like that, Mr. Seok Kang-Ho. We should take some time to visit tourist spots and famous places too since things will probably quiet down once Kang Chan leaves.”

This conversation was better than hearing them talk about how upset and disappointed they were.

Kim Tae-Jin sat down and took out a thick envelope from the inner pocket of his jacket. He then handed it to Kang Chan. “Here. Use it for your expenses in France.”

“I have plenty of money.”

“Just think of it as an act of sincerity. Take it already. I'm starting to feel embarrassed.”

Seeing Kim Tae-Jin look so troubled made it difficult for Kang Chan to refuse.

“Thank you. I'll be sure to spend it wisely,” Kang Chan said, finally giving in.

“I heard that you can still contact us while you're in France. If you need anything, don't hesitate to let me know through Mr. Seok Kang-Ho.”

“I'll keep that in mind.”

“There's a lot of trifling things that you can't ask your family or the people you're close with to do for you if you're far away from them. When it comes to those things, just ask me to do it,” Kim Tae-Jin added.

Kang Chan really didn't expect that he was going to talk more than Yoo Hye-Sook.

Kim Tae-Jin only stopped giving reminders and pointers when Kang Chan laughed, followed by Seok Kang-Ho and Kim Hyung-Jung.

“Who are you going to have dinner with?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked Kang Chan.

“I have dinner plans with my parents.”

Kim Hyung-Jung just nodded in response, but Kang Chan could clearly see the dismay in his expression.

“Why are you all acting like this? I already told you that I’ll be back in six months, didn’t I?” Kang Chan said.

“You suddenly decided to leave tomorrow, so can you really blame us? We would have been less upset if we could have dinner and drinks with you, but that’s not an option anymore,” Kim Hyung-Jung replied. They then talked about various other topics.

*Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—.*

In the middle of their conversation, Kang Chan’s phone rang.

“Hello?” he greeted as soon as he picked up.

- Chan, can you talk right now?

“Yes, Father.”

- Your mom will be joining us for dinner. Will you be able to get to my office in time for it?

“Sure, I’ll be there at around six pm. Is that alright?”

- That’s perfect, actually.

“Alright. I’ll see you then.”

The moment Kang Chan hung up, he realized his departure for France tomorrow suddenly felt more real.

“Right! Mr. Kang Chan, please take this to France.” Kim Hyung-Jung handed over a small document envelope while tousling his hair.

“What’s this?”

“It’s a passport with the same information as the ID that I made you last time. You probably won’t have to go through customs and immigration once you get there, but if you ever need to pass the CIQ[1] by any chance, then you should use that passport.”

“Alright. I’ll do that.”

“Do you not know when you’re going to leave yet?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked.

“I’ll be meeting Ambassador Lanok at five in the morning tomorrow.”

“I see,” Kim Hyung-Jung replied, then turned to Seok Kang-Ho. “You should have dinner with us.”

“Sounds like a plan.”

They all couldn’t help but feel disappointed.

“I have to go now,” Kang Chan said. When he stood up, the others in the room followed suit.

“Please have a safe trip.” With a sorrowful expression, Kim Hyung-Jung shook Kang Chan’s hand.

“I’m going to hunt you down if you don’t contact me,” Kim Tae-Jin grumbled. He also shook Kang Chan’s hand.

Afterward, Kang Chan turned to Seok Kang-Ho. “I’ll call you after I have dinner.”

“Alright.”

After bidding them all goodbye, Kang Chan headed to the basement parking lot and looked for Woo Hee-Seung—who was waiting for him. Once in the car, they immediately headed to Kang Dae-Kyung’s office.

“Please take this.” Woo Hee-Seung turned around in the passenger seat and handed an envelope to Kang Chan.

“What’s this?”

“Everyone pitched in a little bit of money. It isn’t a lot, but I hope it can be of some use. It’s the least we can do to pass on our sincerity to our commander.”

His subordinates and colleagues back in Africa had never made Kang Chan feel this way.

Despite living a life that could lead to their deaths at any moment, these soldiers probably didn’t earn that much. They couldn’t even dream of living in a large apartment or driving a luxury car. Considering Choi Seong-Geon visited their houses to give them compensation whenever they got injured, they were likely struggling financially.

Nevertheless, they still pitched in to support Kang Chan. How could he refuse such kindness?

“Tell them I said thanks,” Kang Chan said.

Smirking, Woo Hee-Seung focused on the road again.

It didn’t matter how much money they managed to accumulate. After all, Kang Chan would never be able to bring himself to spend it since looking at the envelope in his hand reminded him of the soldiers.

It didn’t take that long to get to Kang Dae-Kyung’s office from Samseong-dong.

Kang Chan got out of the car in front of the showroom and noticed agents spread out nearby. They chose not to hide since showing their enemies that they were being extremely cautious was more effective when it came to security.

Not wanting the Kang Yoo Motors employees to see him, Kang Chan took out his phone.

- Are you downstairs already?

“Yes. I’m in front of the showroom. Should I go up?”

- No — I’ll be there in a bit.

Kang Chan’s parents came out of the showroom less than five minutes after he hung up. Kang Dae-Kyung was smiling, but it looked forced, and Yoo Hye-Sook couldn’t even hide the fact that she was doing everything she could to stop herself from crying.

“What happened, Channy?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“My schedule has been moved up. I’m sorry.”

“This is all way too sudden.”

“Channy is probably hungry, honey. Let’s head to the restaurant for now,” Kang Dae-Kyung said.

Yoo Hye-Sook nodded and hooked her arm to Kang Chan’s.

Chapter 195.2: Things Never Go As Planned (2)

Kang Dae-Kyung drove Kang Chan and Yoo Hye-Sook to the Korean beef restaurant that was right behind the showroom.

Once seated, they ordered sirloin.

“Mother, I’ve requested to be admitted into the Department of Political Science and International Relations for college. They’ll be giving me an official leave of absence from school, so I’ll get to study the basics a bit more once I’m back before attending school next year,” Kang Chan said.

Kang Chan thought that Yoo Hye-Sook would be very happy to hear that, but she unexpectedly just nodded.

“Dig in,” Yoo Hye-Sook said, then busied herself by feeding Kang Chan with meat. She even wrapped some in lettuce before giving it to Kang Chan. It was as if she was feeding a child without arms.

Kang Chan ate so much that he felt suffocated.

He thought that Kang Dae-Kyung would stop Yoo Hye-Sook from making him eat too much, but Kang Dae-Kyung just kept grilling meat and putting it in front of Yoo Hye-Sook. Seeing them like this made it hard for Kang Chan to say that he couldn’t eat anymore.

They wanted Kang Chan to eat even just one piece of meat.



Kang Dae-Kyung pretended to be broad-minded and understanding of everything that was happening, but it seemed he felt no different from Yoo Hye-Sook. He wanted his son—who was about to go somewhere far—to have at least one more bite before leaving.

Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook only stopped when they thought Kang Chan had eaten a lot even by their parental standards.

“Mother, I can’t eat anymore,” Kang Chan finally admitted. When he stepped back, Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook looked somewhat satisfied.

“Aren’t you two going to eat?” Kang Chan asked.

“I’m already full just watching you eat. Do you want to have rice?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“No, thanks. I’ve eaten way too much already,” Kang Chan answered. He jutted his stomach forward and showed it to them.

“What time are you leaving tomorrow?”

“Most likely around four in the morning. They told me that the embassy would send a car over to pick me up.”

“That’s no different than you leaving late tonight, is it? Are you sure you don’t have to pack anything? Not taking anything with you might give you problems later.”

“Yes. I don’t have to bring anything since they’ll be training and taking care of me over there.”

Yoo Hye-Sook tried her best to accept the situation. Kang Dae-Kyung had to have comforted her a lot before meeting with Kang Chan.

“Do you want to go home with us?” Kang Dae-Kyung asked.

“I have a few more people to meet and say goodbye to, but I’ll be home soon.”

“Okay. Don’t come home too late,” Kang Dae-Kyung said, then gestured to Yoo Hye-Sook with a glance.

Once Kang Chan’s parents had driven away, he left the restaurant as well and headed to the coffee shop at the intersection.

He first bought and took digestive medicine, then ordered coffee and sat on the terrace.

Kang Chan was leaving at five am, but he still didn’t feel like he was really going somewhere that far. He would only be gone for six months anyway, and he could also talk to everyone on the phone whenever he wanted. To top it all off, he was going to France, which he was already familiar with.

Kang Chan waited for his dinner to be digested before calling Seok Kang-Ho.

- Where are you?

“I’ve just finished eating dinner with my parents. I’m at the specialty coffee shop at the intersection.”

- One moment.

*Why did he say that?*

Kang Chan cocked his head.

- The section chief is coming with me. We’re on our way.

Around twenty minutes later, the three people whom Kang Chan said goodbye to earlier arrived at the coffee shop, this time with Jeon Dae-Geuk.

“How can you just up and leave on such short notice?” Jeon Dae-Geuk asked. It was only natural that he would act this way. After all, he didn’t have even the slightest idea of what was happening in the UK. Once everyone was seated, they ordered coffee and requested a couple of other things. After some time, Jeon Dae-Geuk, Kim Hyung-Jung, and Kim Tae-Jin stood up to leave.

“Be safe, okay?” Jeon Dae-Geuk said.

“I’ll be back,” Kang Chan said.

Jeon Dae-Geuk tightly shook Kang Chan’s hand, then turned around.

Kim Hyung-Jung and Kim Tae-Jin also shook hands with Kang Chan again and then followed Jeon Dae-Geuk out of the coffee shop, leaving Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho behind.

“Lanok told me that Ethan was telling the truth,” Kang Chan said.

“Doesn’t that mean things will get dangerous?” Seok Kang-Ho asked as he looked around their surroundings. It was already quite late, so a lot of people were on the terrace.

Kang Chan then told Seok Kang-Ho about what Lanok told him before ending their meeting.

“Damn! That gentleman is quite charming!” Seok Kang-Ho commented afterward.

“Charming?”

“Isn’t he? He stood at a crossroads that was forcing him to choose between his country or a person he held dear. What would you have done if you were in his shoes?”

Kang Chan found himself nodding in agreement now that he heard Seok Kang-Ho’s reasoning.

“Anyway, keep your guard up while I’m gone. You better keep an eye out for anything unusual.

“Call me if you have to. I’ll be with the special forces as they train.”

Kang Chan nodded.

“What’s your plan tomorrow?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“I’ll be meeting Lanok at the Nonhyeon Station at around five.”

“Come out an hour earlier, then. Let’s get some coffee before you leave.”

Smirking, Kang Chan agreed. He didn’t know if he could say the same to others, but he saw no reason to stop Seok Kang-Ho from coming out to say goodbye to him.

“Go home early. Ah, right! Did you tell Mi-Young that you’re leaving?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“I couldn’t. I was afraid it would cause her to fail her exams.”

“That’s certainly possible. Phew! Well, you can call people anyway, so just tell her later. For now, we should go home,” Seok Kang-Ho suggested.

The two stood up, left the coffee shop, and hailed a taxi. Upon reaching their apartment complex, they parted ways near the entrance.

Kang Chan opened the door and went inside his house, finding Yoo Hye-Sook right in front of the door.

“Channy! You’re home already?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked. She looked very happy to see him, perhaps because she expected her to come home late.

Kang Chan lightly washed up, then headed back out to the living room and had fruits with his parents.

He hadn’t fully digested his dinner yet, but he wasn’t full enough to not get to eat a few slices of fruit either.

“If things get too difficult, remember that you can just come home, Channy. Don’t overdo it like when you work out in the mornings,” Yoo Hye-Sook said.

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

Kang Chan stayed with his parents for about three hours before going back to his room.

He ran his hand across his desk and computer.

*I’ve had enough of this.*

From tomorrow onwards, he decided to only think about becoming powerful enough to protect those around him and about the Blackhead’s energy, which could soon make him pay the price for reincarnating.

Kang Chan lay in his bed. He had to sleep whenever he got the chance.

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Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook were still in the living room when Kang Chan woke up at three. He took a shower, put on a shirt and a suit, then left his room.

Seeing him all dressed up and ready to go made Yoo Hye-Sook burst into tears.

“I’ll call you as soon as I get there, Mother,” Kang Chan said.

Unable to respond, Yoo Hye-Sook just pursed her lips and hugged Kang Chan as she cried.

After comforting Yoo Hye-Sook, Kang Chan turned to Kang Dae-Kyung.

“I should give my son a proper hug.” Kang Dae-Kyung hugged him and patted his back. “Be careful with whatever you’ll be up to over there.”

“I will, father.”

Kang Chan put on his shoes at the entrance and went out to the elevator. Yoo Hye-Sook followed him.

*Ding.*

“I’ll be back.”

“Be careful,” Yoo Hye-Sook said.

After comforting her one more time, he finally got in the elevator and pressed the button for the ground floor.

“I won’t be long,” Kang Chan added.

As the elevator doors closed, Yoo Hye-Sook covered her mouth.

Kang Chan softly inhaled as soon as he got out of the elevator, the cold air that filled his lungs seemingly calming him down. If he had those kinds of parents in his previous life, he probably never would have even considered becoming a mercenary.

As soon as he walked out of the apartment building, he found Woo Hee-Seung waiting for him.

“Don’t you ever sleep?” Kang Chan asked.

“I can just sleep to my heart’s content after you leave.”

Kang Chan sat in the back seat, and Woo Hee-Seung sat in the passenger seat.

Seok Kang-Ho, who was already sitting on the terrace of a specialty coffee shop in front of Nonhyeon Station, stood up when he saw Kang Chan.

“Do you want coffee?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“Yeah.”

Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee sat at the table across from them.

“Stay out of trouble,” Kang Chan told Seok Kang-Ho.

“Hey! Shouldn’t you worry about yourself? Don’t beat up them too much for no reason, and you should also give in and lose a bit.”

The two lit up some cigarettes as they drank coffee.

Kang Chan suddenly felt as if time was passing by way too fast.

“Did you know it makes everyone feel weird and shittier if something that was always there suddenly disappears?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

When Kang Chan just smirked in response, Seok Kang-Ho grinned, then sighed. “Don’t take too long.”

Kang Chan nodded. After a while, a black van and a sedan stopped in front of the specialty coffee shop.

“I’m going,” Kang Chan said.

Seok Kang-Ho gritted his teeth so tightly that he couldn’t respond.

“Daye.”

Seok Kang-Ho’s cheek twitched. He looked straight at Kang Chan.

“I’m leaving now.”

“Alright.”

Kang Chan then turned and nodded toward Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee.

*Rattle.*

When he approached the vehicles, an agent exited the van and opened the door of the sedan for him.

A new fight was beginning.

“Mr. Kang Chan, how do you feel?” Lanok asked.

“I feel good.”

Lanok smiled, making him look like he was wearing a jester mask again. Soon after, the convoy drove off.

Seok Kang-Ho just stood on the terrace, his eyes slowly following the sedan.

Chapter 196.1: You Want to Give It a Go, Huh? (1)

The sedan Lanok and Kang Chan were in exited the highway and began heading straight to Osan.

“Diplomats can’t really leave their host countries that easily unless they have a valid reason. That’s why my upcoming departure will be kept under wraps. I plan to get off near Niafles and return to South Korea as soon as I’m done introducing you,” Lanok informed Kang Chan.

Even though it was still early in the morning, Lanok looked as presentable and composed as always.

“France’s researchers are probably examining the issue in the UK as well, but my country will only help them under the condition that your safety is guaranteed under all circumstances,” Lanok firmly added.

“Will they accept that condition?” Kang Chan asked. He couldn’t help but doubt that they would just readily agree.

“Well, it won’t be easy,” Lanok replied. With a faint smile, he continued, “This investigation will require them to essentially reveal all the secrets of their subterranean shock device, so we should expect them to nitpick every tiny detail.”

However, if the UK didn’t take the offer and Ethan turned out to be telling the truth, then France would suffer significant devastation as well.

“In situations like these, it’s especially important to make it clear who’s holding the blade. You should never give the sword over to the other party when it’s already in your hand,” Lanok explained. He sounded as if he was teaching a student.

Kang Chan recalled that the lives of a hundred million people were at stake here. If their positions were switched and Lanok had to put his life on the line to prevent an earthquake from happening in Korea, what would Kang Chan have done?

After some time, the two reached the Osan Airport and promptly boarded a private plane.

“Let’s get some shut-eye first before having a meal together. You can use the room over there,” Lanok instructed him.

Kang Chan readily accepted the offer and entered the small room, finding a bed, a clothes rack, and a small light. He plopped down on the bed.

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They had already eaten twice during their thirteen-hour flight before arriving in Niafles, France, at around one in the afternoon local time. The private plane landed on an empty, deserted airport with sand breezing through the desolate air.

Having gotten a lot of sleep, Kang Chan felt glad that he was starting this training in a good, healthy condition.

The vehicle waiting for them at the airport took them to a small city about an hour away. The backdrop of the European town’s rural landscape bore an eerie, ominous silence and an inexplicably heavy atmosphere.

The car parked at a building that was slightly removed from the center of the city. Kang Chan then stepped out of the car and immediately felt as if he had just entered a small town in Eupnae of Gapyeong back home. Agents dressed like laborers lined up in front of the building, all looking sharply at Kang Chan and Lanok as they passed by.

The seven-story building was already quite old and was surrounded by street cafes, small bakeries, and shops that could be commonly found in France, making it quite hard to believe that it actually served as the headquarters of an information bureau.

*Click.*

Kang Chan soon entered the establishment, the lobby reminding him of an old French apartment building.

*Why do the French always put stairs right after the front door?*

Ignoring the stairs, Lanok walked straight ahead and went further inside. They then took the elevator to the seventh floor, which made Kang Chan feel as if he just took a time machine from the past to the present. In a hallway lined with carpet and glass partitions on each side, he could see computer facilities and other state-of-the-art technology.

Kang Chan was taking a quick scan of the room when a chubby man in his forties walked over to Lanok.

“Entrez(Please, come in),” he told them.

Lanok and Kang Chan followed the man past the glass walls and into an office decorated with elegant furniture.

“It’s an honor to meet you. I’m Pierre Lomans, the supervisor of the Niafles department,” the chubby man greeted.

“My name is Lanok,” Lanok said as he shook Pierre Lomans’s hand. He then turned and gestured to Kang Chan. “This is Mr. Kang Chan,”

“Please have a seat,” Pierre offered.

Lanok and Kang Chan sat down at the chairs that were facing the desk. Pierre took it upon himself to pour them some tea, a clear display that he was treating Lanok with great respect yet also immense caution.

“We have completed all the necessary preparations. To start, please take a look at this,” Pierre picked up and handed them the paper envelope that was on the desk. “After a brief introduction and a short break, we will proceed with the training immediately.”

Kang Chan took out the documents from the envelope, which included a passport and identification card.

“This is the identity you will be using during your stay in France. Unless there are any special circumstances, you will use this name while you’re here—”

“Pierre,” Lanok jumped in, cutting Pierre off. “You must not have been fully informed about Monsieur Kang yet. This isn’t the proper way to treat someone who has been acknowledged by all the European intelligence bureaus. Let’s put these documents away.”

“Understood, sir,” Pierre obediently responded.

Lanok's response was so cold that Kang Chan almost felt sorry as he gave back the documents. In situations like this, wasn't it only proper for the person asking for a favor to be more timid and for the person doing that favor to be more relaxed?

Yet on the contrary, every time Lanok's expression and tone changed, Kang Chan could see clear hints of Pierre working hard to get in Lanok's good graces.

Their awkward conversation lasted for about twenty minutes before Lanok finally stood up.

"Well, Mr. Kang Chan, I'll return once the discussions with Britain have concluded," Lanok said. He then glanced at Pierre one final time before leaving the room.

*What the hell? He came all the way to France and drove an hour here just to leave so quickly?*

Kang Chan found it so unbelievable that he almost laughed in disbelief, but Lanok was already out of the office.

Afterward, Pierre took Kang Chan to see all the floors from the third to the seventh floor and assigned him a room on the fifth floor. His quarters had a living room, bed, shower, and even a simple kitchen. Not only were the facilities pretty good, but they were actually quite big and spacious as well. He felt as if he had just entered a nice room in the middle of a long, weary trip. On the other hand, Kang Chan supposed if the room was any smaller, he would probably feel trapped.

"You will be using room 503 from now on, Mr. Kang Chan," Pierre told him.

There were six rooms on the fifth floor, rooms 501 to 506, but Kang Chan didn't know who was in the other rooms.

"We use the same system as a hotel. If you need anything, you can just dial zero on the phone here and tell us about it," Pierre politely said, seemingly not wanting to offend Kang Chan.

People always asked Kang Chan the same questions—Who he really was, where he learned French and gained his combat skills—but today, Kang Chan found himself becoming curious about Lanok's identity again.

*Will that guy ever tell me?*

"Do you have any questions?" Pierre asked, sensing Kang Chan's curiosity.

"No, I'm good," Kang Chan replied.

*People who work for intelligence bureaus might not be good for other things, but they really know how to read the room.*

"I see. Then we will have a short briefing session in an hour and serve you dinner afterward," Pierre respectfully continued.

*Click.*

*It's nice that these government punks are polite, but they're too stiff.*



They reminded him of the agents he met in South Korea.

After freshening up a bit, Kang Chan opened all the shelves in the room. The closets were filled to the brim with clothes. There was loungewear, workout clothes, five sets of suits, hats, shoes that fit the outfits, and even guns and magazines.

*Well, guess I'm really here now!*

He then called back home to Seoul. After talking to Kang Dae-Kyung, Yoo Hye-Sook, Seok Kang-Ho, and Kim Hyung-Jung, he no longer had any other urgent calls to make.

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In the morning, Kang Chan received education on decryption techniques, satellite information management, the command structures of various intelligence bureaus across the world, and insights into global economics. In the afternoon, he had courses in psychology, English, and social dancing.

What truly surprised Kang Chan was the utilization of satellites and the extent of involvement of intelligence bureaus from France, the United States, and China. He never suspected that they could be so deeply involved in aspects related to a country's political, economic, and societal activities.

Kang Chan also learned about international power dynamics and the resulting economic trends that those dynamics created. In doing so, he finally began to realize just how powerless South Korea was.

'Was this why everyone in Korea was so desperate to connect the country to the Eurasian Rail?'

In essence, if the United States and China really put their minds to it, they could destroy every inch of South Korea any day of the year.

The more he learned, the more he grew curious. Fortunately, he could easily grasp and understand all the lessons because he had the current state of affairs to compare it to. If it wasn't for the damned English and social dancing courses, he would have found his classes tolerable.

Since coming to France, Kang Chan spent eleven consecutive days inside the building. He only found joy during two parts of his daily routine. The first was waking up at dawn and going to the gym facility to use the treadmill and work out, and the second was calling the people back home in Korea. He even ate in his room by himself.

*How is this different from being locked up in prison? Are they just going to keep me in this room for six months?*

It had been eleven days, but Lanok still hadn't contacted him. Kang Chan had full trust that he would take care of things outside, though.

It was strange how people's emotions worked.

Kang Chan had made friends with the elderly staff member who prepared him food. They even exchanged greetings and small talk every now and then. After his meal, Kang Chan drank coffee and enjoyed about an hour of rest.

Later that day, he received news that the school festival ended in a success. Seok Kang-Ho called him every day, while Michelle and Kim Hyung-Jung took turns calling him every other day.

Chapter 196.2: You Want to Give It a Go, Huh? (1)

*Click.*

On the twelfth day, just as Kang Chan had finished his morning classes and lunch, the door to his room opened. Much to his surprise, Lanok soon came in.

“Mr. Ambassador,” Kang Chan greeted, clearly taken aback. He was glad to finally see him again after almost two weeks, though.

After exchanging French-style greetings, Kang Chan and Lanok sat opposite each other.

“How’s your stay here so far?” Lanok asked.

“I don’t think it was necessary for me to come to France for this,” Kang Chan replied, genuinely feeling that he could have just done all of this in South Korea.

“You’ll understand once your basic education is over,” Lanok said with his signature smile, reassuring Kang Chan. “Anyway, Ethan seems to be running out of time. He has just agreed to let France’s DGSE and scientists come over for a visit.”

Lanok looked quite relaxed. It seemed he had managed to protect the sword he was holding.

“If it’s alright with you, we will be leaving right away,” Lanok told him.

“Sure. I don’t see why not,” Kang Chan responded.

He had five suits and a bunch of shoes he could wear to match them in his wardrobe. Kang Chan got changed and holstered a gun to his ankle before leaving the room with Lanok.

As soon as they got in a car inside the building, they swiftly hit the road. It took about an hour to reach the airport. The private jet they boarded naturally offered an unmatched level of comfort.

The private jet took off as soon as they arrived at the airport. There was no need to go through security or even put on seat belts. Once the plane had finished its ascent, Lanok poured Kang Chan a cup of tea that his aide had prepared for them.

“Pierre was surprised by how quickly you pick up things. Agents who have worked at the French intelligence bureau for some time receive the same education you’re getting before they can be transferred to the DGSE,” Lanok said.

So in essence, it was basic training to become a higher-up? It didn’t matter either way, though. If this was the process he had to go through to become even more powerful, then he would gladly endure it regardless of how boring or exhausting it was.

“These classes will last about a month, after which you will be staying with agents who have come from various countries on the fifth floor. You’ll then spend a month each in Israel, Germany, and, finally, Russia before returning to Niafles,” Lanok added.

“Did you also go through this process?” Kang Chan asked.

“I did. Vasili, Ludwig, and Vant were actually my batchmates. There were thirteen of us in total, but only five of us survived,” Lanok said.

Considering the harsh nature of their line of work, that result was not entirely surprising.

“As I expected, you don’t seem that surprised,” Lanok remarked.

“Should I have acted otherwise?” Kang Chan asked with a grin.

“Hahahaha,” Lanok chuckled loudly as he lifted his teacup and looked at Kang Chan. “Mr. Kang Chan, the reason why agents from intelligence bureaus around the world—even Russia’s—train together is so they can create a direct connection to exchange information if there’s ever an emergency. Since you’re Asian yet joined the training in France’s place, the trainees who will join you next month will probably act a bit rough around you.”

Nothing was easy in this world.

“I expect that you’ll lead them well, Mr. Kang Chan,” Lanok said.

Kang Chan grinned faintly, to which Lanok smiled in response. After about three hours of flight, the plane landed on a strip.

The skies by then had grown dark, the air a bit damp. Heavy rain was pouring.

“This weather reminds me of Ethan’s dark mind,” Lanok joked before they got off the plane.

Ethan was waiting for them with an umbrella. He was in a coat that seemed to have been made by cutting up a British military uniform.

“Good to see you, Lanok. Welcome, Mr. Kang Chan,” Ethan greeted.

After exchanging brief handshakes, they got into a sedan and left immediately. Their convoy had five vans and sedans clearly tasked to keep them safe.

Ethan had a noticeably stiff face and was moving with so much urgency.

“What about our researchers and agents?” Lanok asked.

“They have finished preparations and are just waiting for you now,” Ethan replied, turning back from his position in the passenger seat.

“Dedham? Even the name of the city sounds unpleasant,” Lanok remarked.

Ethan didn’t even bother replying.

Even though France and England were both European countries, they had clear differences in multiple aspects, including their buildings’ architecture, the people’s genetic features, and their territories’ atmosphere.

To survive in this country, people seemed to need to eat a lot and be strong. The sedan drove on for about 20 minutes before turning into a smaller road.

*Thump, thump.*

As soon as it did, Kang Chan's heart began to race.

*Why is it doing this?*

He sharply glanced around his surroundings, but the cars that were around, behind, and in front of them were all ones that Ethan prepared. Kang Chan could only trust the gun that was holstered at his ankle.

*Thump, thump.*

Seeing Kang Chan's expression, Lanok's eyes glinted. They didn't have to talk to each other to know.

'I think we should be careful, sir.'

'I see.'

The two only had to exchange glances. Since then, they had not uttered another word.

After about twenty minutes more on the road and driving past a few checkpoints, they finally arrived at their destination.

'Kingston Laboratories.'

*What a cliché name.*

They got a perfect view of the facilities stretched before them as soon as they got out of the car. Kang Chan and Lanok immediately but subtly examined their surroundings.

The buildings, all made of cement, rose like rounded structures on a wide plain, resembling something built by indigenous Inuits. Oddly enough, none of the buildings had visible windows.

There was a massive, round cement structure right in front of where they got off too, which was about the size of a department store that Kang Chan had visited in Gangnam.

*Thump, thump. Thump, thump.*

Kang Chan's heart was still sending him a warning.

*Should I enter or not?*

Ignoring Kang Chan's questioning gaze, Ethan extended his hand toward the metal door of the cement building.

"This way, Mr. Kang Chan," Ethan said in a hasty tone.

"What about our agents?" Lanok asked briskly.

"They're waiting inside. I'm sure you're well aware that it would be dangerous to be seen meeting here, considering the surveillance of the other parties from the satellites," Ethan replied just as stiffly.

While they were talking, agents stepped out of the sedans and vans to surround the area. Kang Chan supposed it wouldn't make sense to stall going inside when he had already come all the way to the entrance of the very thing he came for anyway.

“Let's head in,” Ethan urged once more.

As they began to walk, Lanok momentarily paused when he saw the look in Kang Chan's eyes but swiftly continued.

Much to Kang Chan's surprise, the old-looking door opened without making any noise. The fluorescent lights and metal stairs with handrails that came up to one's waist greeted them straight from the entrance.

Kang Chan had never seen such an incredible facility in all his life. Each of the rounded cement structures had towering facilities, and the expansive indoor space that could probably contain twenty soccer fields was equipped with various machinery. People in hazmat suits were all over the place, working with a sense of urgency.

Upon entering, Kang Chan instantly felt a cold shiver run down his spine. However, he knew the enormity of the facility and the massive machinery weren't the ones that caused it.

*Urrrrng.*

The faint vibrations, dusty air, and light coming from the fluorescent bulbs... only added to its intensity.

For the first time, Kang Chan felt chills. An eerie and threatening sensation followed not long after. He felt as if he was confronting an enemy that he couldn't possibly defeat, something that Kang Chan had never felt before.

“Let's head downstairs,” Ethan quickly directed.

*Clunk. Clunk. Clunk. Clunk.*

A metallic clank echoed with every step that the men took down into the depths of the facility. As they went round and round the building, descending about ten meters, a long connecting corridor came into view.

Now Kang Chan also felt an impending sense of doom. Trying to endure the sensation, he gritted his teeth. He had never been seized by such a feeling of dread in his life before.

If this kept up, he would likely stiffen up and become sluggish. He had faced countless enemies throughout both of his lives, but none of them managed to give him this sensation.

Kang Chan took a deep breath, then smirked at himself.

*A mere machine dares scare a human?*

Kang Chan cracked his neck from side to side to loosen up.

*Haah. Haah.*

It was ridiculous, but as he walked, he could hear himself breathing. That only evidenced how nervous he was.

They had probably walked about a hundred meters already. Kang Chan's nerves were standing sharp on edge, which made everything around him seem to slow down. Just then, Ethan stopped.

The machine stretched deep down into the ground and reached high up into the top of a rounded cement building. The French agents already in the facility approached Lanok and greeted him. Men in suits and safety helmets followed suit not long after.

*Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. Buzz.*

The mechanical vibrations of the machine changed into something that sounded like a nervous enemy's breathing.

Even Ethan was clearly taken aback. He began to bellow loudly at the researchers who were dressed in hygienic suits and standing near the French agents.

“What the hell happened to the shockwaves?!” Ethan screamed.

“I don't know, sir! It just popped up!” one researcher frantically replied.

*Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. Buzz.*

It was glass.

The large contraptions of the machine, which looked like the head of a spaceship planted on the floor, had a glass front that allowed Kang Chan to peer inside.

*Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. Psh. Psh. Psh. Psh.*

Nine devices long enough to connect to the bulging cement roof were attached to the core of the machine. As Kang Chan approached it, the vibrations grew increasingly intense.

Kang Chan glared back at the machine through the glass, unflinching.

‘You want to give it a go, huh?’

He didn't need an explanation to know. The Blackhead, a large mineral of crimson-red color, was beginning to emit powerful, increasingly bright flashes.

*Buzz. Buzz. Buzz. Buzz.*

*Hah. Hah.*

Ethan, Lanok, and everyone in the area looked at Kang Chan in surprise.

Chapter 197: You Want To Give It a Go, Huh? (2)

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

Warning sounds abruptly filled the basement. The speakers also blared an announcement done with a feminine voice that Kang Chan thought was commonly heard in video games.

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control!”

*Brr. Brr. Brr. Brr.*

The machine flashed bright lights through the glass. Its vibrations and noises were growing stronger and louder.

*Huff. Huff. Huff.*

Tilting his head, Kang Chan glared at the Blackhead. He felt as if he was looking at the heart or eyeball of a gigantic monster.

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control! Please get out of its blast radius immediately!”

“Lanok! We’ve never come across an issue like this! It might be too late now! Let’s get out of here!” Ethan yelled.

The researchers walking around and the employees operating heavy machinery below the core were now running for the door as fast as they could.

However, Kang Chan didn’t move an inch. He just glared at the blackish-red surface of the Blackhead, which was still flashing.

*I feel like I’m connected to it.*

He was certain that leaving now would cause catastrophic consequences.

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control! Please get out of its blast radius immediately!”

The calmness in the announcer’s voice only made them even more nervous.

“Sir?” one of the nearby researchers yelled at Ethan. Their faces were full of despair and fear. After all, there was nothing they could do.

“Get the fuck out of here!” Ethan swore.

The researchers ran toward the iron stairs. Kang Chan could no longer see any of the employees below the core.

With his hands in his pockets, Lanok turned to the French researchers. “You all should head out as well.”

*Clunk. Clunk. Clunk. Clunk.*

The researchers ran out, urgency echoing with each of their footsteps.

As if having put on a mask, Lanok’s expression showed no changes. However, he had to hide his hands in his pockets because his right pinky finger was trembling.

“Lanok!” Ethan yelled.

“Be quiet. I’m going to stay here until Monsieur Kang leaves. It doesn’t matter whether you stay or not, but I hope you’ll at least be a little quiet.”

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control! Please get out of its blast radius!”

“Ah! And from now on, refrain from using vulgar language around me and Monsieur Kang,” Lanok added.

Ethan’s gaze alternated between Lanok and Kang Chan as he gritted his teeth.

“You guys should head outside,” Lanok said.

“We’ll stay with you, Mr. Ambassador.” The French agents were firm with their conviction.

*Rumble!*

A few seconds later, the main machine shook, sending tremors to the floor. Lanok, Ethan, and the French and British agents swayed with it.

*I’ve established a proper connection with it!*

The energy extended out of the Blackhead like spiderwebs tightly wrapped around Kang Chan.

This wasn’t right.

Kang Chan thought that the subterranean shock device would activate if he left. On the contrary, however, it now seemed to be sucking in his energy to start an earthquake.

*So you’re targeting my energy?*

*Rumble!*

It was as if an invisible rope was tightening around him. He could just be going crazy, but he felt as if he was in the presence of a gigantic living monster.

Kang Chan didn’t know how to stop the energy, but he knew that he wouldn’t just die if the machine took away all his energy. It would also bring forth a catastrophe.

*What does it want me to do?*

*Rumble!*

Kang Chan trembled.

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control! Please get out of its blast range immediately!”

*It’s the spiderwebs—I need a way to cut them off.*

Kang Chan unholstered the pistol attached to his ankle. He then pulled the breechblock and released the safety switch.

*Clank!*

Considering the energy keeping him bound was coming through the glass, all he could do right now was attack the glass.



Surprised, Ethan's eyes widened. Lanok still had the same expression on his face.

"Ethan! Is the glass is bulletproof?" Kang Chan asked.

"Bulletproof? Ah, yes, it is! You really shouldn't shoot—"

*Tang! Pew! Tang! Pew! Tang! Pew!*

Kang Chan fired a couple of bullets, causing sparks to fly from the glass.

"Fuck!" Ethan yelled out of instinct.

*Brr. Brr. Brr. Brrrr.*

The machine began to quiet down.

Kang Chan was still aiming his pistol at the Blackhead. Feeling this way against a machine could be odd, but he was sure he was connected to the damn red jewel. Shooting at it a few times seemed to have severed that connection, however.

*Brr. Brr. Brr. Brrrr. Brrrr.*

When the machine's sounds changed, the alerts and beeping warning sounds stopped.

"What on earth just happened..."

Ethan looked at Kang Chan in astonishment.

*Click.*

Kang Chan put down his pistol and exhaled softly. Not even he understood or could explain what just happened.

*Brrrr. Brrrr. Brrrr.*

The Blackhead wasn't flashing anymore. However, it was now emitting a far dimmer red light.

Finally looking away from the Blackhead, Kang Chan turned to Lanok, who remained seemingly unbothered.

"What now?" Lanok asked.

After a while, Ethan finally seemed as if he was coming to his senses. "Well, the original plan was to have a briefing after the inspection."

"If so, then I trust you have prepared tea and cigars for us?" Lanok's aura and tenacity completely overpowered Ethan. They even stunned the French agents and seemingly angered the British agents.

"This way please, Mr. Kang," Ethan said.

"Ethan, refrain from speaking in English around me and Monsieur Kang. Vasili doesn't speak French because he wants to," Lanok said.

*Does Lanok have to embarrass Ethan in front of British agents?*

Right now, Lanok was like an old captain who couldn't tolerate the defiance of a colleague whom they had already beaten once before.

Ethan never protested whenever Lanok was like this.

“Je m'excuse, c'est ma faute[1], monsieur Kang,” Ethan said.

“Ça ne fait rien[2].”

*Clank. Clank. Clank. Clank.*

Kang Chan had a strange feeling as he walked out of the passage. It was as if he was giving up on his fight against the machine instead of seeing it through—as if he just turned away from an enemy with a pistol in their hand.

As soon as they went through the iron doors, the humid air that the rain had left behind greeted Kang Chan, making him feel refreshed. Aside from wanting to smoke a cigarette, he didn't seem to have undergone any changes.

Ethan walked along a path that went around a convex cement building so large that it took them over ten minutes to go around it. Behind it was another convex building, but it was at least more reasonably sized.

The people here definitely lacked creativity.

Entering the smaller building, they found five wooden doors in a large hall.

“We have prepared the rightmost room for the researchers. Since only the three of us can join the meeting, our agents should wait outside,” Ethan said. He didn't seem skilled enough to match Lanok.

Lanok nodded, finally taking his hands out of his pockets.

Ethan led Kang Chan and Lanok to the room at the very left. In the middle of it was a large circular table that went up to their knees and plush armchairs around it.

*Damn it.*

Having to sit in this room that could accommodate fifty people with ease made Kang Chan feel a little homesick.

Kang Chan and Lanok sat close to each other, and Ethan sat about three spaces away with his chair toward Kang Chan.

Soon after, an employee came over and put coffee, tea, cigars, cigarettes, and an ashtray on the table.

Kang Chan chose coffee, and Lanok a cup of black tea. They then took a moment to light up their cigars and cigarettes.

“Phew.” The smoke that Kang Chan exhaled was quickly sucked up to the ceiling.

“I can't make sense of this situation, so please let me ask you this, Monsieur Kang. Why did you shoot the machine?” Ethan asked.

Kang Chan smiled as he raised his coffee cup.

*How should I explain it? Do I have to say that I felt the energy from the machine? Won't that make me sound crazy?*

“Mr. Ethan, I acted like that out of pure pride. We couldn't control the situation and didn't have any other option, so I thought I should at least try breaking the machine with my own hands if an earthquake was going to occur anyway,” Kang Chan said.

“Haaaa!” Ethan sighed deeply. The room grew silent for a moment.

“As you saw, the Blackhead is in the main machine. Nine supporting devices intensify the energy inside the Blackhead, which then creates shockwaves underground,” Ethan explained.

Kang Chan didn't even want to know about complicated things like this.

“I heard that one Blackhead is discovered every few years. Why didn't you just try to get a new one?” he asked.

“Blackheads normally don't have energy. The one in the machine is simply special. Ever since a satellite discovered it, we have spent over two years working on it.”

“So you did all of that and also bought Sharlan's services?”

“Ahem.” Ethan quickly picked up his teacup in response. Lanok smirked.

“Are you asking me to go into one of the nine supporting devices?”

“No. It's a vacuum in there, so a person can't go in there. However, with your permission, we can connect you to them through energy-gathering equipment.”

While listening, Kang Chan realized that his energy was draining out of him.

It had been about twenty to thirty minutes since they left the machine room.

Much like the time he ran like crazy in North Korea, he felt as if all his energy was escaping out of the soles of his feet. He started becoming sleepy as well—enough for him to fall asleep if he just leaned his head back right now.

“Monsieur Kang, that situation earlier was the worst we've experienced so far, and the interval between these incidents is quickly decreasing. If you're going to help us, I hope you'll hurry,” Ethan said.

“How long is it now?” Lanok asked.

“It occurs around once every week now.”

“I'll have my country's researchers look into it first. We'll act based on their findings.”

No matter what Ethan said, Kang Chan or Lanok wouldn't just comply with his wishes.

"Now that it has come to this, we're willing to provide full cooperating on anything. However, I hope you'll decide as quickly as possible."

"We'll keep that in mind. We'll take our leave now. Let's go, Mr. Kang Chan." Lanok said, seemingly having noticed Kang Chan's condition.

Kang Chan found no reason to refuse, and Ethan couldn't do anything to stop them.

"To start with, give your full cooperation to the researchers France sent," Lanok added.

"Alright."

As they left, Kang Chan glanced at Ethan's side profile. He felt as if the latter was hiding something from them.

Once outside, Lanok gave the researchers and agents their new orders.

Ethan seemingly wanted them to stay in the research institute. Nevertheless, perhaps because he was tactless or because he was trying to show his sincerity, he got in the passenger seat and accompanied them to the airport.

Kang Chan felt very sleepy.

The car's pleasant vibrations, the soft cushions, and the humid, after-rain weather.... he was in the optimal condition to fall asleep.

Kang Chan sucked his left cheek toward his tongue.

Showing his enemies weakness was the same thing as telling them to look for an opportunity to get the best of him whenever they wanted.

*Crunch.*

Kang Chan felt horrible pain as the metallic taste of blood filled his mouth. Fortunately, that was enough to wake him up completely.

They drove for an excruciatingly tiresome hour and a half before reaching the airport.

If it wasn't for France, it would've been difficult for Kang Chan to come to the UK often.

"Rentrez bien[3], Monsieur Kang," Ethan said.

"Ä bientöt[4]."

Kang Chan then got on the plane. He was so tired that he drooped like lettuce. His sleepiness had returned as well, perhaps because the tension had finally left him.

*Ding. Ding. Ding. Ding.*

The warning went off, and the plane took off soon after. Kang Chan pressed on the bridge of his nose with his thumb and index finger.

“Are you okay?” Lanok asked.

“I don’t know why, but I suddenly feel very sleepy.”

Kang Chan wouldn’t have said that if he didn’t trust Lanok.

He suddenly started missing Seok Kang-Ho—the only colleague he could trust to protect him. With Seok Kang-Ho around, he could sleep whenever he was having a hard time. Unfortunately, he was thirteen hours away from him by plane.

After some time, a flight attendant came in with tea, but Lanok held up his hand and sent them away.

“You should get some sleep.”

“I agree, Mr, Ambassador. I’ll lay down for a bit.” Kang Chan replied, feeling relieved that Lanok was next to him. If it wasn’t for Lanok, he wouldn’t have done something this crazy.

Kang Chan went into the room that he fell asleep in on his way to France. After taking his jacket off, he went straight to bed.

*Even I can feel this tired, huh? Could this be the result of the machine taking my energy away?*

When Kang Chan closed his eyes, he saw an image of Seok Kang-Ho grinning. He then thought of Yoo Hye-Sook opening her arms and hugging him and Kang Dae-Kyung reaching out to him with his long arms to tousle his hair.

As Kang Chan fell asleep, he thought of one more person.

*Is Mi-Young doing okay?*

“Yeah!”

Kang Chan thought he could hear Kim Mi-Young.

*Knock knock knock.*

Kang Chan woke up to someone knocking on his door. He still felt heavy.

Kang Chan felt pain similar to when he was stabbed and lost a lot of blood. He was cold and trembling. It was as if someone had just beaten the shit out of him.

Kang Chan smirked. He thought of the Blackhead and the machine as he forced himself to stand.

When Kang Chan opened the door and went outside, Lanok—who was sitting on the sofa—looked at Kang Chan. Surprise could be seen in his eyes.

“What’s wrong?” Kang Chan asked.

“You’re too pale—you should probably go to a hospital.”

“Ethan might find out that I’m not feeling well, and I don’t think that’ll be too good.”

“I’ll order Pierre to handle this. For now, let the medical team support you.”

“Alright.” Kang Chan sat on the sofa. Not long after, he broke out in a cold sweat.

*I can't believe my encounter with a machine is giving me body aches.*

*Ding. Ding. Ding. Ding.*

The plane slowly tilted downward as the lights flickered and warnings went off.

Kang Chan leaned back against the sofa but soon sat up.

“You’re really pale,” Lanok commented.

“I’ll be fine.”

Unfortunately, Kang Chan didn’t get better even after landing at the airport and getting in a car. He was in an almost similar condition, if not worse, when he got stabbed at the hostess bar.

Lanok was probably curious, but he just kept quiet instead of asking Kang Chan questions.

The car began to speed up, which was unusual.

As soon as they reached the building, they immediately went into a room. Kang Chan lay in bed, and a medical staff briefly examined him and attached an IV to him.

“He’s showing symptoms of physical strength loss. Let’s keep him under close observation for about another day so he can get some rest,” the medical staff said. They left soon after, leaving behind Kang Chan and Lanok in the room.

“Don’t you have to go now?” Kang Chan asked.

“Will you really be okay?”

Kang Chan just smirked in response.

“I’ll be back. I just have to go over the researchers’ report.”

Although Ethan was the one who caused trouble, Kang Chan was the one who fell ill, and Lanok seemed even busier than Ethan.

Lanok left without asking what he was curious about.

Kang Chan fell asleep again.

Sometimes, he couldn’t help but miss Director Yoo Hun-Woo from the Bang Ji Hospital.

Chapter 198.1: Is There Anything Else You’re Hiding? (1)

Kang Chan woke up as usual, removed the needle from his arm, and got out of bed. He slept for over twelve hours straight since yesterday.

Although he felt somewhat drained of energy, he was not worse off than yesterday. He just felt way too stiff—like a block of wood. After doing some light stretching, Kang Chan changed into his workout clothes and headed to the gym.

The gym on the sixth floor was always empty around this time. Kang Chan warmed up to loosen up a little bit more and then went over to one of the machines that were facing the window. He stepped onto it and pressed the start button.

*Whir. Thud. Thud. Thud. Thud.*

Once the machine started, he gradually increased the speed until he reached the speed that he usually ran at. No matter what anyone said, he would still be convinced that the Blackhead definitely drained him of his energy. He needed to find a solution for it.

“Hah. Hah.”

Even though his stamina wasn't as high as it used to be, it wasn't so bad that he had to stop running.

*Will the French researchers find a way to solve it?*

If they failed to find anything in particular, he would be willing to try Ethan's suggestion to him and Lanok, which was to get connected to one of the supporting devices that were installed to extract energy.

It was absolutely ridiculous.

The energy that left the Blackhead stuffed Kang Chan's dead self into someone else's body, but it was now trying to steal it back.

*Thud, thud, thud, thud.*

“Hah, hah.”

It was just a feeling—just out of instinct—that Kang Chan felt this way. Nevertheless, he was certain that if he let the machine take the energy away from him yesterday, they would have found themselves in the middle of a powerful earthquake.

Perhaps there was a problem with the machine's design or the combination of energies failed. They had never built anything like it before, after all.

For now, Kang Chan focused on building his stamina back up. After about an hour of running, he switched to his strength workout. By the time he returned to his room, he no longer wanted to lift even one more finger. If he could have Yoo Hye-Sook saying, “Channy! You should have taken a rest day today!” during times like this, he would have likely felt going back up and running again.

Kang Chan showered and changed into new clothes before stepping out of the bathroom.

*Knock, knock, knock.*

After some time, someone knocked a few times on the door. He was already expecting that, though, since they had always brought him his breakfast around this time.

*Click.*

“Mr. Kang Chan. How are you feeling?”

Much to Kang Chan's surprise, however, it was Pierre, the executive of the Niafles branch, who greeted him, not food.

“I’m feeling a lot better now. Please come in and have a seat,” Kang Chan politely offered.

“If it’s all right with you, may I join you for your breakfast?” Pierre asked.

“Of course,” Kang Chan answered in an easygoing tone.

“Bring in the meal!” Pierre shouted toward the doorway upon hearing Kang Chan’s response.

*This sneaky man! How could he brazenly ask me if he could join me for breakfast when he had already prepared food for two people?*

An employee carried in a portable table and unfolded its sides to prepare it for dining.

“Next week, agents from five different countries will be arriving at this location,” Pierre began as he spread a generous amount of butter onto his toast. “They will be coming from Russia, Israel, Germany, the United States, and China.”

Kang Chan just listened to Pierre speak as he tore off pieces of his bread. Every time he moved his mouth, the inside of his cheek throbbed with pain.

“Do you think you’ll be okay?” Pierre asked with concern.

“Is the agents’ arrival something that my answer can change?” Kang Chan asked.

“Of course. If you were to refuse, they would all be sent someplace else,” Pierre responded respectfully.

“It doesn’t really matter to me. I’m here to be educated, so I’m going to follow the plan that’s already been set up,” Kang Chan lightly replied.

Pierre nodded as he picked up a thinly sliced baguette, making Kang Chan think that he was the type to eat hearty breakfasts.

“Mr. Kang Chan, the purpose of this training is to facilitate an exchange of information between intelligence bureaus. Since you were recommended, France did not send any agents,” Pierre informed him.

*If I’m hearing things right, there’s a slight edge to his words.*

Kang Chan wiped his mouth with a napkin and straightened his back before looking at Pierre.

“I mean to say that after you agree to their arrival, it will be difficult for you to receive special treatment or leave the training. What’s more, you cannot use the things you’ll gain from this training to bring any harm to France,” Pierre explained.

“I understand,” Kang Chan obediently replied.



Although Pierre bowed down before Lanok, he was still an executive who managed a territory for an intelligence bureau. Kang Chan could understand Pierre giving him these words of warning.

After the meal and Pierre left the room, Kang Chan pulled out his phone.

It was nine in the morning, which meant it was around five in the afternoon in South Korea. The dial tone crackled from the audio feedback and rang about three to four times before the call was picked up.

- It's me, Cap!

Seok Kang-Ho sounded as coarse as always. Kang Chan listened to this voice every day, but he was still glad to hear it again today.

Kang Chan began to explain to him in detail what happened yesterday.

-Are you all right now, at least?

“Yeah. It's bearable. What's up with you, though? You sound a bit different,” Kang Chan asked out of curiosity.

- Well, the thing is, Oh Gwang-Taek is behind bars.

“What?” Kang Chan couldn't believe his ears.

Maybe it was inevitable for a gangster to be imprisoned, but Kang Chan still found the news quite shocking. He couldn't believe the same man who told him a while back that he was going to quit being a gangster and become a proper businessman suddenly got arrested.

- He was involved in a fight at the bar. He apparently thought that the civilians who fought him were gangsters who came to attack him, so he pulled out his blade and struck back. I guess five against two isn't exactly a fair fight.

*Tsk! To think he was just talking about how scared he was about getting attacked!*

- I heard Joo Chul-Bum is also in prison. He wasn't at the site but was arrested later. When I didn't hear from him, I began to wonder if he didn't call me because he was embarrassed. Unfortunately, they told me only his lawyer was allowed to see him when I tried visiting him, so I just headed back.

*He should be able to meet him if he talks to Kim Hyung-Jung, no?*

Kang Chan wondered if he should tell Seok Kang-Ho that or not.

- I thought about asking Kim Hyung-Jung, but I don't really have any reason that I can give him if he asks why I have to meet Joo Chul-Bum. It made asking feel so awkward.

Seok Kang-Ho seemed to have already thought of it.

“How did you find out they were arrested?” Kang Chan asked.

- I heard from Executive Suh.

“You met with Executive Suh?” he wasn't expecting that.

- Last night, after dinner, I went out with Director Kim, Executive Suh, and the section chief for a couple of drinks.

“Tsk! So they already know what happened then,” Kang Chan said.

- That’s why I can’t ask them for that favor. If you were here, I would have tried to come up with an excuse to go.

*That idiot! He swung his blade at the wrong people!*

“Let’s just keep our eye on it for now,” Kang Chan told him.

- They did say something about the investigation probably being handled by Unit 4. Based on the limited visitation rights to go see him, they’re most likely right.

“What’s Unit 4?” Kang Chan asked.

- It’s an organized crime unit that handles serious cases, including those eligible for capital punishment.

“Goddamn it!”

- Anyway, don’t lose sleep over it. I’ll see what happens after the first trial.

“All right,” Kang Chan responded.

Kang Chan hung up feeling quite uneasy and upset. There was no room for excuse for what Oh Gwang-Taek did, but that didn’t mean he cared any less about it.

He went to class as soon as the call ended. He had to do a role-playing exercise involving eight people, nine including Kang Chan.

Each participant had to perform their part flawlessly nine times in English to complete the exercise. Kang Chan thought that they could probably make good money by introducing this kind of training program in South Korea.

Afterward, he took courses in politics, economics, and psychology. While he spent the day studying, his stamina slowly began to return to normal.

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Kang Chan spent the next few days attending even more classes. After some time, he had grown to adapt well enough to his life at Niafles. Everything went according to the schedule that the intelligence bureau had set.

On Saturday morning, Lanok came to visit him. It had been about a week since they last saw each other. Since Lanok arrived in time for breakfast, they brought each other up-to-date on recent happenings over a meal.

“The researchers have given me quite an intriguing report,” Lanok told Kang Chan, who had been dying to know more about this topic.

Lanok picked up a slice of baguette as he continued, “According to the researchers’ analysis, the Blackhead is a type of energy aggregate. It requires a balance of nine energies, but it is currently missing two of them.”

*Wait, is that all? That can't be everything that the research team came up with.*

Kang Chan couldn't help but be reminded of the sly snake that Lanok was. He even doubted anyone could be more cunning than him in this world. His expression made it impossible to tell whether or not the researchers had actually come up with a solution.

“There is apparently a significant reason why cetinium and denadite were used to replace the lost energies. Their findings suggest that the two energy sources were used to replace the missing energies so they could stop the earthquakes, not to actually trigger them from occurring,” Lanok continued.

*What's he saying this time?*

Chapter 198.2: Is There Anything Else You're Hiding? (1)

Lanok took a few seconds to put the remainder of the baguette pieces into his mouth. If Kang Chan didn't know how French people ate, he would've died from frustration.

“The subterranean shock device probably went out of control as soon as it was connected to the Blackhead. If left alone, it would have caused intense earthquakes to occur all over the United Kingdom, so they tried to use the two energy sources to stabilize it,” Lanok continued.

“But that didn't help them regain control over it, so they turned to others for help?” Kang Chan asked.

Lanok nodded. “Introducing the two energies into the mix seemed to have magnified the Blackhead's energy, which is the opposite of their goal to weaken it.”

“Does that mean Ethan was telling the truth when he said there's still a risk of an earthquake taking place?” Kang Chan asked.

“According to the researchers and the magnitude of the seismic waves that will forcefully create an earthquake, the probability of the disaster being confined to the UK is quite high. However, we still have to wait for the simulation results of its impact on the tectonic plates before we can be certain,” Lanok responded.

*So that's the reason Ethan acted so submissively!*

Lanok still hadn't given Kang Chan any solutions to the problem.

“After you visited the site, the device remained stable for quite some time before starting to vibrate again around morning last Thursday. Hence, our researchers think that stabilizing the device will provide us with enough time to remove the Blackhead, which should wrap everything up and prevent any earthquakes from happening.”

“Does that mean I'm going to have to face the machine like I did last time?” Kang Chan inquired.

“Considering it appeared to pose a risk to you, we can’t have you confront it unprepared. They have prepared an energy-blocking suit to sever the connection between you and the Blackhead. To be safe, they also made goggles that can detect the energy waves,” Lanok answered.

*I’ll get to see the energy with my own eyes?*

If so, then Kang Chan would soon get the opportunity to confirm if what he felt the last time he went was true or not.

Kang Chan’s expression made Lanok smile.

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Kang Chan still couldn’t enjoy taking the plane once a week, which was nothing compared to what Lanok had to go through every day. To make things worse, each trip required nearly two hours of driving. His only solace was that the weather was clear and sunny. ‘

Once the plane had taken off, Kang Chan and Lanok talked about various topics.

“Have you heard the news that five agents from different countries will be joining you on Monday?” Lanok asked.

“Pierre told me,” Kang Chan replied.

Lanok briefly nodded in response.

“Those agents are most likely already aware of your reputation. I doubt you’ll run into any issues with them, but if you encounter any difficulties, you can request immediate assistance from Pierre.”

Since they still had a long way to go before reaching their destination, Kang Chan decided to finally ask something that had been on his mind for quite some time now.

“Mr. Ambassador, I heard France didn’t send an agent for the training because I was recommended. Wouldn’t that cause you any trouble?”

“Not at all. We don’t do this training program often, but it typically occurs once every five years, so France can just participate in the next one,” Lanok replied.

“Why didn’t France just send an agent this time too? I wouldn’t have cared either way.”

“Only agents recommended by the five participating countries can attend. Under normal circumstances, each country typically recommends its own agents, but I recommended you instead for this batch. Naturally, that means France can’t participate this time around,” Lanok replied.

Kang Chan was lost for words for a moment.

*An agent can only attend if they were recommended?*

So under normal circumstances, it would've been impossible for Kang Chan to receive this kind of training.

Lanok smiled. It was rare for him to show emotion.

“A while back, I asked you if you could help me if a talented French individual came forward after you gained power. Do you remember?” Lanok asked.

“Yes,” Kang Chan replied.

“France does not have any suitable candidates to take part in this training right now. Considering we lack talent at the moment, I decided to recommend you instead since I have no doubt that giving you this opportunity will greatly benefit France in the future. So you shouldn't feel overly burdened,” Lanok reassured him.

*What is it that Lanok really wants?*

Seeing Lanok's wide smile, which caused his eyes and the corners of his mouth to crinkle, Kang Chan couldn't help but feel a bit apologetic.

“Monsieur Kang. Truth be told, Vasili, Ludwig, Vant, Yang Bum, and even I will have to step down from active duty in the intelligence bureaus in the next five to ten years. We couldn't create a leader among us. However, I firmly believe that you can become the sole leader of the upcoming world of intelligence. When that time comes, I ask you to protect France and take care of the talents who come from France.”

Lanok had definitely taken off his mask now. Looking at him in the eyes, the only thing Kang Chan could do was nod.

*Should I ask him or not?*

Lanok smiled in amusement at Kang Chan.

“I've never seen you hesitate, Mr. Kang Chan,” he said.

This was also Kang Chan's first time seeing Lanok smile that way too.

“Mr. Ambassador, to be honest, I've always wondered about your status in the intelligence bureaus,” Kang Chan said.

Holding his teacup, Lanok chuckled out loud before replying, “I'll answer that question for you once you're done with your training. Consider it a part of our celebration of you formally becoming a part of the intelligence bureaus.”

“All right,” Kang Chan accepted with a grin. The two laughed together.

Kang Chan liked the smile that Lanok had on his face right now.

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Ethan, who had come out to the airport to greet them, could not conceal the urgency in his expression. Lanok would never have let himself look so tense in front of others.

The three exchanged greetings before getting into the car. They didn't really talk about anything important.

Kang Chan focused on the scenery outside as he took deep, slow breaths. He felt as if he was going to be facing an extremely powerful foe all by himself again.

*What's it gonna be like today?*

Kang Chan waited for the moment they would be off the streets. After some time, the car exited onto the outer roads.

*Thump. Thump.*

Kang Chan's heart was sending him the same warning as last time. He wished he had the goggles that allowed him to see the energy waves right now. He couldn't be entirely sure, but from this distance, he already felt his connection to the Blackhead.

*Should I have brought a machine gun with me?*

Kang Chan grinned. He took another deep breath.

He had been told that he would be getting a suit that could sever the energy connection between them and goggles that could make the energy visible to the wearer. It should allow him to determine what exactly was the energy that was coming from the Blackhead.

The subterranean shock device was just a machine. It couldn't ask Kang Chan for the energy back after forcing him to live in someone else's life. Even if it was a god, it still wouldn't be right.

This wasn't his first time doing this anymore, so he felt a bit more relaxed. After about twenty minutes, the sedan finally reached its destination.

Click.

The moment the car doors opened, his heart began to beat even more loudly than before.

He could only see the rounded buildings, but his surroundings felt thick with heavy silence and nervousness.

"This way, please," a researcher immediately said, guiding Lanok and Kang Chan into the last room on the right.

Once they were inside, a man with a white beard talked to them. His expression was quite grim.

"All the personnel inside the building have been evacuated. We also have people on standby in case of emergency," he said.

He then looked at Ethan, a slight hint of hesitation evident on his face.

"If you have something else to say, please be quick about it," Ethan said.

“Based on our analysis, even in the worst-case scenario, it is unlikely that an earthquake will occur.”

Lanok quickly turned to Ethan. He then frowned at the researcher.

“However, if our calculations are right, then failure to handle this properly will likely cause an explosion with enough power to rival the simultaneous detonation of twenty Tsar Bombas. An explosion that strong will render not only France but the entire Europe an uninhabitable environment,” the researcher continued.

Ethan stood firm against Lanok’s fierce glare.

“Why is your conclusion different from the report?” Lanok asked.

“We’ve received the duplicate blueprint of the primary machinery quite late, so we couldn’t calculate the explosion of Blackhead itself,” the researcher answered.

“What can we do to stop it?”

“Other than attempting what I mentioned before, there is no other way,”

Lanok sighed as silence filled the room.

“How much time do we have left?” Lanok asked.

“Unfortunately, it is impossible to give an accurate answer to that question.”

“This is outrageous.” Lanok seemingly couldn’t bring himself to believe just how absurd their situation was.

“Fine, then,” Lanok said after a few moments. He then ordered, “Hurry up and finish the preparations.”

The researchers quickly got to work.

Lanok turned to Kang Chan. “Do you know anything about Tsar Bombas?”

“I know it’s a nuclear weapon that Russia developed,” Kang Chan answered.

Ethan glanced at Kang Chan but swiftly looked away.

“It’s known as one of the most powerful nuclear weapons ever developed. It has terrifying destructive power, a mushroom cloud that can reach a height of sixty kilometers, and can cause an explosion that can be seen from even a thousand kilometers away.”

This was the first time Kang Chan had heard of the weapon since his training in the Foreign Legion.

“I wish we were dealing with an earthquake now,” Kang Chan joked.

Lanok’s eyes were just as sharp as Kang Chan’s.

This doesn’t change anything, Mr. Ambassador. If I can be of assistance in finally dealing with the Blackhead, then I’d be willing to cooperate. We should put an end to this while we still can.”

“I leave it in your capable hands,” Lanok said, sounding quite stressed. Turning to Ethan, he asked, “Are you hiding anything else?”

“No, Lanok,” Ethan replied.

Lanok sighed. After a while, researchers came in holding something that looked like a spacesuit.

*Thump. Thump.*

Kang Chan felt as if he now knew the reason his heart was beating so fast.

Chapter 199.1: Is There Anything Else You’re Hiding? (2)

A researcher brought over what looked exactly like a spacesuit.

“Please take off your jacket before wearing this,” the researcher told Kang Chan.

Kang Chan took off his jacket and handed it to one of the agents.

“You’re going to have to put on the pants first,” the researcher instructed.

Kang Chan put his legs one after another through the pants, which were connected to the boots. The researcher then draped suspenders over his shoulders.

“Please raise your arm.”

Two people had to grab and lift the top part of the suit to put it on Kang Chan. They lowered it down on him, seemingly covering him with it like a lid. Afterward, another researcher brought over and attached a belt that seemed to have been made out of aluminum. It seamlessly clasped onto the hook connecting the two parts of the suit.

“The moment you put on the helmet, you will no longer hear anything outside. All communications will be done through the headset built into the helmet,” the researcher explained.

Kang Chan looked across him and saw Lanok putting on a headset with a mic.

“This suit contains ninety minutes worth of oxygen. The screen near your left forearm will display how much time you have left. It will give you audible updates every twenty minutes until you only have thirty minutes left, at which point it’ll start updating you every ten minutes. The plan is to save at least ten minutes of your oxygen for your trip back to us.”

Kang Chan only nodded in response. Soon after, two researchers lifted a helmet high in the air and lowered it onto his head.

*Click. Click.*

*What’s this?*

When Kang Chan put on the helmet, he saw various lines in front of him. They were in different colors and showed irregular movements.

“Mr. Kang Chan, can you hear me?” a researcher asked.



“I hear you loud and clear.”

Kang Chan noticed a slight spicy taste in his mouth as he breathed.

“I see multiple lines of different colors. Are these the energy?” he asked.

“You’re seeing the wavelengths of the energy that the lens on the helmet has made visible. Anyway, let’s begin.”

Kang Chan walked according to the researcher’s instructions.

*Clunk. Clunk.*

A heavy, metallic sound rang out with each step he took. He felt as if he was in a crystal ball that had a white ray moving in various directions.

When Kang Chan headed out, the colorful energy wavelengths also exited the convex cement building. They spread like a spiderweb, scanning the surroundings before disappearing.

Perhaps it was because Kang Chan was wearing a spacesuit, but the energy that scanned his surroundings just kept repeating the same behavior, examining other places before going further away. Seeing the wavelengths at work, he became completely certain that what he felt the first time he visited this place was actually real.

*Huff. Huff.*

It was a striking sight.

The researchers opened the door of the convex building, and Kang Chan immediately heard familiar warning sounds and a woman announcing that the situation had gone out of control.

*Huff. Huff. Clunk. Clunk.*

The suit was making it very difficult to walk, but he chose not to pay it any attention for now.

The lens of the helmet made the interior of the convex building seem full of spiderwebs, all of which began from the Blackhead in the main mechanical equipment.

Some of the rays were as thin as a thread, while the others were as thick as a rope. Among them, the red one was especially fast. It also displayed rougher movements than the others when it passed through Kang Chan and the researchers.

The rays twisted and turned like lightning as they extended, creating quite a terrifying sight whenever they approached and disappeared.

“Mr. Kang Chan, are you okay?” Lanok asked as looked at Kang Chan and his surroundings. He also had goggles on now.

Only Lanok knew that this place drained Kang Chan of his energy. Now that he could see how it happened, he seemingly became worried.

“I’m still completely unaffected,” Kang Chan answered.

Kang Chan took quite a while before he reached the bottom of the stairs.

*These idiots! If they were going to build a facility this big, shouldn't they have at least made an elevator?*

Now ten meters underground, Kang Chan began walking into the corridor again. He was accompanied by Lanok, Ethan, five researchers, and five agents each from France and the UK.

One of the researchers walked past the main engine and pointed to the middle of the corridor, which continued on to the left and right, looking like a T.

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control!”

If they used a walkie-talkie instead, they wouldn't have had to listen to the awful warning sounds.

It took them around fifteen minutes to reach one of the nine auxiliary devices. A researcher reached out to it and pulled a cable about five centimeters thick. It looked like an electrical cord.

*Huff. Huff.*

“This cable is connected to the cetinium, allowing it to transfer the energy's wavelength. If we connect this to the spacesuit, your energy will be transferred to the cetinium and then to the Blackhead. In theory, that should be enough to stabilize the Blackhead's energy,” he explained to Kang Chan.

Kang Chan slowly inhaled.

“To sever your connection to it, you just have to pull the cable toward you. Did you get all that?”

Even at that moment, countless energy rays were passing through the researcher, Kang Chan, and the people nearby.

“Yeah, got it,” Kang Chan answered.

Looking quite nervous, the researchers finally pulled the cable, revealing an end that looked similar to the hose attached to LPGs[1] to refill them.

“We're going to connect the cable to the spacesuit now,” a researcher said.

*Huff. Huff.*

Looking straight into Kang Chan's eyes, he attached the cable to the right side of his waist.

*Click!*

*Brrr!*

The cable began to vibrate lightly as soon as it was connected. All the red wavelengths around them then swiftly rushed to Kang Chan and the auxiliary device.

“Mr. Kang Chan! Are you okay?” Lanok asked, worry clearly evident in his voice, as the surprised researchers instinctively took around three to four steps away from him.

Without the goggles, Kang Chan never would have learned about this phenomenon.

“Still doing good, Mr. Ambassador,” Kang Chan replied. He really did feel fine.

Kang Chan turned toward the researchers. The helmet didn’t turn with his head, so he had to twist his entire upper body to look at them.

“Did that do anything to the Blackhead?” Kang Chan asked the researchers.

“It hasn’t shown any changes yet.”

The auxiliary device was now surrounded by a red glow.

*Huff. Huff.*

The sight made him feel quite terrified, but he found it more bearable than he initially expected.

“The wavelength of the cetinium is getting bigger,” a researcher said.

Kang Chan didn’t know what that meant.

When Kang Chan turned his upper body toward the researchers again, he noticed they were alternating between writing down something and looking at the control panel that was connected to the auxiliary device.

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control!” the woman ceaselessly exclaimed.

*Can’t they turn that off?*

Everyone in the room already knew that there was a problem, so the warnings weren’t really doing anything but worsen their anxiety.

*Badum. Badum. Badum. Badum.*

Just as Kang Chan began to feel as if everything was going smoothly, his heart started beating loudly. It was as if it was screaming at him that he was in grave danger.

*Go! Get out of here!*

*What’s going on? What’s making my heart react like this?*

*Huff. Huff.*

Kang Chan turned and looked both ways as he tried to control his breathing.

At that moment...

*Whoosh!*

The world before him was completely engulfed in a blackish-red color.

*What’s going on?*

Not long after, the energy inside Kang Chan completely left him.

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control! Please get out of its blast radius immediately!” the woman continued to announce.

“Remove the cable!” Lanok ordered as soon as things went south.

After a couple of futile attempts, one of the researchers answered, “We can’t get close to him!”

*Huff. Huff.*

Albeit with difficulty, Kang Chan successfully turned to the side, finding researchers covering their faces with their hands.

“Mr. Kang Chan! The red energy struck you. Can you remove the cable?” Lanok asked.

*I have to answer, but...*

His mouth wouldn’t open.

*Bang!*

It didn’t take long for him to fall to the floor on his butt.

*Huff. Huff.*

Hearing his own breathing, he looked down. Unfortunately, the helmet didn’t follow his head movements, preventing him from seeing the cable.

*What did they tell me to do again? Pull the cable toward me?*

He had to sever the connection, but he had not even a drop of energy left in him. He couldn’t even lift a finger right now.

Everything around him had been dyed in a blackish-red color. It was as if his surroundings had been covered in blood.

Kang Chan was immediately connected with the Blackhead.

*Is it because of the cable?*

They had basically opened the door for the Blackhead, which had been doing everything in its power to reclaim the energy inside Kang Chan. He couldn’t help but regret not bringing a machine gun with him or even just unholstering the pistol attached to his ankle.

*Beep! Beep! Beep! Beep!*

“Warning! Warning! The shockwave has gone out of control! Please get out of its blast radius immediately!”

*Huff. Huff.*

Kang Chan didn’t even have the strength to raise his head up. All he could do now was stare at whatever was in front of him.

Chapter 199.2: Is There Anything Else You’re Hiding? (2)

*Fuck!*

Kang Chan was at a loss for words.

After this rock shoved him into some random stranger's body, it was now trying to kill him because some people wanted to control the power it possessed.

“Mr. Kang Chan!” Lanok called out. It sounded a lot more prolonged to Kang Chan, though. The way he heard it made him think of a stretched-out cassette tape being played in slow motion.

*Hufffff. Hufffff.*

*Everything is moving so slowly!*

Kang Chan looked as far above him as his eyes would let him. He then gazed past the helmet.

Unfortunately, that didn't change anything. His surroundings were still wrapped in a blackish-red color, and the wavelengths, which were as thick as the cable that was connected to Kang Chan, were still coursing toward him.

*So this was how the Blackhead tried to connect to me! Good thing I shot it with my pistol a couple of times back then! I can't do that right now, though. I have to pull the cable toward me. Since it's connected to the right side of my waist, I can just fall on it, can't I?*

He could still hear the conversation between Lanok and the researchers, but their words sounded slurred to him.

*What would Seok Kang-Ho say if I died sitting like this?*

That fucker would definitely run over here and shoot everything that moves. If he couldn't get his hands on a gun, he would just bring a knife instead.

*Well, an explosion will devour this area before he even gets the chance to do that.*

Kang Chan tried to lean to the right but soon realized that he didn't even have the strength to do that.

The blackish-red lines were becoming thicker and thicker, and the speakers were still blaring out the bullshit warning about everyone having to vacate the premises immediately. Kang Chan found it unfortunate that the recording of the female voice would never get tired.

*If I die here, will I just reincarnate somewhere else again? Well, if I die now and get sent to hell, that place will definitely be in chaos for a bit. The people I killed, including Jang Kwang-Taek, Yang Jin-woo, and everyone else in Africa, will definitely pounce on me.*

Kang Chan smirked. He would have Choi Seong-Geon and a few other soldiers helping him, at least.

With all his strength now gone, he felt as if his soul was the only thing left in his body.

‘I'm so happy today that I no longer envy anyone in this world.’

‘Channy! Should we ask your father to buy us dinner?’

‘Channy thanked me!’

'My son loves me so much!'

The edges of Kang Chan's lips curved into a faint smile.

*Hey, Blackhead! You don't have a mom, do you?*

*You know, just thinking about my mom is enough to make me tear up. Strangely, it's also giving me strength now.*

Kang Chan tilted to the right and gradually fell down to his side.

*Swish. Click! Bang!*

The blackish-red rays scattered in all directions.

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The expressions of National Intelligence Service Director Hwang Ki-Hyun, Presidential Security Chief Officer Jeon Dae-Geuk, and NIS Special Support Division Manager Kim Hyung-Jung all darkened.

"Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong has assigned an additional prosecutor to investigate the case. He's under Huh Ha-Soo, so the moment he feels like foreign countries are putting external pressure on him, he will immediately manipulate the media," Kim Hyung-Jung said.

"What if we use Mr. Kang Chan's criminal immunity to prevent them from investigating it?"

"The dates won't match up if they tell us to release our records. More importantly..." Kim Hyung-Jung trailed off in the middle of his sentence.

"There's no way the President will tolerate that. In case you forgot, he was willing to hand over his position to our enemies despite knowing how important it is just to stay true to his principle of keeping his political career clean of corruption," Hwang Ki-Hyun continued on Kim Hyung-Jung's behalf.

Jeon Dae-Geuk groaned

"The hotel's CCTV footage captured Mr. Kang Chan's face quite clearly, and Park Ki-Bum of the parking lot gang has already finished giving his testimony. With how things are going right now, the best we can hope for would be for Mr. Kang Chan to receive a special pardon after being found guilty through a trial," Kim Hyung-Jung added. "His fight in Yongin and meeting with the Oh Gwang-Taek and the big shots of Busan and Honam at the hotel have also been caught on record. There's so much evidence that proving his innocence is becoming difficult."

"Can't we use his distinguished services in the operations he completed?" Jeon Dae-Geuk asked.

“I doubt they’ll believe that a high schooler did all of that.”

“What about what he did in the presentation hall?” Jeon Dae-Geuk tried another angle.

“We don’t have proof that Mr. Kang Chan played an active role in dealing with that incident either,” Kim Hyung-Jung countered.

Jeon Dae-Geuk glanced at Hwang Ki-Hyun, who just listened to them.

“We still have time until Kang Chan returns to South Korea. Fortunately, there are no records of him departing, so they can’t request cooperation from France. For now, let’s try our best to stop this case from being reported on the news. We can come up with a solution for this once we’ve contained the situation,” Hwang Ki-Hyun said, finally joining the conversation again.

“Shouldn’t we at least arrange a meeting with Oh Gwang-Taek, Director?” Jeon Dae-Geuk asked.

“Doing that now would be dangerous. If we make even just one mistake, they could shift all the blame to the President. Our safest option right now is to conduct a media blackout before looking for a way out of this.”

“I’ll do my best to stop this from reaching Mr. Kang Chan as well,” Kim Hyung-Jung wondered.

“You absolutely shouldn’t tell him.”

“I know. That’s why I’m pretending as if I don’t know anything about this when I’m around Mr. Seok Kang-Ho.”

“Isn’t there a way out of this? I feel like we’re overlooking a better way to handle this,” Jeon Dae-Geuk stroked his chin as he tried to let go of his frustration.

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Opening his eyes, the first thing Kang Chan saw was Lanok, who was quite worried about him.

“You feeling better?” Lanok asked. It was almost admirable that he could look so calm during a moment like this.

“What about the explosion?” Kang Chan immediately asked.

“The machine has stabilized again. They said that they still can’t guarantee how long it will stay this way, though.”

Lanok followed Kang Chan’s gaze, then lowered his head. “I didn’t expect that red ray to be so strong.”

He raised his right hand and showed it to Kang Chan. It was wrapped in bandages. “The part of the floor that you were sitting on earlier almost melted. If we stalled any longer, you would have fallen all the way to the bottom.”

“The machine could generate heat?”

Lanok nodded.

“We’re heading back to France for now,” he said. “They installed a temporary shield in this place, but it’s not enough to reassure us or make us feel relieved. After all, for as long as we’re around, we won’t know when the red rays are going to close in on us again.”

After a short while, Lanok issued orders to the agents guarding the entrance of the room with their hands clasped in front of them. In response, they immediately carried out his instructions.

A stretcher was soon brought inside. Unlike ordinary stretchers, this one was covered with a clear film wrap similar to the ones used for cakes sold in individual pieces.

“I was told that putting you in there will prevent the energy from reaching you,” Lanok explained. He seemed just as speechless as Kang Chan.

The agents lifted the mattress Kang Chan was laying on and moved him to the stretcher. They then covered him with the clear film wrap, which made him feel awful, and wheeled him out of the building.

*Damn it! I can't believe this! I feel like I'm running away from a complete defeat!*

He couldn’t even shoot the machine and fight back this time. To make matters worse, he was still wearing an ugly spacesuit.

Kang Chan felt as if they were conducting the perfect medevac.

The agents lifted Kang Chan’s bed onto the back of an ambulance. Lanok and an agent then sat next to him.

After some time, Ethan finally came over to see them.

“Lanok! Please do it for me!” Ethan yelled.

Kang Chan thought that Ethan was asking Lanok to take good care of him, but Lanok’s expression seemed to tell him that Ethan was talking about a completely different matter.

*Click! Whoosh!*

The ambulance drove off as soon as its doors closed.

“Ethan asked me to keep what happened here a secret,” Lanok explained.

“What time is it?” Kang Chan asked, having noticed that it was already dark outside when he was brought out of the building.

“It’s already around seven in the evening. You were unconscious for about five hours.”

“We really lost, huh?” Kang Chan sighed. Lanok’s face looked distorted to him since the film wasn’t as clear as glass.



“The researchers are going to find a way to stop it from causing earthquakes.”

After about twenty minutes on the road, the ambulance finally turned. When it did, the agent beside Kang Chan pulled the cover on top of him toward the wall of the vehicle.

“Are you heading back to South Korea after all of this?” Kang Chan asked Lanok.

“Resting during my travels is one of the joys in my life.”

Kang Chan smirked. The end of Lanok’s eyes curved a little, displaying a faint hint of happiness.

They hopped on a plane as soon as they arrived at the airport. Kang Chan fell asleep not long after ascending to the skies, waking up only when they finally landed in France.

“I have an important appointment in South Korea, Mr. Kang Chan, so I’m going to have to take my leave now. If you think you can’t push through with this anymore, you can head back to South Korea with me right now,” Lanok offered. He had always been hard to read, but right now, he sounded as if every word he said came from the bottom of his heart. Lanok talked about the Blackhead and the training that Kang Chan would be joining starting Monday the same way.

“I don’t want to back out of this fight, Mr. Ambassador,” Kang Chan said as he looked straight into Lanok’s eyes. “I refuse to admit defeat.”

“You won’t have to. I have your back.”

Kang Chan immediately realized that Lanok repeated what he said at the presentation hall.

Lanok then reached out and held Kang Chan’s hand.

Kang Chan’s pride was hurt.

Although there had been instances in the past when he had been so injured that he couldn’t move an inch, he had still come out of those situations victorious. His two encounters with the Blackhead were the only times when he was beaten so one-sidedly that he couldn’t even do anything.

With a stretcher, Kang Chan was transferred to the ambulance waiting at the airport. He then headed back to accommodation in Niafles.

‘Wait for me,’ he mumbled in his head. For some reason, he thought that the red rock would understand what he was saying.

‘You pitiful, motherless bastard!’

Kang Chan now felt a little relieved.

Chapter 200: Is It Smithen or Sharlan, That Is The Question (1)

On Sunday, Kang Chan took a day off from his workouts. To be honest, he felt so drained that he would’ve taken the day off even if it was a weekday. In fact, when he woke up, he could barely sit up and eat breakfast.

The human mind could be quite mysterious.

He had lived ten years as a mercenary and only lived in South Korea for barely half a year, yet what he missed the most was Yoo Hye-Sook's signature spicy bibim noodles and japchae. And ramyeon too, of course.

'Anyway, how am I supposed to fight against a rock?'

If he just kept having stand-offs against it, he would eventually die from constantly losing all his energy to it. It wasn't like provoking it by saying, "You don't even have a mom, do you?" worked.

Sitting on the bed, Kang Chan had coffee and toast while contemplating how to deal with the Blackhead.

"Argh!"

Feeling a bit more recovered, Kang Chan forced himself to get down from the bed. Immense pain coursed through him.

'Wait.'

A thought suddenly occurred to him as he stood straight.

If the energy was inside him, he should've seen it while he was wearing the goggles. He saw multiple wavelengths coming from external sources, but he didn't get the chance to look at the one he was exuding.

He knew that Lanok and the researchers were wearing radios, but was anyone else wearing goggles?

Kang Chan immediately picked up his phone and called Lanok.

- Mr. Kang Chan! How are you feeling?

"I've finally regained some of my strength," Kang Chan replied.

He heard a low sigh of relief coming from across the line. They exchanged a few pleasantries before Kang Chan told him about the idea that just popped into his head.

- That's interesting. One of the researchers actually thought about that as well. He said he got to look at you with the goggles on before you wore the suit.

*Yes! That's what I'm talking about!*

"What did he see?" Kang Chan curiously asked.

- A dark and intense red, apparently.

That wasn't what Kang Chan expected. Since the red light attacked him so violently, he thought that the energy that he possessed would be a different type and color.

"Red? That's surprising. I thought my energy would have a different color to complement the red wavelength."

- I will relay your message to the researcher and have him call you if necessary.

"Thank you, Mr. Ambassador," Kang Chan responded. He heard Lanok laugh over the phone.

- If only Europe was aware of the present danger, all Europeans would have been grateful to you. Oh! Before that, you will likely have to endure quite a commotion.

Lanok lowered his voice as he continued.

- Mr. Kang Chan, Ethan has a dark heart. It's hard to know what he'll do to hide the subterranean shock device and the fact that England did something so foolish. There's only one way to perfectly keep secrets in the intelligence community.

Lanok sounded so calm despite talking about such sinister topics. They spoke about a few more things before dropping the call.

'So the rock and I have the same type of energy, and it has to take all the energy I possess to refill its power?'

The Blackhead lost two of its nine energies, and Kang Chan supposedly had one of them. However, if he and the Blackhead actually shared the same energy...

Kang Chan tilted his head.

*Did it resurrect someone else aside from me and Seok Kang-Ho?*

His thoughts were just becoming more complicated.

'I have to think about this methodically.'

Right now, the most pressing issue was the Blackhead overpowering him. The researchers weren't fools, so they were probably thinking the same thing and would likely put more effort into creating another solution like the energy-severing suit.

After finishing his lunch, Kang Chan began to stretch.

"Whew!" He couldn't help but groan as he sweated. His pride would have been less hurt if he had been hit in the head with a rock.

Around dinner time, Pierre came to see Kang Chan to check whether or not Kang Chan was going to participate in the training, which was starting tomorrow. Kang Chan answered without hesitation. If he said he wasn't going to participate, he would essentially be wasting the opportunity that Lanok made for him by giving him France's slot in the training.

After dinner, Kang Chan stretched some more and walked in place. Unable to bear the thought of losing to a stupid rock and dying from it, he grew determined to win.

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In the 506th criminal division of the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's Office, Deputy Prosecutor Lee Seung-Ryul sat behind his desk as he watched Oh Gwang-taek being brought in. Oh Gwang-Taek, who was in a yellow prison uniform and handcuffs, had chains wrapped around his wrists and two prison guards holding onto each of his arms.

*Thud.*

Oh Gwang-Taek plopped down on the metal chair in front of Lee Seung-Ryul's desk.

"Do you have anything to say?" Lee Seung-Ryul questioned.

“Let’s stop right there. Isn’t it illegal to call suspects to the prosecutor’s office and have them wait for hours?” Oh Gwang-Taek replied.

Lee Seung-Ryul smirked, seemingly amused. His beard was untrimmed and messy, making him look quite disheveled.

“I’m investigating you right now. I don’t see the problem,” Lee Seung-Ryul said.

“We both know what’s up. You’re trying to prevent me from any visitations, so you’re making me stay here the whole day by summoning me for record purposes. Enough is enough,” Oh Gwang-Taek leisurely countered.

Lee Seung-Ryul smirked again as he quickly thumbed through a thick pile of documents.

“You’re pretty well connected for a gangster. I might just get a nervous breakdown thinking about all the coming days. So why don’t we end all of this now? That way, I won’t have to keep you trapped in a tiny waiting room for the whole day, and you get to play king comfortably within the confines of jail. It’s a win for both of us, eh?” Lee Seung-Ryul said, pausing his perusal of the documents to look up. “Park Ki-Bum from the parking lot gang has already confessed to everything. Everyone below him also came to confess, and we even have camera footage of you meeting the top dogs of Honam and Yeongnam in a hotel. It’s about time for you to admit to what you have to and move on.”

“Ha! So you’re saying that I, the great Oh Gwang-Taek, am best friends with a little high-schooler? Shit. I won’t be able to say my name in public anymore with how embarrassing that is,” Oh Gwang-Taek said, turning his head in the opposite direction as if he was ignoring Lee Seung-Ryul.

“I’m also quite curious about that. Are you saying that you’re not friends? If so, then let’s clear things up. Is Kang Chan a part of your family?” Lee Seung-Ryul chided.

“Why don’t you get a copy of my family documents if you want to know so badly? I’m Oh Gwang-Taek, and that high schooler’s name is Kang Chan. how would we be a family?”

Lee Seung-Ryul looked at Oh Gwang-Taek as if he were a fool. “Kang Chan, this punk, killed a French citizen, took over Gong Te Automobile, and beat up former vice president Kim Seon-Il to steal DI. We even have camera footage of Joo Chul-Bum slapping Kim Seon-Il.”

“You can talk to Joo Chul-Bum about that, then!”

Lee Seung-Ryul nodded and standoffish replied, “You know how this works. You’re the top brass, Kang Chan is the brawn, and Joo Chul-Bum is a member of your crime ring. All that’s missing is

the punk funding you. I was going to do this nicely, but you're forcing me to dig through your bank accounts. Fine, let's do it,"

"You should write a book. I think it'll get pretty popular." Oh Seung-Ryul didn't seem the slightest bit ruffled.

"You know we have all the camera footage, right? Come on, Oh Gwang-Taek! Don't make this harder than it has to be. Kang Chan acted alone to kill a French citizen, stole the business rights to operate in Korea from Suh Jeong Motors for Gong Te automobile, beat up a former executive to take DI, and messed up the parking lot gang and Park Ki-Bum's men. Let's wrap it up like that." Lee Seung-Ryul didn't miss the moment Oh Gwang-Taek briefly glanced at him. "Don't you feel sorry for Suh Do-Seok? He can't even properly get around anymore. How's he gonna live in prison? If you just confess to what I mentioned, I'll cut down the sentence from ten years to five for you, Suh Do-Seok, and Joo Chul-Bum. Considering two of the men you stabbed died, that's a short sentence!"

Lee Seung-Ryul lifted his chin when Oh Gwang-Taek just looked at him silently.

"Honestly, with your status, wouldn't you still live like an emperor even behind bars?" Lee Seung-Ryul asked.

Oh Gwang-Taek tilted his head. "Five years?"

"Five years," Lee Seung-Ryul replied with certainty.

Oh Gwang-Taek signed loudly and straightened his back.

"You fucker! You thought I would sell out a high schooler just for five years in prison? Motherfucker! Tell your wife to be careful from now on whenever she leaves the house," Oh Gwang-Taek angrily warned.

Lee Seung-Ryul gritted his teeth.

"Don't ever call me again just to tell me this kind of bullshit," Oh Gwang-Taek sprang up from his chair and walked toward the door.

The assistant prosecutor and prison guard looked at Lee Seung-Ryul with flustered expressions.

"Take him away!" Lee Seung-Ryul shouted.

Oh Gwang-Taek was already waiting in front of the door.

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On Monday morning, Kang Chan got up and forced himself to head to the gym. As usual, he started with some cardio and then did his strength training routine. Afterward, he ate breakfast, drank coffee, and enjoyed a short break. Unfortunately, his condition still wasn't up to par.

The fact that he and the Blackhead shared the same energy still lingered in his mind. If Seok Kang-Ho had one of the missing energies, then who was the other one?

A name flashed across his mind.

Smithen.

That man should've been dead, but Kang Chan eventually found out that he was still alive and well.

Kang Chan called Seok Kang-Ho.

- It's me.

"Can you talk right now?" Kang Chan asked.

- I'm at the newly set up office. They've just delivered all the furniture, and the gym equipment has all been set up as well. Hurry and come back to Korea already. We now have the perfect place to drink coffee and smoke together.

After Seok Kang-Ho jokingly urged Kang Chan to go home, Kang Chan told him what happened last Saturday.

- It would make sense if it was Smithen. Considering his condition back in Africa, he was as good as dead.

"Daye, there's something I'm curious about. Where was the Blackhead at the time for us to have gotten its energy? I'm sure the energy wouldn't have left the rock if it was just left alone, so something must have happened that caused it to release two of its energies. We're not the only ones who died back then either, you know," Kang Chan pondered out loud.

Seok Kang-Ho couldn't reply immediately.

"I think figuring that out should be our priority. What made it release energy?" Kang Chan said.

- Nobody knows except for Sharlan, right?

"Didn't Sharlan say he took money for it? The person trying to buy the diamond had to have given him the money... Ethan. That's it! That punk must know something!" Kang Chan exclaimed.

Kang Chan felt as if the threads were being unraveled one by one.

Learning what happened back then didn't guarantee that he would find a way to stabilize the Blackhead. Nevertheless, it was still better than being oblivious to it.

- Give it some more thought, Cap. If something dangerous happens again like last time, we have no idea what'll happen to you.

"I should meet Ethan first. Otherwise, I'll go meet Sharlan," Kang Cha mused.

- Didn't that son of a bitch say that he would give you something if you let him out?

"I didn't know about the energy I had back then," Kang Chan said.

- Exactly! That bastard probably knew that there was some issue with the Blackhead. Maybe he was trying to use that to negotiate with England!

*Was that what happened?*

“Daye!” Kang Chan suddenly shouted.

- What is it?

“I’m sure I cut that motherfucker all the way to his left ribs, yet he’s still alive.”

-Are you saying Sharlan has the energy?

“It’s possible.”

- Do you think that’s why the fucker said he wanted to negotiate with you? He knew England would need him.

The situation became more complicated as their questions were answered.

“There’s still some time. I’ll call again after I’ve discussed this with Ambassador Lanok,”

- Got it. Anyway, are you sure you’re fine? I can go to France too if you want.

“Let’s wait things out a bit longer for now. If something goes wrong and you get hurt by the Blackhead too, no one reliable enough will be around to take care of things,” Kang Chan said worriedly.

- If something happens to you, even if it means all of Europe explodes, I’ll go and crush that damn Blackhead to pieces.

“Ha, sure. Just keep your phone next to you at all times,” Kang Chan urged.

- Will do.

After hanging up, Kang Chan looked outside with a blank expression. He was almost certain that he just got a new lead.

After some time, Pierre knocked on the door and came in. As Kang Chan stood up, five men followed Pierre inside.

“Mr. Kang Chan, allow me to introduce the men you’ll be training with,” Pierre said.

All five had chiseled jaws and sturdy bodies that reminded Kang Chan of Jeon Dae-Geuk and Kim Tae-Jin. They seemed to be in their thirties, which was around the same age as Kang Chan in his past life.

“This is Andrei, a Spetsnaz,” Pierre began.

Andrei gave a curt nod.

“Leon from GSG-9.”

Leon, from the German special forces team, held his hand out to shake Kang Chan’s.

“From Israel’s Sayeret Matkal, Grafelt.”

Kang Chan shook hands with him as well.

“Frederic, a Green Beret.”

This guy looked the friendliest out of all these people.

“Jiang Kanglin, from the SW.”

Jiang Kanglin just nodded instead of offering his hand.

Now that Kang Chan thought about it, the only men he didn't shake hands with were the ones from the Spetsnaz and the Snow Wolves. Well, it wasn't that important anyway. He really couldn't care less.

“Tomorrow morning, we will assign everyone to their rooms, and in the afternoon, we will begin classes on negotiation, information exchange, and use of satellites,” Pierre continued.

When Pierre led the five men out of the room, Kang Chan immediately questioned what he was doing here.

People who worked at intelligence bureaus probably already knew each other's faces. If a problem ever arose, he could have just asked someone to introduce him to these people. That made him wonder if spending five uncomfortable months with these guys and visiting each other's countries were really necessary.

‘I'll see how things go a little longer.’

After steeling his resolve, Kang Chan called Lanok.

- Raphael speaking, Monsieur Kang.

Lanok's secretary, Raphael, was the one who answered.

- The ambassador is in the middle of a meeting right now. If it's urgent, I can connect you to him.

“It's fine, Raphael. I have about four hours of free time left anyway, so just tell him that I asked to speak to him once he's done with his meeting.”

- Will do, Monsieur Kang.

Perhaps it was because Kang Chan was far away from home, but he felt glad to hear Raphael's voice too.

*Is it Smithen or Sharlan? Damn it! Am I Hamlet or something?*

To answer that question, all he really had to do was wear the goggles that made energy wavelengths visible to him and look at Sharlan. If Sharlan shone, then that would mean he possessed the energy. If he didn't, Kang Chan could just take the goggles to Korea and look at Smithen. Sharlan was in France's Lorian base, so it would only take a few hours to get there by plane.

Kang Chan smirked and looked outside the window.

If Sharlan had the energy, killing him and determining where the energy would go would be a good experiment.



*Knock, knock.*

After some time, someone knocked on his door. It sounded different from what he was used to. As Kang Chan turned his attention to it, the door opened, and the five men earlier walked into the room.

“Can we have a cup of tea?”

Kang Chan didn't know how to feel about the French he spoke.

“Have a seat,” Kang Chan replied.

The five men dragged over chairs from the table and desk and made themselves comfortable.

Kang Chan remembered being told to press zero on the telephone like in hotels. When someone answered the call, he requested tea for six people.

This was a kind of brazenness that only white people had. If they were Korean, they would've prepared tea themselves and brought it over.

“Are you the God of Blackfield?” Andrei gazed sharply at Kang Chan.

Jiang Kanglin had a similar look in his eyes. The other three just seemed very curious.

*These bastards. I'm already in a bad enough condition as it is...*

“You look a bit different than from what I've heard. You seem too young,” Andrei continued.

“What are you trying to say?” Kang Chan asked, sounding quite irritated.

“I'm just asking if you really are the God of Blackfield.”

“Why do you want to know?”

Andrei tilted his head.

“If you are the God of Blackfield, then you should already know the reason.”

*Pft.*

The corner of Andrei's eye twitched, displeased by Kang Chan's smirk.

“Andrei, if you came here to train, then just stay quiet and learn.”

“Don't tell me what to do, boy,” Andrei scoffed.

Kang Chan just snickered in response. He kept receiving all kinds of nonsense just because he was reborn as a young person. Well, he did hear the same thing when he was first dispatched to Africa, and all those punks had been...

“Let me give you a warning. Don't you ever laugh at my face again,” Andrei growled.

“Phuhuhu.” For the first time since coming to France, Kang Chan laughed out loud that his chest heaved violently. He never expected it would be because of some Russian.

Andrei slowly stood up and assumed a stance that showed how serious he was.

Kang Chan stretched his neck from side to side.

It didn't matter if he was in a bad condition or who he was up against. He wouldn't just let anyone who picked a fight with him get away with it.