

Blackfield 201

Chapter 201: Is It Smithen or Sharlan, That Is The Question (2)

The edges of Andrei's lips slightly curved upward, making it seem as if he was aiming for this all along.

This was no different from the first time Kang Chan went to Africa as a mercenary and someone tried walking over him just because he was Asian. Those jealous of him acted exactly like Andrei as well when he became the captain.

Andrei's posture?

Just tell me to go fuck myself instead.

During times like this, the right type of look in one's eyes could give them a headstart. That was why Andrei couldn't rashly reach out and attack Kang Chan even though he was already standing.

Another similarity that this situation and his life back in Africa shared was that the people around them just watched instead of stopping them from fighting. They would wait for the results and act accordingly.

If Kang Chan got beaten up and lost, his opponent would become even more arrogant. If he won, then they would start acting as if they were only following him because of his rank.

Sons of bitches. I'm busy feeling like shit over here!

Kang Chan didn't lose another recruit, but he did lose to a rock.

In the middle of their intense staredown, someone knocked on the door.

"Come in," Kang Chan said, and an employee opened the door. He quickly scanned the room and put the tea they ordered on the table that they had dragged over to the middle of the room. They probably noticed the heavy atmosphere, but they remained calm.

Jiang Kanglin quickly looked at Kang Chan and Andrei...

"Ugh," Andrei groaned. Sitting down, he cracked his neck. Back in Africa, fights only ended once there was a clear winner.

Kang Chan sat down as well.

Pouring himself a cup of tea, Fredric commented, "They told us to pick a leader."

This fucker's accent is shitty as well.

"Then give the position to whoever wants to be the leader."

"I'll be the leader," Andrei interjected as soon as Kang Chan answered.

Kang Chan wasn't interested in becoming the leader, so instead of responding, he just poured tea into the cup in front of him.

“Does anyone object to me being the leader?” Andrei asked and looked every person around him in the eye. Kang Chan couldn’t understand why he was so greedy for the position.

Sure dude, you do it.

Nobody said anything.

I just met these fuckers, but they’re already tiring to deal with.

“Hey, you brat!” Andrei called Kang Chan as the latter put down his cup.

Whish! Bam!

Kang Chan thrust his thumb, and Andrei punched it away.

Pow! Pow-pow! Pow-pow-pow!

Crunch!

Before Andrei could block Kang Chan’s hand, which was coming for his eyes and neck, he sprang to his feet, knocking over the table. Greifelt held onto it tightly.

Pow! Pow! Pow! Pow-pow!

How dare this son of a bitch blabber off?

Bam!

Amid their rapid exchange of blows, Kang Chan jabbed Andrei’s side with the middle knuckle of his middle finger.

Pow! Pow! Pow! Pow! Pow! Pow!

He’s not even as good as Dayeru, yet he’s acting out in front of me!

Andrei bent forward, having been punched in his neck, side, armpit, and stomach.

Whish!

Exploiting that momentary weakness, Kang Chan kneed Andrei’s face, causing his head to jerk backward.

Crunch! Crunch! Crunch!

Without missing a beat, Kang Chan landed multiple blows on his opponent’s face.

Thud!

With glinting eyes, Kang Chan glared at Jiang Kanglin. Seemingly frozen in place, the man could only flinch.

“You all better start showing me some respect. You are to refer to me only as Monsieur Kang from now on. Only those I consider a friend can call me by my name,” Kang Chan ordered.

Leon and Graifelt looked at Kang Chan with intrigue.

“Then our leader...” Fredric stopped for a moment when he noticed Kang Chan’s gaze. “... should be Monsieur Kang.”

“Oui,” Leon answered. Graifelt agreed as well.

Kang Chan glanced away from them and back at Jiang Kanglin, causing the latter’s cheek to twitch. Not long after, he answered, “oui.”

For an Asian, Jiang Kanglin had an extremely firm build. It made Kang Chan wonder if he had caucasian ancestry.

“Argh,” Andrei groaned as he sat up and wiped the blood between his nose and mouth with the back of his hand. His nose and left cheekbone had been caved in, though, so the bleeding didn’t stop.

Kang Chan turned his attention to Andrei.

For as long as Andrei hadn’t dropped his eyes in submission, then he was still ready to go for another round. The same principle applied to lions, tigers, wolves, and even sons of bitches.

Andrei stood up and looked at Kang Chan. Twisting his head, he said, “I acknowledge you as our leader, br—”

Crunch!

Fredric frowned as Kang Chan punched Andrei in the face again.

Thud!

Andrei fell on his butt wheezing.

“Andrei,” Kang Chan called.

“What, you br—”

Bam!

“Ugh!” Andrei cried. Kang Chan’s kick would have killed him if he hadn’t twisted his upper body and let it hit the pit of his stomach.

Truth be told, Kang Chan really considered killing him. If he turned rebellious fuckers like him into his subordinate. they could later backstab him or shoot him in the head while he’s not looking.

For almost ten years, Kang Chan lived a life that made him accustomed to things like this. Considering they were all from different special forces, the best he could do right now was put a confident finish to this fight.

“Andrei,” Kang Chan called again. If the man continued to defy him, he would kill Andrei.

Unfortunately for the poor Russian, Dayeru wasn’t here to take a hit for him.

As heavy silence filled the room, Kang Chan smirked.

So you've chosen death, huh?

“Oui, Monsieur Kang,” Andrei answered just before Kang Chan could kick him.

If Andrei died here, then only Russia would be left out of the training, right? All because he died in an unjustified fight.

“Sit down and have some tea,” Kang Chan said.

Andrei stood up and sat at the table. Blood was still dripping down from his nose like a faucet left partly open.

Andrei took a sip from his cup, then stood up and left.

Kang Chan was now forced to have the carpet in his room changed.

“Any of you smoke?” Kang Chan asked.

“Go inside and get some cigarettes and an ashtray,” one of the men said.

Did these sons of bitches just tell me to bring over cigarettes? I didn't even let anyone order me to make them coffee when I was still a new recruit.

Graifelt glared at Kang Chan for a moment, but he soon sighed and walked inside.

Kang Chan felt as if his life was becoming increasingly difficult as time passed.

He didn't expect this training to be completely peaceful, but he didn't expect to be the ‘captain’ of a team of special forces soldiers just because he won a fight either.

Click!

Graifelt put an ashtray and cigarettes on the table. Seemingly dying for a smoke, everyone swiftly took a cigarette.

“What the hell? So everyone wanted to smoke?” Graifelt grumbled. He seemed at a loss for words, but it didn't really make anyone feel bad.

“I don't like long names. From now on, I'm going to call you Felt, Deric, and Janga,” Kang Chan said.

Except for Leon—whose name was already short—they all looked speechless.

“I heard the training starts after lunch. You're all from different special forces, so feel free to fight each other as much as you want if you have disagreements. But if we're together, none of you are allowed to stab the others in the back. Break this rule, and I'm going to kill you all myself,” Kang Chan warned.

After extinguishing their cigarettes, the four looked at Kang Chan seriously. He had already experienced this before as well.

Kang Chan fully understood now why Pierre didn't show up at all.

Andrei only returned to the room after Kang Chan had lunch with the others and was enjoying coffee and cigarettes with them. The white mask he was wearing only left his mouth, eyes, and area below his nose uncovered, making him look like a character from some horror movie.

This son of a bitch still has no plans of backing down.

Killing this fucker would certainly be for the best. No one was as reckless as someone who thought he was carrying the honor of his unit on his shoulders.

When Kang Chan's eyes glinted, the atmosphere instantly changed.

Raphael came into the office and approached Lanok's desk.

"I've received word that Monsieur Kang has beaten up Andrei. He needed emergency surgery because the fight caved in his nasal bones and cheekbone, but he refused to be brought home," Raphael said.

"He was a wolf pouncing on a lion, so they should consider themselves fortunate that he's still alive. Anyway, this doesn't seem like a good time to call him. What about Anne?"

"She's been assigned to Unit 1 of the DGSE."

Lanok gave Raphael a cold look. "Does that mean my expectations were right?"

"I only follow your judgments."

Lanok pressed his lips together and glared at the clock. "Securing talented individuals isn't easy—it's not something that can be accomplished with greed. They're making things needlessly complicated. What about the researchers' report?"

"They haven't given us a new report yet."

Lanok nodded, then looked up.

"Raphael," Lanok called.

"Yes, Mr. Ambassador?"

"My decisions will certainly bring development to France. I don't know how it'll turn out, but I'm at least sure Monsieur Kang will protect me and our homeland."

"I see. Should I prepare tea and cigars?"

"I'd like that."

Raphel bowed and left the room.

"Monsieur Kang." Lanok sat up from his desk, turned his chair around, and stared at the French flag hanging behind him. "Please look after France."

Lanok's desperate wish filled the room.

Kim Seong-Woong glared at the South Korean flag and the Ministry of Justice's flag.

“We have conclusive evidence. We don’t even need testimonies to prove Kang Chan is guilty at the trial,” Lee Seung-Yeol reported. The prosecutors sitting with him seemed to agree.

“What about Oh Gwang-Taek?” Kim Seong-Woong asked.

“Identifying the person funding the crime rings is proving difficult.”

“Did his money trail not lead to a suspect?”

“For a gangster, his source of income is clean.”

“Do we have evidence proving he instigated murder, at least?”

“If we can’t tie Oh Gwang-Taek to a crime ring, then we can’t prove his relationship with Kang Chan either.”

Kim Seong-Woong groaned as he lowered his greasy forehead.

“There’s circumstantial evidence that the National Intelligence Service has interfered on multiple occasions,” Lee Seung-Yeol said. “Some also point to the special forces’ involvement.”

“What the hell are you talking about right now?!” Kim Seong-Woong suddenly yelled, causing Lee Seung-Yeol’s gaze to drop to the table.

“Don’t cloud the issue! This case is an investigation about Kang Chan using the Eurasian Rail as an excuse to murder, intimidate, threaten, and steal for his personal gains!”

“Understood.”

“Hmm.” Kim Seong-Woong looked at the prosecutor across from Lee Seung-Yeol.

“We have finished preparations for a search and seizure operation on Kang Yoo Motors, Kang Yoo Foundation, and Kang Chan’s building. However, the media will definitely catch wind of the case once we proceed with it,” the prosecutor said.

“Isn’t the National Intelligence Service stopping it from reaching the news?”

“That won’t be enough to prevent all information about the operation from being leaked. They’ll likely need at least a day to contain the situation.”

“If so, then proceeding with this means we’re going to incite a full-scale war.”

“We’re thinking of taking Kang Dae-Kyung into custody for questioning.”

“What about Yoo Hye-Sook?”

“We can’t imprison her right now since she lacks criminal charges against her. Some people are also watching from outside the country, so it would be best for us to treat the investigation process for the two as separate matters.”

“I can’t believe someone without any phone call records still exists in modern-day South Korea! It’s appalling,” Kim Seong-Woong said, trying hard to ignore the fact that the National Intelligence Service cooperated with Kang Chan to make that happen. “I’ll let you know once I’ve reached a decision. For now, just be prepared to issue a warrant and conduct a search and seizure on their properties at any moment.”

“Alright.” The prosecutors’ answer strangely lacked energy.

The training wasn’t any different from what Kang Chan had been learning the past few days. If he was being honest, the training itself was boring, and the atmosphere was shit.

He still had trouble figuring out why this training was even necessary. From his perspective, spending six months in the DGSE would have yielded far greater results.

Kang Chan took a short break after learning the locations and functions of each country’s satellites. Suddenly feeling frustrated, he looked out the window.

‘Is someone in danger again?’

Looking out the window wouldn’t give him an answer, but the scenery at least made him feel a bit better.

Grafelt noisily poured himself a cup of coffee.

This kid drinks a lot of coffee.

Grafelt had a somewhat tenacious aura around him. It made him seem cruel.

Andrei soon entered the room, but he didn’t say anything.

That fucker was partially responsible for this shitty atmosphere.

Click.

After a while, the door opened.

Unlike in schools, they didn’t have bells to signal the start of their training. Rather, it started as soon as an instructor came inside and only ended when they left.

Two people came inside and put a globe on the table. It was bigger than any globes he had ever seen, allowing them to see all the continents at a glance.

What’s that?

Kang Chan focused on the globe. The deep gold line painted on it had to be the Eurasian Rail.

“Today, we’ll be going into detail about the economic effects, profits, and losses that we think each country will face when the Eurasian Rail is connected,” one of the instructors said.

So this is why!

Kang Chan finally understood.

This was why they were taught international economy and the locations and functions of all the satellites in orbit.

They were preparing them for the changes that the Eurasian Rail would bring to the world.

If the first generation—Lanok, Vasili, Ludwig, and Ethan—led this era, then the second generation would lead the world after the Eurasian Rail was connected.

The people here right now would be responsible for the next generation of intelligence bureaus. It was highly likely that they would eventually become their countries’ Eurasian Rail representative as well—if they were still alive by then, that was.

Why did Lanok yield this important position to Kang Chan?

He did ask Kang Chan to protect France, but it wasn’t as safe as choosing a French person instead.

Kang Chan focused on the training as best as he could. It would’ve been much better if he didn’t feel frustrated.

The others also put their entire attention on it. Through this lesson, the benefits their countries would enjoy in the future could be changed.

Kang Chan now understood why Andrei acted out in an attempt to be in the frontline.

Did Lanok already predict all this before sending me here? Rather than sending a weak French agent, did he choose to make me the leader instead so he could ask me to secure France’s benefits and find and teach someone talented enough to replace me in the future?

If it was Lanok, Kang Chan thought all of that was certainly possible.

Perhaps because this was their first day, they all ate in Kang Chan’s room after their training even though nobody ordered them to.

Andrei used a straw to eat.

He’s bullshitting in so many ways. Isn’t he embarrassed or ashamed? Maybe he’s just anxious about us scheming behind his back.

They were going to learn what kind of person Kang Chan was as time went by anyway.

“I’ll see you guys tomorrow,” Kang Chan bid them goodbye.

The five left his room. Their eyes, expressions, actions, and manner of speaking clearly displayed their determination to never lose during this training.

“Phew!” Kang Chan sighed.

Everything was always so tiring and bothersome in the beginning.

Men were quite difficult to understand, but no matter how much they tried to bullshit their way, a month together would be enough to naturally create a hierarchy between them that was unlikely to change.

Kang Chan took a chair at the table and sat beside the window.

He still felt frustrated.

Kang Dae-Kyung, Yoo Hye-Sook, Seok Kang-Ho, and Lanok were all far away from him.

Choi Seong-Geon's death was already hard enough for me to endure, but now I might face problems with Kim Tae-Jin and Kim Hyung-Jung as well? Is that bastard Wui Min-Gook causing problems again?

It was already dark outside, so the window in the living room slightly reflected Kang Chan like a mirror.

His eyes were glinting.

What's going on? What's happening?

Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—.

It didn't take long before Kang Chan's phone began to ring.

Chapter 202: I Have Bad News (1)

Kang Chan picked up his phone and saw Lanok's name in the caller ID.

"It's Kang Chan, Mr. Ambassador," Kang Chan greeted.

- Mr. Kang Chan. I heard you called earlier.

Kang Chan had been waiting for Lanok's call for a while now. Finally getting the chance to talk to him, he told him everything on his mind for the past few days.

- Mr. Kang Chan.

Lanok sounded quite taken aback.

- France was definitely managing the large Hadron collider back then. I remember seeing it when I was looking at your mercenary records.

"You said the Hadron collider was operated in French territory and that it's not connected to the earthquakes."

- It's also true that we released energy into the Earth's crust during that time. It was part of the research on the Hadron collider's transformation.

"Was it released near Africa, by any chance?" Kang Chan asked.

- That's right. Other continents had a higher chance of discovering the source of the energy, so we aimed it toward Africa.

Kang Chan felt as if he caught a lead.

"Mr. Ambassador. Could you activate the Hadron collider one more time?" Kang Chan asked.

Lanok sighed and groaned in frustration.

- Are you planning to break the balance of the Blackhead once more with the Hadron collider?

“Yes. It’s the reason behind my reincarnation. Considering the energy of the Blackhead is with me, I believe it’s worth a try,” Kang Chan replied. When Lanok didn’t say anything, he continued, “If this doesn’t work, Europe will be destroyed either way, Mr. Ambassador. I’d rather try this than let the energy be forcefully taken from me.”

- Let me discuss this with the researchers first. I’ll give you my decision shortly.

Kang Chan sighed in relief, thinking he was finally on the track to counterattack in his fight against a rock.

- On another note, Mr. Kang Chan, I have bad news.

Was this the reason he had been feeling so uncomfortable?

Kang Chan felt his heart drop.

- The South Korean prosecution is preparing to arrest you. Huh Ha-Soo’s close associates have started to take action, and if they fail to find you within a few days, they may arrest your father first. I can’t provide any assistance because it can potentially be seen as political interference.

Kang Chan felt more worried about Yoo Hye-Sook than his father, the one who could actually be arrested.

“I’ll make a call to Korea,” Kang Chan said.

- I will confirm the activation of the Hadron collider and whether or not Sharlan has the remaining energy source. Don’t lose your spirit.

“Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.” Kang Chan bid him goodbye, then put his phone down on the table and looked at his reflection in the window. He had gotten so used to his face now that he could barely remember how he looked before his reincarnation.

He could say the same for this life, which constantly brought and weaved new experiences into his past. Perhaps the Blackhead would serve as the catalyst to wrap up his previous life.

Kang Chan picked up the cigarette he had left on the table. He felt as if the living room window was keeping an eye on every little thing in his life.

Click.

“Hoo,” Kang Chan exhaled. He stood up from his seat, picked up the landline phone on one side of his room, and dialed a number.

- Oui, puis-je vous aider?

“Un café s’il vous plaît,” Kang Chan said.

- Parfait.

Kang Chan sat back down at the table. Not long after finishing his cigarette, an employee knocked on the door and brought him a pot of coffee. He poured himself a cup before picking up his phone and calling someone.

- Kim Hyung-Jung speaking, Mr. Kang Chan.

“Manager Kim, I heard the prosecution is trying to arrest my father. Are you aware of this?” Kang Chan asked.

Kim Hyung-Jung couldn't answer immediately.

“They're probably trying to connect him to Oh Gwang-Taek and Joo Chul-Bum,” Kang Chan mused.

- We could not blatantly block the prosecution's execution of the law. I apologize for not informing you sooner. I was searching for a solution.

Kang Chan took a sip of his coffee before setting the cup back down.

“Were you able to find one?” Kang Chan asked.

- We believe this is a retaliatory investigation following the arrest of Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo. The National Intelligence Service has gone into a fierce internal debate about whether to arrest Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong based on evidence of his meeting with Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo. The opposing party argues that it could be seen as a political maneuver by the NIS.

Kang Chan felt as if Kim Hyung-Jung was telling him the answer.

“How much time do we have?”

- They don't know you've left the country, so if our estimations are right, then they'll serve the arrest warrant in about three days.

“I see.”

- Mr. Kang Chan.

Kim Hyung-Jung sounded different.

- The NIS is facing great obstacles right now. We don't have an organization like France's DGSE, so there are limits to our operations. I apologize.

“If so, then I won't speak of this issue any further. However, I just hope my innocent father and mother won't be unjustly wronged.”

Kang Chan let out a low sigh. He wasn't doing this for any recognition or reward. He just liked the people enough to accept the favors they asked for. That was the reason he came here in the first place.

The innocent Kang Dae-Kyung being arrested would change that, however.

“Are you sure that we have about three days?” Kang Chan confirmed.

- Yes.

“And the Prosecutor-General's name is Kim Seong-Woong?”

- That is correct.

“Then please let me know of any developments,” Kang Chan said.

- Understood.

After hanging up, Kang Chan immediately looked for and called another number.

- Mr. Kang Chan. To what do I owe this call?

“Mr. Ambassador, it seems we have about three days until my father’s arrest. There is evidence that Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong and Huh Ha-Soo met, but the NIS cannot take any action because it could be interpreted as political maneuvering.”

- How can I help?

“I have to return to Korea,” Kang Chan firmly said.

There was a moment of silence before Lanok spoke again.

- This side of you is what moves people’s emotions, strangely. It also relieves me because it feels like you will protect Anne this way as well. I will inform Pierre. It will take about... an hour to prepare a plane.

“Thank you, Mr. Ambassador,” Kang Chan replied.

- Mr. Kang Chan.

They weren’t speaking face to face, so Kang Chan clearly noticed the slight change in Lanok’s tone.

- Let me share a rule of France’s DGSE with you. If the goal is clear, the means and people’s opinions do not matter. All the intelligence bureaus in the United States and Europe follow that rule as well. For South Korea to stand tall in the international community, it needs such an organization.

“I understand,” Kang Chan replied, keeping his answer short and brief since he planned on taking this road anyway.

After hanging up, he took a shower and prepared some clothes and a gun.

Knock, knock, knock.

Soon after, Pierre entered Kang Chan’s room.

“I just spoke to the ambassador. It will take some time to prepare the goggles you require. I apologize for the delay, but preparations for your departure will be done in approximately fifty minutes,” Pierre politely said.

Goggles?

Kang Chan suddenly recalled Seok Kang-Ho and Smithen. Since he was going to South Korea anyway, the DGSE probably thought this would be a good chance to confirm if either of the two possessed the Blackhead’s missing energy sources.

“I can wait,” Kang Chan replied.

He didn't have to come all the way here himself to tell me that.

When Pierre left, Kang Chan searched for Yang Bum's telephone number. It had been a while since they had last spoken.

- Mr. Kang Chan.

Yang Bum easily and comfortably spoke in Korean.

“Are you available to speak right now?”

- Of course.

“I need evidence related to Huh Sang-Soo's defection and espionage. If it's related to Huh Ha-Soo, then even better,” Kang Chan replied.

- That's unexpected. I thought you would ask me about the agent we sent to the training, Jiang Kanglin.

“He seemed to find me a bit uncomfortable,” Kang Chan remarked.

- I'm sure it's because of his pride as a member of the special forces. If there's ever a moment when you clash, please go a little easy on him for me.

It sounded as if Yang Bum was aware of what happened with Andrei.

“Will do,” Kang Chan replied without any hesitation. If the guy didn't come at him, there would be no need to beat him to a pulp anyway.

- Where should I send the documents? Ah! If it's alright with you, I can have Jiang Kanglin bring it to you.

“Is that possible?” Kang Chan asked.

- He has a laptop and a portable printer with him. You'll get the documents in a few moments. You'll visit China soon, I hope?

“I will,” Kang Chan replied. He then hung up. He had drunk half of his coffee when someone knocked on his door.

Jiang Kanglin entered with a couple of files. “The Director asked me to give you these documents.”

Kang Chan took them and let out a quiet sigh. It was all written in Chinese, so he had no idea what any of it meant.

“Is something wrong?” Jiang Kanglin asked.

Why is this guy still here? And why is he being so friendly?

Jiang Kanglin even helped himself to some of the cooled coffee.

Knock, knock, knock.

Before Kang Chan could reply, Pierre came inside.

“Monsieur Kang, you can come down in twenty minutes,” Pierre said.

Jiang Kanglin looked at Pierre and Kang Chan as he took a sip of his coffee.

“You going somewhere?” Jiang Kanglin asked.

“I’ll be away for about three days,” Kang Chan admitted. He found no reason to tell him he was heading back to Korea, so he just gave him a simple response as he scanned the documents.

“Can I go with you?”

Kang Chan slowly turned his head to look at Jiang Kanglin.

“Based on the contents of the documents, it seems like you’re going to Korea. I’ve always wanted to visit their special forces’ training grounds,” Jiang Kanglin added.

Seeing Kang Chan’s gaze, Jiang Kanglin shook his head. “Don’t misunderstand. The dissatisfaction I showed on the first day was the least I could do to show respect for my dead comrades.”

He swirled the coffee pot and poured himself a little more.

“Let’s just make it clear that Director Yang Bum, who I admire and respect, acknowledges you. I’ll call you Monsieur Kang if that’s what you want even though I find it uncomfortable if it means we can get along on more informal terms. To be honest, I’ve been wanting to meet the special forces team that went to the recent operation in North Korea.”

“I don’t think this is a good time for that, but I’m sure you’ll get the chance to soon enough,” Kang Chan responded.

Jiang Kanglin shrugged and left the room with regret on his face. Kang Chan just had to wait for about fifteen minutes now. However, before he could depart for South Korea...

Du du du du du.

The table, cup, phone, coffee pot, and everything else in his room began to shake.

Surprised and at a loss for what to do, Kang Chan froze in place.

He heard that an earthquake would soon render all of Europe uninhabitable, but this was the first time it occurred to him that he would be so powerless once it actually happened. Perhaps he felt this way because he had never experienced an earthquake before.

Du du du du du.

He glanced around him when everything began to shake once again.

Thud! Crash!

The cup fell to the carpet.

Bam!

He could hear heavy objects fall to the ground from the higher floors as well.

Is this how I die?

In that short moment, Kang Chan thought of Yoo Hye-Sook, Kang Dae-Kyung, and Seok Kang-Ho. He felt relieved that they were all in South Korea.

The tremors lasted for about thirty seconds before finally stopping.

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

Kang Chan quickly picked up the phone.

“Hello?” he answered.

- Mr. Kang Chan. Get to South Korea as quickly as you can!

He had never heard Lanok sound so flustered.

- They say the subterranean shock device has gone completely out of control!

“Mr. Ambassador! What about the others? I heard Anne is in France.”

- I’ll have her out of there as quickly as possible, so just focus on getting yourself out of there.

“Mr. Ambassador, what about the activation of the Hadron Collider?” Kang Chan quickly asked.

-It’s too late, Mr. Kang Chan! Just leave!

Damn it!

Kang Chan gritted his teeth.

Lanok wanted him to escape even though he knew Anne would die?

“Mr. Ambassador, please activate the Hadron Collider! I’ll head straight to England.”

There was no response.

“Mr. Ambassador!” Kang Chan urged.

- Mr. Kang Chan, that isn’t...

Du du du du du du. Boom! Thud! Whack! Clunk!

-Was that an earthquake?

“Yes! It’s a bit worse this time!” Kang Chan shouted so he could be heard over the noise. “Please let me use the Hadron Collider! I’ll head straight to England. Should I tell Pierre or will you give him the command?”

- Tell Pierre! I’ll have it prepared so the Hadron Collider can be activated before you arrive.

The tremors stopped almost at the same time Lanok finished his sentence. Kang Chan never thought that lands and buildings could be so quiet and scary when they weren’t shaking.

Kang Chan immediately stood up and left his room, finding the five foreign agents standing in front of their rooms with surprised faces. Unfortunately, he didn't have time to give them an explanation.

When he got to the elevator, he decided to use the stairs next to it instead.

Tat tat tat tat. Tat tat tat tat.

At this rate, there was a chance he would fail to prevent Kang Dae-Kyung's arrest. Yoo Hye-Sook wouldn't be able to take it.

Going down the stairs, Kang Chan couldn't help but think that what he was doing could be pointless.

Even so, how would I be able to live with myself if I escaped to Korea alone?

Anne's life felt equally as heavy as the great number of other people who would die.

When he got to the ground floor, he bolted to the entrance. An employee greeted him outside and opened a car door for him.

Oblivious to the severity of the situation, the people in the area just looked as if they weren't expecting to experience earthquakes in France.

The car hit the road as soon as Kang Chan got into the backseat.

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

"Hello?" Kang Chan answered.

- Mr. Kang Chan, a powerful earthquake has apparently damaged the structure surrounding the subterranean shock device. The Hadron Collider will be ready by the time you arrive in England. Once you're there, call us when you need us to activate it.

"Understood."

Kang Chan ended the call and turned his gaze outside the window.

Before his eyes was a peaceful view. However, as they said, all of this could disappear in an instant.

He couldn't estimate the extent of the damage, but if Europe sank into the ocean, he doubted Asia, Africa, or the Americas would emerge unscathed.

This terrifying catastrophe was the result of a mere rock manifesting people's greed. It was not even the famine-stricken Africa but the prosperous England that caused all this.

When Kang Chan arrived at the airport and boarded the plane prepared for him, Lanok called him again.

- England has just been hit by the strongest earthquake they've ever had. All of Europe is now somewhat aware of their plan.

"What about Anne?" Kang Chan asked.

Lanok laughed wryly.

- Having Anne leave right now would be no different from publicly announcing an emergency decree to all of Europe.

It was scary how cold-blooded Lanok could be during times like these. Knowing how much to hide and how much to scrutinize others seemed like a lot of work.

“Shouldn’t we at least inform and save as many people as possible?” Kang Chan asked.

- Mr. Kang Chan. The leaders and influential figures of other countries have already left for the safe zones.

“What about their citizens?”

- There is no way or place for the entire Europe to escape, and revealing the danger to them could just lead to further panic and more difficulties securing any kind of buffer. In the worst-case scenario, we could even face a shortage of personnel to operate the Hadron Collider.

Kang Chan had nothing to counterargue with.

- On another note, we have started an investigation into Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong and his close associates.

“Thank you, Mr. Ambassador,” Kang Chan replied.

- I should be the one thanking you. I’m sure Ethan will be desperately waiting for you at the airport trying to spot the plane in the distance until his neck is as long as a giraffe's.

After hanging up, Kang Chan drank tea to pass the time. Korea was in the late hours of the night, so they would probably find out what was happening in Europe through the news in about five hours.

Damn it!

Kang Chan was certain that either Sharlan or Smithen had one of the missing Blackhead energies, but he ended up having to fight alone anyway.

Mulling over his thoughts, he began to wonder about what would happen if the particle accelerator targeted not Africa but the Blackhead’s exact location. Would he lose the energy he possessed just like the energy left the Blackhead? If he did, would he simply lose the ability to quickly recover from injuries or would he outright lose his life? There was no way to tell.

Kang Chan clenched his teeth.

He was worried about Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook. All of this was happening because he failed to tie up loose ends before leaving South Korea. At that moment, he realized that he had recently left multiple other events in his life unfinished.

Korea needed an organization similar to France’s DGSE. Kang Chan decided to prioritize taking care of that after resolving this whole Blackhead issue.

Chapter 203: I Have Bad News (2)

Ding. Ding. Ding. Ding.

When the plane landed, Kang Chan went down the ramp and found Ethan looking like a raccoon, not a giraffe.

“Thank you for coming. Let’s head to the site,” Ethan greeted, the dark circles under his eyes becoming even more noticeable. He pointed to the helicopter on one side of the runway.

Whoosh. Du-du-du-du-du.

The helicopter ascended into the dark skies of the night as soon as they got on it. After correcting its direction, it went full speed.

“The roads are in such a mess that we would’ve had trouble if we took a car there,” Ethan explained through the headset.

“Ethan! If the Blackhead instantly loses energy, how do we disable the machine?” Kang Chan asked.

“Do you have a way to do that?” Ethan quickly turned toward Kang Chan.

“I’ll find one. The question is can you disable the machine if I make it happen?”

Amid the dark world below the helicopter, Kang Chan saw big, fallen trees every now and then.

“We should be able to accomplish that if we remove the nine auxiliary cables connected to the main engine...” Ethan trailed off for a moment but continued when Kang Chan looked at him. “They think the Blackhead will explode if even one of the nine energies becomes unstable. That’s why we can’t just recklessly turn it off! The earthquake earlier happened because we couldn’t stabilize cetinium’s energy!”

“Does that mean we can remove the cables if we can balance out the energy?” Kang Chan asked.

“I heard the Blackhead will stop glowing if that happens!”

Kang Chan cocked his head. “The energies should’ve destabilized when you connected the cables to the main engine!”

“Our studies showed that the cetinium and denadite could prevent that! On another note, can you explain how you got one of the Blackhead’s energies?” Ethan asked, his greed blatantly showing in his eyes. Kang Chan was still in the middle of helping him out of this crisis, yet he was already targeting his possessions.

I’m going to kill this fucker!

Noticing Kang Chan’s glare, Ethan quickly turned to the window.

About fifteen minutes into their flight, Kang Chan felt the Blackhead’s energy connect to him. In the distance, he saw the lights from the research institute.

Remembering that he brought the goggles with him, he put them on and examined the buildings below.

‘What’s that?’

Thin energies were spreading in all directions from the round cement structure.

When the helicopter landed, the researchers and the two agents waiting for them quickly walked over.

“The building has cracks all over it,” one of them warned.

Kang Chan quickly went into the building with a meeting room.

“The Ambassador contacted us earlier.” The French researcher looked nervous. “The energy is leaving the structure right now, and the main engine has gone completely out of control.”

Kang Chan didn’t notice it before, but the floor was shaking a little.

“Timing is important! According to our calculations, we might be able to buy some time, but we don’t know exactly how long or if it’ll even work!” Kang Chan explained.

“Are you going to wear the energy-blocking suit?” a researcher asked.

Kang Chan shook his head. Even if the Blackhead’s energy could be temporarily suspended, he doubted he could move quickly while wearing such a cumbersome outfit.

He took off his jacket.

“Please take a look at this!” One of the researchers took out a large floor plan, pointed to where the main engine was, and then showed the location of the cables. “Two researchers and five agents will go in there with you to help disconnect the auxiliary devices.”

“Aren’t there nine cables?”

“We’re short on manpower right now.”

It seemed some of them had already run away in hopes of avoiding this disaster.

“At least order the English agents over there to come!” Kang Chan exclaimed.

“We’re lacking hands out here as well. We only have enough people to shut down the electricity and operate the equipment!”

Five people wearing thick gloves put on their work uniforms and helmets. They then stood behind Kang Chan.

Kang Chan didn’t like this situation one bit, but being hard-headed now wouldn’t accomplish anything.

“Let’s go, then!” Kang Chan said.

The nervous researcher nodded.

Ethan watched from outside the area where the French agents and the researchers were standing.

Still wearing the goggles, Kang Chan looked at all the thin lines coming into the building. He felt as if he was watching a monster struggling to enter.

Huff. Huff.

Kang Chan controlled his breathing as he looked at the entrance door to the main engine.

A researcher took out a satellite phone and pressed a button. "Starting the countdown!"

They were louder than usual, perhaps because of the tension.

"One second! What are you guys doing right now?" Ethan walked toward Kang Chan and the researcher.

Does he not know what the plan is?

Ethan's gaze alternated between Kang Chan and the researcher.

"Five minutes before we activate the machine!"

Du-du-du-du-du.

At that moment, the floor shook profusely, causing everyone inside the building to violently sway with it.

"Mr. Kang Chan! What are you doing right now?" Ethan asked.

"Ask Ambassador Lanok for details later! Go! Now!"

"I asked what you're doing!"

The researchers and the agents who were supposed to go in with Kang Chan stiffened.

"Four minutes before we begin!" one of the researchers yelled.

Kang Chan turned toward Ethan and brought his face right up against his. "Ethan, if you want me to leave, then I'll go. Otherwise, be fucking quiet and stay the hell out of my way. You're making me feel so damn mad that I don't even want to do this anymore."

Kang Chan wasn't kidding. If Ethan tried to block his way again, Kang Chan would immediately go back to South Korea. After all, to him, Kang Dae-Kyung being arrested was as horrible as Europe being wiped out.

Gritting his teeth, Ethan stepped back.

Behind them, Kang Chan heard someone announce, "Three minutes!"

Bam! Pow!

Two of the lights on the ceiling exploded.

Kang Chan realized for the first time just how long five minutes were.

Thin red lines stuck to Kang Chan and then went away, seemingly out of desperation. He didn't feel his energy draining out of him yet, though.

"One minute!" a researcher yelled.

Du-du-du-du-du. Screech! Screech!

The vibrations grew louder as they heard something being twisted.

“Thirty, twenty-nine, twenty-eight, twenty-seven...”

Please hurry! Time is so fucking slow!

“Five, four, three, two, one—activating the machine!” a researcher exclaimed.

Kang Chan and everyone around him quickly exchanged glances.

BANG!

A heavy sound echoed from the bowels of the earth.

Did it work? Is it successful?

A horrifying silence filled the room.

Du-du-du-du-du!

The building shook once more.

Bam! Pow! Whish! Whish!

All of the lights exploded, allowing darkness to spread into Kang Chan’s surroundings.

Brr. Brr. Brr. Brr.

An emergency light faintly illuminated Kang Chan.

“Is there an emergency light inside as well?” he asked.

“Yes!”

Kang Chan looked at the building. The vibrations had subsided, and he no longer saw any red energy.

“We have to go right now!” Kang Chan shouted. He then ran out of the building, the agents and researchers following behind him.

Kang Chan headed to the hazy outline of the enormous cement building.

Screech!

The engine didn’t make that sound before.

Clunk. Clunk. Clunk. Clunk.

Kang Chan quickly made his way to the location the researcher pointed to earlier.

Huff. Huff. Huff.

The energy is suspended right now! We just have to take out the cables!

In this huge space, the hideous machine facility was standing while relying on the auxiliary light.

Is it over? Did all of the energy spill out somewhere?

The silence felt as scary as the earthquakes.

Clunk. Clunk. Clunk. Clunk.

The researchers and the agents stood close to the main engine. Simultaneously, Kang Chan stopped in front of a cable.

“Remove the cetinium first!” Kang Chan yelled.

Clank! Chkk!

“The denadite as well!”

Clank! Chkk!

It worked!

“What’s next?!” Kang Chan asked.

One of the researchers gestured to a cable, and an agent pulled it.

Clank! Chkk!

Clank! Chkk!

Kang Chan removed the cable in front of him.

Clank! Chkk!

Only four cables left to pull!

Brrr!

At that moment, the building began to shake once more as the main engine emitted a red light.

They didn’t need orders anymore.

Clank! Chkk!

Clank! Chkk!

Just two more cables!

Kang Chan reached out to one of the last cables.

Whoosh!

Before he could get to it, however, a red light strong enough to make his eyes hurt spewed out.

Brrr! Du-du-du-du-du!

At the same time, the vibrations grew stronger.

Thud! Pow! Crash!

Kang Chan tightly held onto a cable and clung onto it. The light was bright enough to prevent him from looking up, so he turned his head to the side instead and pulled the cable’s connecting lever.

Clank! Chkk!

Brrr! Du-du-du-du-du!

The vibration was so strong that an agent holding onto the railing had to hold onto a researcher.

Whoosh! Bang!

The sound coming from the main engine changed. The red light rushed toward Kang Chan.

“Urgh!” Kang Chan screamed. Pain coursed through him, making him feel as if his heart was being stabbed and something was burrowing into his side.

BANG! Du-du-du-du-du!

Kang Chan fell to the ground. The pain had reached his spine—like a long knife piercing through it. He didn’t lose strength this time, but agony seemed to devour him.

Son of a bitch! This was within my expectations, though!

A portion of the seven energies that spewed out had gone into his body.

The Blackhead was red, and so was Kang Chan.

Some went back into the Blackhead, and the rest seeped into Kang Chan!

They had to take from each other in this battle, but Kang Chan had no idea how to steal anything from the machine!

Bam!

Kang Chan grabbed onto a handrail and tried to stand up.

Du-du-du-du-du!

The researchers and the agents just held on for dear life.

“You son of a bitch!” Kang Chan yelled as he turned to the side.

BANG! Bang! Crack! Crack! Du-du-du-du-du!

The earthquake worsened enough for large cement pieces to start falling from the ceiling.

Clunk! Clunk!

“If I fall here—!” Kang Chan yelled when the rail he was depending on fell forward. Gritting his teeth, he used the momentum to tightly grab onto the last cable. The tips of his toes remained on the handrail, but the rest of his body dangled on the handrail. If he removed the valve, he would certainly fall to the bottom.

An agent rushed and tightly grabbed onto Kang Chan’s foot.

Clank! Chkk!

Whoosh!

An enormous group of lights surged toward Kang Chan.

‘Father...!’

The world turned black. Kang Chan lost consciousness.

Kim Seong-Woong sat on the sofa of a safety house in Hannam-dong. His eyes and expression clearly showed his displeasure. He reluctantly stood up when Hwang Ki-Hyun came inside the room.

“I’m Hwang Ki-Hyun, the Director of the National Intelligence Service.”

For formality’s sake, Kim Seong-Woong shook Hwang Ki-Hyun’s hand

“Have a seat,” Hwang Ki-Hyun offered.

An awkward silence filled the room as tea was served.

“Would you like a cup?”

“Mr. Director, if we’re here to talk about the investigation, then I’m letting you know now that whatever you say could be used for it later,” Kim Seong-Woong said.

“I see. Please have some tea.” Hwang Ki-Hyun pointed to the teacup. “I asked for a meeting with you in hopes that you’ll stop investigating Mr. Kang Chan, Prosecutor-General.”

Kim Seong-Woong tightly gritted his teeth as Hwang Ki-Hyun added, “An average of fifteen remarkable agents lose their lives every year in just Europe alone, and all we can do for them is engrave a star on the wall at the headquarters for their deaths. Even so, to this day, the agents still run to certain death without hesitation if that was what they had to do.”

“Even if you say something like that right now...”

“I asked Kang Chan to do everything for the development of South Korea. It’s true that I asked him to help us stand tall as a key member of the international community and as a truly powerful country now that the Eurasian Rail is connected.”

“Even if so, the crimes that he committed don’t just disappear,” Kim Seong-Woong argued.

“You have a fair point, but are you sure you’re persecuting the right person for those crimes?”

“Are you saying that you don’t trust South Korea’s prosecution?” Kim Seong-Woong asked.

Hwang Ki-Hyun exhaled softly. “The National Intelligence Service has finished investigating you and the prosecutors assigned to this case.”

His eyes became sharper, befitting a man of his title, as he continued, “All this time, believed I had to walk on the right path. It’s different now, though. No matter what the President says, I’m willing to face all the repercussions of my actions. Now, what do you think I should do in this situation? We

have a North Korean agent in downtown Seoul right now. Their agents murdered the best commander of South Korea's special forces."

"Something like that happened?"

"I would have believed that you didn't know about it if we didn't have complete evidence that North Korean agents met with Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo, and that you met up with him twice as well. If I decided to, I could have the Prosecutor-General of South Korea arrested immediately for treason and harming South Korea's military personnel and interests."

Kim Seong-Woong tightly gritted his teeth.

"I know you find this unfair, but it doesn't matter. For the sake of South Korea's development, I'd be willing to accuse the Prosecutor-General of South Korea of committing a crime he didn't even do," Hwang Ki-Hyun continued.

"The other prosecutors won't just take this lying down."

"Don't be too conceited. It seems you truly have no idea what the National Intelligence Service is capable of. The moment I decide to fight dirty, I can have the prosecution, the police, the administration, the military, the media, and every other organization out there completely under my control, all while pulling wool over the President's eyes."

Kim Seong-Woong gulped, his eyes showing his surprise. He couldn't help but wonder if Hwang Ki-Hyun was really this powerful.

"Why did you ask to see me instead of doing that, then?"

"To give you a chance to play nice."

'So you're planning on comforting me right after you slapped me?'

Kim Seong-Woong looked as if his pride was hurt.

"You won't be able to stop Mr. Kang Chan if he gets angry. To make things worse, we'll have to hand over such a man of talent to France as well. After all, I doubt he'd want to live in a country that gives his parents trouble. Unfortunately, that would also mean we'll have to give up on our dream of connecting South Korea to the Eurasian Rail, which is what Japan, China, and the United States want," Hwang Ki-Hyun said.

"If the National Intelligence Service can accuse me of treason, why not do that instead?"

An uncomfortable moment of silence passed as Hwang Ki-Hyun sharply looked at Kim Seong-Woong. "Mr. Kang Chan said that he'll turn himself in. Please don't mess with his parents until then. I'm sure you know that they're innocent."

“Is he really that important?” Kim Seong-Woong asked. The look that flashed in Hwang Ki-Hyun’s eyes surprised him.

“He connected South Korea to the Eurasian Rail and saved the President and Ambassador Lanok at the Presentation hall. I can’t tell you about the rest of what he’s done since then because it’s classified government information, but he has produced South Korea’s most brilliant accomplishments in the past fifty years,” Hwang Ki-Hyun answered.

Kim Seong-Woong grew curious.

“If Mr. Kang Chan is arrested, then a portion of the National Intelligence Service’s elite agents and a candidate to become a special forces commander will resign or apply to be transferred to the reserves. Lastly, the representatives of the Intelligence Bureaus of North Korea, Russia, Japan, and the United States will pray for your safety for the rest of their lives,” Hwang Ki-Hyun added.

He’s telling the truth!

Through clenched jaws, Kim Seong-Woong said, “Please release Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo.”

“Prosecutor-General, we only announced a few of the criminal charges on the opposition party because the President had to take South Korea’s dignity into consideration. If we publicize all of it, then the entire opposition party will be deemed amoral and dishonorable.”

“If so, then you leave me no choice but to handle Kang Chan and his father in accordance with the law.”

Hwang Ki-Hyun sighed. “Mr. Kang Chan will prove too much for you.”

“You’re looking down on the prosecution too much.” Kim Seong-Woon glared at Hwang Ki-Hyun, showing no intention to back down.

“Prosecutor-General, I support the President’s way of running the country. However, if you show keep pursuing your ulterior motives, then even the matters relating to Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo will disgrace even the Prosecution’s chief executives.” Hwang Ki-Hyun warned, ending the one-sided conversation. “I’ll be taking my leave now. I look forward to your wise judgment.”

Kim Seong-Woong glared at the door the NIS director walked out of.

Chapter 204.1: Do You Really Think He Would Just Sit Still? (1)

Seemingly just waking up from a nap, Kang Chan found himself in a hospital room when he regained consciousness. An IV, a beeping machine, and a few electrodes and wires were connected to him.

He was still alive, which meant they likely succeeded in dealing with the Blackhead. Nevertheless, his heart sank. Kang Dae-Kyung could be in prison by now.

Kang Chan looked to the side, finding two French agents standing in front of the door with their feet apart and hands clasped together in front of them. They approached Kang Chan.

“How long was I out?” Kang Chan asked.

“You were unconscious for two days, Monsieur Kang.”

Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!

As he sat up, he removed the breathing tube attached to his nose.

“Where’s my phone?” Kang Chan asked again.

“Right here.” One of the agents took out Kang Chan’s phone from the table drawer. Out of instinct, Kang Chan looked for Seok Kang-Ho’s number first.

- Hello? Where are you? Are you okay?

Seok Kang-Ho’s barrage of questions was filled with worry.

“Is my father alright? Did something happen to him?”

- The National Intelligence Service and the Prosecution are holding their ground in a power struggle. What the Prosecution is trying to do has filled the agents with spite, so not even they can do anything rash right now.

“Will it resolve anything if I fly over right now? And can you hold on long enough for me to get there?”

- You coming to South Korea right now will just throw everything in even more chaos. You should talk to the others first. Anyway, how do you feel?

“Right now, I just feel like I woke up from a good night's sleep. I have to talk to manager Kim. I’ll call you back after.”

- Alright.

Kang Chan hung up and immediately looked for and dialed Lanok’s number.

- Mr. Kang Chan! You’re awake! How do you feel?

“I don’t feel anything particularly wrong with me right now,” Kang Chan answered.

Amid their conversation, an agent headed outside and came back with a tray of soup, bread, and a few other foods that Kang Chan could eat.

- That’s a relief. The hospital said they couldn’t find any special symptoms, and the researchers said that they couldn’t see any energy waves from you. There are no energy wavelengths from the Blackhead either.

Did they turn the Blackhead into nothing more than just a normal rock? He felt somewhat bittersweet about it.

Ah, shoot! Now’s not the time to be swayed by emotions.

“Mr. Ambassador, I’ll leave for South Korea.”

- I have ordered a plane to be on standby. Just tell the agents when you’re good to go.

“Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.”

Kang Chan hung up and ate the soup and bread that one of the agents brought for him. He wasn’t just eating because he was hungry. To recover the energy he lost the past few days, he knew that he would have to eat his fill.

A moment later, a member of the medical team came into the room and removed the IV on Kang Chan’s arm, then wheeled the equipment out.

“Is there somewhere I can take a shower?” Kang Chan asked.

“There’s a shower facility you can use at the end of the hall.”

“Do you happen to have anything I can wear as well?”

“We have prepared a pair for you.” An agent opened the closet, revealing a clearly new suit hanging on the rack inside it.

Damn it! I didn’t get stabbed this time, but that rock managed to ruin my clothes anyway.

Thanks to the two agents blocking the entrance, Kang Chan got to use a small shower facility that had ten shower booths by himself.

He knew that now was not the time to care about trifling things, though.

Kang Chan flung off the hospital gown and lightly washed up. He then changed into the suit he had brought into the facility with him.

“Do you know where the plane is?” Kang Chan asked the agents after dressing up.

“A car is waiting for us in the underground parking lot of the hospital.”

Kang Chan was just about to head toward the elevator when a British agent quickly ran over.

“Mr. Kang!”

“What’s he saying?” Kang Chan asked the French agents.

“He’s saying that you can’t leave the hospital without Ethan’s permission.”

Kang Chan’s eyes glinted, causing the British agent to give an even longer explanation. Despite how many words he said, Kang Chan didn’t understand him one bit.

More importantly, Kang Chan neither had the time nor wanted to wait for something like this.

“I’m going to talk to Ethan, so tell them to back off,” Kang Chan said.

As the French agent passed on Kang Chan’s orders, the elevator opened. Kang Chan got in, and the two agents got in after him. The British agent just watched, unable to stop him from leaving.

Kang Chan got in the car prepared for him and left the hospital. While on the road, he looked at his surroundings.

“This hospital belongs to the intelligence bureau,” an agent told Kang Chan.

“Did they suffer severe damages from the earthquake?”

“The earthquake didn’t hit the entire country that hard, but it did heavily damage one residential area. It seems over a thousand people died.”

Damn it! Why did they make a subterranean shock device in the first place? To gain what?

“What about the other countries?” Kang Chan asked again.

“The earthquake reached all across Europe, but it hit the UK the hardest.”

Nothing to be done about it now, though, since it already happened.

Kang Chan brought up his phone to his ear as he continued to listen to the agent.

Ethan didn’t answer, perhaps because he had something important going on. Kang Chan figured that since his number would be left in the call history, Ethan could now either decide to return the call or not. Either way, he had done his bit.

The airport was thirty minutes away from the hospital.

The two agents got on the plane with him to look after him. After a while, the plane took off.

Whether it was from the United Kingdom or from France, there wasn’t much of a difference in the time it took to get to South Korea.

“Is there coffee here?” Kang Chan asked.

“We’ll prepare one for you,” an agent replied. He quickly brought over coffee and an ashtray.

Kang Chan wasn’t stupid. At this point, even Seok Kang-Ho would notice that the French agents were treating Kang Chan unusually politely.

“What’s going on?” Kang Chan asked.

The agents looked as if they couldn’t understand what he was trying to say.

“Why are you guys treating me this way? I need to know the reason,” Kang Chan said.

“Monsieur Kang, those that join the training in France’s Niafles are subject to being promoted to Conducteur by the DGSE. Now that the DGSE has promoted you to that rank, it is only natural that we treat you at the same level as the assistant director.”

This is driving me nuts!

Two days after losing consciousness, he woke up as an officer of France's DGSE. Kang Chan couldn't complain about it right now, though, since he knew that Lanok wouldn't have done this without a reason.

The agents went outside when Kang Chan didn't say anything else and just picked up a cigarette.

Click!

“Whooh!” When Kang Chan exhaled smoke. He finally felt alive again.

Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—. Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—.

Kang Chan had just extinguished his cigarette and was drinking coffee when Kim Hyung-Kung called him.

“Hello?”

- Mr. Kang Chan, it's Kim Hyung-Jung. I heard from Mr. Seok Kang-Ho that you've woken up. Are you injured anywhere?

“I'm fine,” was all Kang Chan replied since he didn't know what Seok Kang-Ho said.

- I heard you're coming to South Korea.

“That's right. I'm on my way right now. I think I'll be there in about twelve hours. Is my father okay?”

- The prosecution won't be causing problems any time soon, so you can take your time to calm down a little bit before coming over.

“Alright.”

It's not like I'm going through my stormy period of adolescence. Would I really do something to the Prosecutor-General as soon as I get there?

When Kang Chan hung up, an agent brought over a delicious-looking steak.

He had always found it much better to have food served all at once. Having it divided by course out of formality was too slow for him.

After his meal, Kang Chan went into the room in the back of the plane and laid down. Although he heard that he had been unconscious for two days, he felt as if he woke up hours ago and it was already time for bed.

Kim Seong-Woong opened the blinds and looked out the window, finding two agents in suits standing near two cars. They were so stone-faced that it seemed as if they were trying to blatantly tell the world, “We're agents of the National Intelligence Service.”

Because of them, Kim Seong-Woong couldn't just rashly give orders to Deputy Prosecutor-General Lee Seung-Ryul, who was already waiting for orders in front of Kang Dae-Kyung's company.

These two NIS agents stayed in front of his office to show that they would arrest Kim Seong-Woong for treason the moment he tried to have Kang Dae-Kyung arrested.

‘Would they really push through with this?’

Kim Seong-Woong frowned when he remembered the look in Hwang Ki-Hyun’s eyes during their meeting.

Huh Ha-Soo sold off South Korea’s classified secrets?

Kim Seong-Woong wasn’t even sure if that was true.

However, if they followed due process, then they should’ve strongly protested against Huh Sang-Soo receiving the death penalty in China and asked for help from the United States and Japan. They wouldn’t arrest the chairperson of the National Assembly just because he provided aid to the enemy.

Even if he did act to benefit the enemy a little bit, Huh Ha-Soo put in so much to achieve many things before that! Are they just going to ignore all of that and just count his sins?

How many people in this world do they think would be completely innocent if they were investigated right now? They’re disturbing the prosecution from fairly enforcing the law just so they can deploy a mere high schooler in the frontlines!

Kim Seong-Woong was aware that Kang Chan was by no means ordinary and Kang Dae-Kyung was innocent.

That was all the more reason for them to arrest Kang Dae-Kyung.

Chapter 204.2: Do You Really Think He Would Just Sit Still? (1)

The National Intelligence Service was in a similar position as Kim Seong-Woong. They, too, were burdened by this situation.

Even if he gave in and accepted that Huh Ha-Soo joined hands with the enemy, he really wouldn’t know if something like that did happen.

Pursing his lips, Kim Seong-Woong glared at his phone.

He was the last bastion in the majority-opposition party. If the National Intelligence Service arrested him for treason or for acting to harm the interests of South Korea’s military, then he could just immediately cry injustice.

In life, there were times when people had to take a chance, but they didn’t have to rush to take it. Rather, it was imperative that they create a perfect plan for it first and then put it into motion at the right moment.

Kim Seong-Woong held up his phone and called a number. “For now, we’ll withdraw.”

They had to prepare extensively.

“It seems like they’re withdrawing. Let’s go home,” someone said.

“I’m going to wait right here until they have completely left the premises,” Choi Jong-Il responded. He looked pale and was breaking out in cold sweat.

“They’re already leaving. If you’re really that worried, then at least wait in the car.”

Still leaning on the car, Choi Jong-Il shook his head.

“Why are you like this? You’re making us feel uncomfortable. If the manager finds out, we’re all going to die.”

“Be quiet,” Choi Jong-Il frowned. “You all should step out of this. Prosecutor or not, if anyone pulls any stunt right now, I’m going to intervene.”

“You’re not even supposed to be working.”

“Hmph! Knowing his personality, do you really think he would just sit still if his father gets arrested?”

Woo Hee-Seung couldn’t answer.

“I wouldn’t have had any regrets even if I died back in China. You should all leave now and focus on protecting him. Don’t forget who made us strong enough to fight the Spetsnaz, SBS, and SW. I’m not saying that we should return the favor, but we should at least protect the person who will save South Korea when it’s in a really difficult situation. I would put my life on the line to do that,” Choi Jong-Il said.

“Our lives depend on hyungsoo-nim,[1] so please go home. The opposition has already withdrawn.”

Choi Jong-Il soon gasped for breath and grabbed his side. He wouldn’t have made it into the car if not for Lee Doo-Hee wrapping his arms around his upper body to help him.

“Hyungnim,” Woo Hee-Seung called.

Choi Jong-Il lowered the window, revealing his pale face to Woo Hee-Seung.

“Please go home. Even the agents who were off duty all voluntarily came out today, so you can rest assured that nobody will be able to mess with his father even if the sky splits in half. Honestly, I have never found being an agent as worthwhile and proud as I do now. ”

“Are you absolutely sure about that?”

“Isn’t it a hundred times better to stop the prosecutors here than to face that gentleman when he’s angry? Please go home and don’t worry about this. Lieutenant Cha Dong-Gyun already talked about this. We barely managed to stop the off-duty special forces from coming all the way here. Please don’t be as hard-headed as they are.”

With a nod from Woo Hee-Seung, Lee Doo-Hee quickly slid into the driver’s seat.

“Do you really think that man won’t do anything if he finds out that you came here in that state? Please just stay with hyungsoo-nim. We’ll take care of things

here. Why should we be scared when we've received orders to be here?" Woo Hee-Seung added.

When Choi Jong-Il nodded in resignation, the car finally hit the road.

"They had agents blatantly standing around the building. They looked as if they were ready to arrest us if they had to. It was so suspicious," someone said.

With his head turned to the side, Kim Seong-Woong pursed his lips. "So you're not going to mess with him first?"

"How about we tell them to make Kang Chan turn himself in instead, Mr. Prosecutor?"

"They did say that he would turn himself in, but the problem is that they didn't tell us a date and time. If things go wrong, then won't we just be stupidly waiting for him?"

Kim Seong-Woong couldn't bring himself to say that they had to do something before Huh Ha-Soo's crimes were proven.

Lee Seung-Ryul and the other prosecutors observed Kim Seong-Woong's mood. They couldn't understand why the National Intelligence Service would go this far and had so much spite against them when they were just trying to investigate Kang Chan.

"We'll broadcast us arresting Kang Dae-Kyung," Kim Seong-Woong said, startling Lee Seung-Ryul.

"If we rush into the building with reporters in tow, then even the National Intelligence Service won't be able to outright defy us."

"Mr. Prosecutor-General! The National Intelligence Service can just conduct a media blackout."

"The top three daily newspapers are on our side, so they won't be able to stop everything, especially not the internet news articles. The moment we get the public's opinion, the situation will become completely favorable for us." Kim Seong-Woong was almost absolutely certain about his plan already, but he still had one question in mind. What on earth was President Moon Jae-Hyun thinking, pretending not to notice that his government institutions were at each other's throats?

Kim Seong-Woong wanted to know the answer to that before he made a move.

Early morning the next day, Lee Seung-Ryul arrived in front of Kang Dae-Kyung's office building with a group of investigators, creating an undeniably vicious atmosphere.

Kim Hyung-Jung himself was in the premises to command the scene. The agents disguised as employees of Kang Yoo Motors were all on standby at the showroom.

The moment they executed an arrest warrant for Kang Dae-Kyung, the NIS agents would arrest Lee Seung-Ryul and the investigators who accompanied him.

Kang Dae-Kyung had no idea that all of this was happening.

He didn't even have time to care about what was going on outside because he was busy giving consultations to companies that approached him about the delivery of goods. The NIS agents and the prosecutors made sure not to draw his attention as well.

Tension rose in front of the building when Lee Seung-Ryul answered his phone. After the call, he said, "Get ready."

Rattle! Rattle! Rattle!

A prosecutor and a couple of investigators came out of the three vans.

Kim Hyung-Jung walked over to Lee Seung-Ryul, who was taking a deep breath.

"I don't know what's going on, but we're performing official duties here. Any disturbance to that will be seen as an act against the law. We have the authority to arrest you on the spot," Kim Hyung-Jung said. "Prosecutor Lee Seung-Ryul, if you take so much as a step toward that building, then everyone with you will be arrested for espionage. It's best you think about this carefully before making a move."

Lee Seung-Ryul looked at the investigators standing on either side of him.

"It seems you believe that bringing reporters here will help you, but we have already removed all of them from the premises," Kim Hyung-Jung added. "It's best you all just obediently get back into your vehicles and leave. You are aware that we will also arrest Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong for the same criminal charges the moment you cause a problem here, aren't you?"

Lee Seung-Ryul gulped dryly when he saw Kim Hyung-Jung's eyes. He had handled many cases, but he had never seen eyes as scary as the ones before him. Nevertheless, he didn't budge and instead glared at him.

Kim Seong-Woong told him to arrest Kang Dae-Kyung at all costs. He also told him not to worry since they would be taking clear countermeasures afterward.

Lee Seung-Ryul examined the investigators that were on either side of him once more.

At that moment, Kim Hyung-Jung nodded to his men. Five agents surrounded Lee Seung-Ryul and the investigators.

Lee Seung-Ryul was dumbfounded. There were only five of them, yet he could feel intense pressure from them.

'Is it because they're NIS agents?'

Lee Seung-Ryul had a couple of sunbaes and hoobaes in the National Intelligence Service, but he had never gotten any details from them about their organization. The people he knew weren't agents, so they wouldn't really be able to answer even if he asked.

Still, he didn't expect the agents to be this overwhelming.

“Prosecutor Lee Seung-Ryul.”

Lee Seung-Ryul quickly looked at Kim Hyung-Jung, who now sounded different.

“I trust that we are both working with the country's best interests at heart, so I'm going to give you one last chance. If you don't get in the car, you will be arrested for treason and espionage. Any resistance will be met with deadly force,” Kim Hyung-Jung warned.

Lee Seung-Ryul tried to breathe in as subtly as he could. Being overpowered like this hurt his pride. If they fired Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong, then his career would also end anyway.

They want me to go from being the deputy prosecutor of the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's Office's special investigation department to someone who draws up reports about a petty thief who stole red peppers or dogs in a deserted countryside?

Even if things didn't work out, Lee Seung-Ryul would be quite well off for the rest of his life even if he was fired from being a prosecutor and became a lawyer. Moreover, if people from Huh Ha-Soo's side exerted their influence, then he could even become a member of the National Assembly, which would put him in a good position to order Kim Hyung-Jung around.

To put it bluntly, if the administration changed, then who knew if this incident could become his hero story? If that happened, then he could investigate this idiot, who was fiercely glaring at him right now, for abusing his authority.

Gritting his teeth, Lee Seung-Ryul made up his mind. He looked at the five agents who had approached him and his group under Kim Hyung-Jung's orders. However, while he was mulling over his thoughts, it seemed they had walked over to someone else and even briefly bowed to them in greeting.

What's happening? Who just arrived that has enough influence and power to make them act like that?

Lee Seung-Ryul quickly looked around his surroundings.

Seriously, what is even going on? This man was just glaring at me a couple of seconds ago. Why is he looking all surprised now?

Lee Seung-Ryul followed Kim Hyung-Jung's gaze. Turning around and looking behind him, he suddenly felt so surprised that it seemed as if he couldn't breathe.

Having seen so many photos of the man and so frequently at that, Lee Seung-Ryul felt as if he had already known him for some time now.

Either way, he didn't have much of a choice now—no, he didn't really know what to do in this situation.

Like a tiger slowly approaching its prey, Kang Chan headed straight toward Lee Seung-Ryul.

Chapter 205.1: Do You Really Think He Would Just Sit Still? (2)

“Mr. Kang Chan!” Kim Hyung-Jung exclaimed.

Kang Chan nodded at him and then glanced back at Lee Seung-Ryul.

“This will all be over if I go, won’t it?” Kang Chan asked.

Lee Seung-Ryul was momentarily speechless, unable to imagine in his wildest dreams that Kang Chan would be so confident. Kang Chan’s gaze and attitude were such a force to be reckoned with that he regretted looking down on him for being a high school student.

“Leave us for now. I’ll contact and meet with you in the evening,” Kang Chan ordered.

“You have to go with us now, sir,” Lee Seung-Ryul replied.

‘Damn it, damn it, damn it! I can’t believe that I, the assistant prosecutor-general, spoke formally to a little high school student in front of all the investigators! And to think I did that when he was talking to me using informal speech!’

Kang Chan was turning to Kim Hyung-Jung when he paused and slowly spun back to Lee Seung-Ryul.

“Go while I’m still being nice. I don’t want Manager Kim or the others here to get hurt in the crossfire. Would you rather we take things further?” he threatened.

The faces of the five men standing around Lee Seung-Ryul changed in an instant. They were already prepared to attack him just a moment ago, but Kang Chan’s presence and words seemed to have made them completely forget the concept of surrendering.

Kang Chan looked around and grinned when he saw a familiar face. The pale-faced Choi Jong-II bowed to him in greeting.

“Are you really coming to the prosecutor’s office?” Lee Seung-Ryul asked.

Kang Chan just gave him another sharp glare instead of replying, preventing him from insisting any further.

“Fine. I’ll believe you for now. Come to the 506th criminal division of the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's Office. I’ll be waiting for you there,” Lee Seung-Ryul said.

“All right,” Kang Chan responded.

Lee Seung-Ryul nervously gulped as he returned to his van like a solicitor chased away for trespassing. The operation seemed somewhat doable without Kang Chan around, but the moment he met him, he had no doubt in his mind that he shouldn’t mess with him... at least not at that moment.

After some time, the three vans finally left the area.

Kang Chan and Kim Hyung-Jung walked over to Choi Jong-II.

“What are you doing here?” Kang Chan asked.

“I flew over from China when I heard the news. First Lieutenant Cha Dong-Gyun is also nearby,” Choi Jong-II replied.

Kang Chan let out a low sigh.

In all honesty, he was starting to become a little sick of working for South Korea, but seeing Kim Hyung-Jung protecting Kang Dae-Kyung and Choi Jong-II rushing over from China in a nervous sweat softened his heart again.

Maybe he would feel less wrong about all this if the ones who changed his mind were pretty women. What was so great about tall men with chiseled chins and bullet wounds on their chests and stomachs?

“Let’s get out of here for now,” Kim Hyung-Jung said, his gaze directed at Kang Yoo Motors.

Kang Chan agreed with a silent nod. He wanted to see them. He wanted to see Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook’s smile, but he had to take care of this whole mess with the prosecution first.

“You better go straight to the hospital. I’ll stop by when I find the time,” Kang Chan instructed Choi Jong-II.

“You don’t have to do that, sir,” Choi Jong-II insisted.

Kang Chan got in the car that Kim Hyung-Jung pointed to. On the way to Samseong-Dong, he made a phone call. By the time he reached the fifth floor of the building from the underground parking lot, Seok Kang-Ho was already waiting for him. Kang Chan couldn’t help but grin from ear to ear.

“Welcome back. How are you feeling?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“See for yourself,” Kang Chan jokingly replied when Kim Hyung-Jung came back with cups of coffee in hand.

“Have you had breakfast yet?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked.

“I ate on the plane,” Kang Chan replied.

The three drank a bit of their coffee.

“It’s as you saw, Mr. Kang Chan. If they were to execute the warrant, we were planning to immediately arrest Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-woong and everyone he sent to the site,” Kim Hyung-Jung explained.

“But those people are innocent, aren’t they?” Kang Chan asked.

“They are well aware that your father is innocent as well. This is a planned investigation aimed at saving Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo, not a legitimate one,” Kim Hyung-Jung replied.

Kang Chan took another sip of his coffee, feeling a bit of momentary relief. Getting to prevent Kang Dae-Kyung from being arrested lifted some weight off his shoulders.

“I’ll go to the prosecutor’s office this afternoon,” Kang Chan said.

“Pardon?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked in surprise.

“If I’m guilty, I should face the consequences. There are only two things I think I can be implicated with: Park Ki-Bum from the parking lot gang and Sharlan. Is there anything else I should be worried about?”

“Kim Seon-II is claiming that he was robbed of the company during the DI takeover process. You are also being accused of threatening Sharlan to take the Gong Te automobile sales rights contract, which should have allegedly gone to Suh Jeong Motors,”

“But Sharlan’s alive, isn’t he?” Seok Kang-Ho asked, confusion evident in his voice.

Kang Chan nodded in response.

“They can’t charge you for killing Sharlan if we bring that bastard with us. I’ll meet with the parking lot gang’s Park Ki-Bum or something to take care of that as well,” Seok Kang-Ho suggested.

“Now that Mr. Kang Chan has returned, we can handle that matter ourselves. Most of these cases can be ruled as self-defense anyway, so we probably won’t have any problems with the others,” Kim Hyung-Jung said with confidence.

“Can I meet with Oh Gwang-Taek?” Kang Chan asked.

Kim Hyung-Jung made a thoughtful, concerned expression for a moment before finally agreeing to it.

“I’ll look into it. The prosecution seems to have given up on linking everyone together as members of a single criminal organization, so it shouldn’t be too difficult to meet him now,” he replied. He then ran his finger down the list of phone numbers attached to his desk.

Unlike often seen in movies or dramas, the desk in the glass booth, which would be used for Kang Chan and Oh Gwang-Taek’s meeting, was normally used for lawyer consultations, so there was no glass separating the two sides.

Click.

The door opened, and Oh Gwang-Taek stepped in, followed by two prison guards.

A wry laugh escaped Kang Chan.

Oh Gwang-Taek entered the booth and sat across from Kang Chan. The prison guards sat down next to him, ready to take visitation notes.

Oh Gwang-Taek awkwardly smiled at Kang Chan.

“These guys are already accusing us of being in the same gang. Why did you bother coming? Go and study, kiddo,” Oh Gwang-Taek said. He behaved as if he wanted the records to show that they didn’t know each other.

“Enough with the nonsense. What happened?” Kang Chan asked.

Oh Gwang-Taek glanced at the prison guard. It was written in his visitation notes that he just asked Kang Chan how he was doing and if he had eaten lunch. The rest of the record was just small talk.

“We made some arrangements, so don’t have to worry about what you say,” Kang Chan explained. Only then did Oh Gwang-Taek look relieved.

“I think I was set up. I knew something was off from the beginning. Have you ever seen normal civilians carrying weapons around? The prosecution said the weapons were already at the restaurant, but do you think it makes sense that that tiny restaurant had five sashimi knives laying around?”

Kang Chan just listened silently.

“I’m fine, but Do-Seok isn’t doing too well. It’s fine if you can’t help me, but at least have his trial held in the hospital,” Oh Gwang-Taek requested.

“What about you? Is there anything you need?”

“Other than women and fine delicacies, I can have anything I want in here, so don’t worry about me and just focus on yourself. Be careful, alright? Considering you can visit me freely, I bet you’re doing fine, at least.”

“I’ve told them that I would go to the prosecutor’s office tonight.”

“What? You idiot! Why would you say that? You should at least wait until my sentence is confirmed before getting yourself locked up!” Oh Gwang-Taek exclaimed.

“I’ll take care of it,” Kang Chan reassured him.

“Are you really going to be alright?” Oh Gwang-Taek asked, concern written all over his face.

“Yeah. Don’t worry about it,” Kang Chan affirmed.

Oh Gwang-Taek nodded.

“I realized a lot of things with this incident. No matter how gentlemanly and serious you act, they will always think of gangsters as gangsters. The

government will always have a reason to put us behind bars. Can't blame them, though, since that's how I've lived until now. Whew! After this is over, let's just pretend like we don't know each other,"

Seeing Kang Chan grin, Oh Gwang-Taek frowned. "I'm being serious, and you're just smiling like a fucking jerk?"

"When you get out this time, prepare to mend your ways and live a better life."

"Why? Did you get a casino license or something?" Oh Gwang-Taek joked.

"You idiot." Kang Chan shook his head.

The two shared a laugh.

"I'm fine. I don't care what happens to me. Just take care of Do-Seok and Chul-Bum," Oh Gwang-Taek requested, his tone becoming serious again.

"That's new. A gangster pretending to act honorable?" Kang Chan joked this time.

As the two chuckled, the prison guard stood up and informed them their time was up. His notes were filled with a bunch more small talk.

"You sure you don't need anything?" Kang Chan asked one last time.

"Just go! If you want, you can come by my room and take some smoked chicken," Oh Gwang-Taek offered.

"You have chicken?" Kang Chan asked in disbelief.

"I have fried sausages, peanuts, bread, chips—everything. So don't worry about me and take care of the men."

They spoke to each other across the table while standing up. The prison guard didn't rush them.

"Oh Gwang-Taek."

"What?" Oh Gwang-Taek tilted his head when he saw Kang Chan's serious expression. It had only been a couple of months at most since they last met, but Kang Chan already seemed like an entirely different person.

"Give it some thought while you're in there. If you really want to stop being a gangster, I'll find an opportunity for you."

"Are you being serious?" Oh Gwang-Taek asked.

Kang Chan just nodded, but for Oh Gwang-Taek, that was more believable than a verbal agreement.

Chapter 205.2: Do You Really Think He Would Just Sit Still? (2)

Kim Seong-Woong had a half-smile, half-worried expression on his face.

“How are we going to proceed with the investigation if he’s coming tonight? They won’t just stay quiet if we arrest him,” Lee Seung-Ryul inquired. He looked a lot more timid than before he set out for Kang Dae-Kyung’s arrest.

“Even the reporters that you spoke about were gone, sir. I think maybe you should evaluate this case from the ground up...” Lee Seung-Ryul trailed off upon noticing Kim Seong-Woong’s piercing gaze.

“What was Kang Chan like?” Kim Seong-Woong asked.

“He was no pushover,” Lee Seung-Ryul replied.

“He’s still a high school student at best, though,” Kim Seong-Woong said.

“You shouldn’t underestimate him just because he’s a high schooler, sir. To be honest, I thought that the National Intelligence Service might have faked his age to give him a false identity,” Lee Seung-Ryul responded.

‘It’s that serious?’

Kim Seong-Woong looked at Lee Seung-Ryul with a much more surprised face than before.

“What was even more shocking was how the agents treated Kang Chan. They interacted with him without any pretense, acting like perfect subordinates to their superior. I couldn’t make sense of it,” Lee Seung-Ryul said.

“Who on earth is that punk?” Kim Seong-Woong cursed, annoyance evident in his expression.

He had been certain he had grabbed onto something good. Under normal circumstances, the government or ruling party would have already presented some sort of negotiation for cases like this. In return for him dropping the investigation, they would have proposed a deal to release Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo or offered some other suitable compensation. But there was nothing.

“What am I missing here?” Kim Seong-Woong murmured to himself.

He thought of Huh Ha-Soo with a creased forehead. Was it possible Huh Ha-Soo really engaged in espionage? What could the powerful chairperson of an entire country’s national assembly have to gain from that?

It can’t be true!

Kim Seong-Woong firmly shouted the words in his mind.

Huh Ha-Soo and Huh Sang-Soo had given him this position. If Kim Seong-Woong backed down now, he might never be able to play a role again.

‘I’m seeing this to the end!’

Kim Seong-Woong’s ambition was to become the Minister of Justice. He couldn’t stop here.

“Mr. Kang Chan is the only one who can resolve this matter,” Hwang Ki-Hyun said in the firmest tone he had ever used.

It was usually Jeon Dae-Geuk who mainly spoke while Hwang Ki-Hyun just listened silently, but Hwang Ki-Hyun’s eyes were burning with intensity right now.

“The information is consistent with the demands that Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo made to North Korea. An attack on North Korea is undoubtedly an opportunity for the United States to unload its old weaponry and revitalize its domestic market through its military industries. It has also been almost twenty years since the Gulf War and the conflict in Afghanistan, so the US military-industrial complex has reached its limits. To top it all off, if a war breaks out in North Korea, the Eurasian Rail will naturally be put to a halt as well.”

“There’s no end to the problems.” Moon Jae-Hyun sighed.

“It’s because they know the South Korea being connected to the Eurasian rail will alter the future significantly,” Hwang Ki-Hyun said.

Moon Jae-Hyun shook his head.

Hwang Ki-Hyun continued, “Russia, China, and South Korea need to unite and put pressure on the United States, but only Mr. Kang Chan can handle this matter.”

The look on Moon Jae-Hyun’s face made Hwang Ki-Hyun quickly bow and apologize.

“No need for apologies. However, we’re not internally unified right now. The National Intelligence Service and the prosecution are fighting over Mr. Kang Chan’s case, and I have no idea where to begin to solve that. How is North Korea reacting?” Moon Jae-Hyun asked.

“It seems Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo has agreed to transfer about two trillion of our won to them. Because he made the promise as the Chairperson of the National Assembly, not as an individual, North Korea is refusing to speak with us unless the agreement is fulfilled,” Hwang Ki-Hyun replied.

“Then North Korea has no way to survive. They don’t have a way to defeat the United States either.”

“If the United States attacks North Korea, China will immediately intervene. North Korea’s plan, should they find themselves in the worst-case scenario, is to use their nuclear weapons. Of course, the US will be unharmed, but the Korean Peninsula will be completely destroyed, making it nearly impossible to turn back. Plutonium has a shelf life of twenty-four thousand years and takes about a hundred thousand years to completely dissolve.”

“Another brinkmanship tactic. I wonder how long Earth will last at this rate,” Moon Jae-Hyun joked, but Hwang Ki-Hyun and Jeon Dae-Geuk’s expressions didn’t brighten up in the slightest.

“The United States will gain something either way, considering the worst-case scenario results in a significant portion of the Eurasian Rail collapsing. This aligns perfectly with Japan’s demands as well,” Hwang Ki-Hyun added.

Their list of problems was growing, but they still couldn’t find any answer in sight.

“Mr. President, to make a flower bloom, you must first get your hands and feet dirty. The just, right path and fair attitude won’t have anyone pointing fingers at you, but they should only be used when teaching students at school,” Hwang Ki-Hyun reasoned.

“What about Mr. Kang Chan?” Moon Jae-Hyun asked.

“He said he would go to the prosecutor’s office tonight.”

Moon Jae-Hyun let out a quiet sigh.

“Yes, Mr. Kang Chan did run into conflicts with Sharlan and crime organizations. However, aside from Sharlan, everything else was an act of self-defense. While I’m still in charge of the National Intelligence Service, I will do my best to defend him. Doing so is no different from protecting the whole of South Korea,” Hwang Ki-Hyun firmly declared.

Moon Jae-Hyun skimmed through the documents on his desk before looking back up.

“This may easily become a political conspiracy,” he warned.

“If it will help Mr. Kang Chan develop an affection for South Korea and save the Korean peninsula, I will willingly get my hands dirty.”

“The request from the United States’ ambassador to see me isn’t about discussing this issue, I’m sure.”

“From what I’ve gathered, they will probably request the release of Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo. The United States needs the information Chairperson Huh Ha-Soo holds and his connections to North Korea. If any problems arise, they can use him as a scapegoat and lay all the blame on him as well.”

Moon Jae-Hyun nodded.

“Mr. President. You said we should nurture talented individuals. Then at the very least, please provide the space for the National Intelligence Service to operate with peace of mind,” Hwang Ki-Hyun pleaded.

“Can you promise me that it won’t be used as a tool for maintaining power?” Moon Jae-Hyun questioned. “That is what I fear the most. Right now, it will be

used to protect the nation, but I worry that it may become nothing more than a means for holding onto power in the future."

"Mr. Kang Chan once said that if you make a habit of getting beat up, it will become an expected occurrence. I firmly believe that even if it's the last thing we do, we have to prevent any actions that threaten national security for personal gain."

Moon Jae-Hyun sighed quietly again. After a while, he finally declared, "I understand. I will leave the National Intelligence Service to handle all subsequent matters. I will appease the ruling party and meet with the opposing party's representative."

"Thank you, Mr. President," Hwang Ki-Hyun replied, expressing his gratitude.

Turning to a different matter, Moon Jae-Hyun asked, "Director, I trust there aren't any issues with the oil development rights with Russia?"

"Please just continue what you've been doing, sir. We are coordinating the remaining follow-up actions with the Russian mafia."

"Well, they're quite the astonishing country, aren't they? To think negotiating with the mafia requires approval from the government."

"That's the way to live for KGB agents who have retired. These days, I heard that when you ask for a nuclear-powered submarine, the first thing they'll ask is if you want missiles aboard it or not."

"That seems to be a funny joke that shows what happens if an agent's pride in their position wanes." Moon Jae-Hyun grinned.

"Apparently, it wasn't a joke." Hwang Ki-Hyun responded.

Moon Jae-Hyun laughed in disbelief.

After having lunch, Kang Chan went to see Lanok.

"Mr. Kang Chan!"

It had only been a few days since they last saw each other, so Kang Chan didn't expect Lanok to be so delighted to see him.

"On behalf of all of Europe, thank you."

"You don't have to, sir," Kang Chan responded.

Lanok showed Kang Chan his rare, real expression—one that wasn't hidden behind any mask.

"How did things go with the prosecution?" Lanok asked.

“I managed to prevent my father’s arrest for now, and I plan to visit them in the evening,” Kang Chan replied.

“I see,” Lanok said with a nod as he poured them some tea. “The National Intelligence Service is prepared to be criticized for political manipulation to protect you. Its director seems bolder than I thought.”

“Political manipulation?” Kang Chan repeated, setting his teacup down after just a sip. He had no idea what Lanok was talking about.

“The United States is calculating a war with North Korea, but the probability is less than twenty percent. The National Intelligence Service plans to use that situation to suppress the individuals related to Huh Ha-Soo in one go,” Lanok replied.

Can that really be done?

Seeing Kang Chan’s expression, Lanok nodded in confirmation.

“I’m sure touching you was the pivotal reason.”

What happened with Sharlan was a personal matter, and he had no excuse for his actions. It was ridiculous that the National Intelligence Service would have to suffer condemnation as a consequence.

“There are a few steps to state matters. You start off with not knowing any better. You’ll then experience betrayal or disappointment, then learn not to be fooled again in the future. They say it’s the three-stage process of agent growth,” Lanok said.

“Does that really exist?” Kang Chan asked out of doubt.

“You can ask the National Intelligence Service. They’ll tell you the same thing.”

Huh. Interesting. I wonder what step I’m at.

Kang Chan quietly sighed.

Just as Kang Chan headed out of the embassy, Woo Hee-Seung called him.

“Hello?” Kang Chan answered.

- Mr. Kang Chan. Hwang Ki-Hyun speaking.

“Yes, Director,” Kang Chan responded as the car he was in headed to Gangnam.

- I heard you intend to go to the prosecution later today. It would be best to go with Manager Kim.

“Can I do that?” Kang Chan asked.

- Of course. I've already prepared everything for you, so you just have to stop by Samseong-Dong and take him with you. I apologize for making things even more troublesome.

"It's okay, sir. I know it wasn't intentional on your part," Kang Chan reassured him.

Kang Chan politely ended the call. When he arrived at Samseong-Dong, he found Kim Hyung-Jung waiting for him at the entrance.

Kang Chan looked at his surroundings. There was an almost unbearable number of agents standing around them.

Chapter 206.1: I'll Go

"Mr. Kang Chan, I'd like to introduce you to someone. This is attorney Song Chang-Wook," Kim Hyung-Jung said.

"I'm Song Chang-Wook."

Song Chang-Wook gave Kang Chan a firm handshake. He was short, had a seemingly firm physique, and neatly trimmed but unstyled gray hair. For a lawyer, his eyes were quite fierce.

"Let's go," Kim Hyung-Jung told the two. He got in the passenger seat, and Kang Chan and Song Chang-Wook got in the back.

Kang Chan glanced around him. More than thirty National Intelligence Service agents got into other cars and vans as well, seemingly intent on going with them.

"Manager Kim, I don't want the National Intelligence Service to be in trouble because of me," Kang Chan said. He didn't want to make something this small bigger than it had to be. He had already prepared himself to face all the consequences of his actions when he faced Sharlan anyway.

"The prosecution can investigate you all they want, but if they decide to arrest you for a shallow or senseless reason, we won't just stand still and watch."

Kim Hyung-Jung sounded so determined that Kang Chan couldn't argue anymore.

Song Chang-Wook, who hadn't said anything since, turned to Kang Chan.

"Tell me, how much do you love South Korea?" the old gentleman asked, his eyes becoming even fiercer. "I can't help but be curious."

The question made Kang Chan cringe.

"I'm not too sure," he replied, unfazed by the look in Song Chang-Wook's eyes. It didn't seem suppressive, boastful, or arrogant, so he found no reason not to answer politely.

"The people I care about asked me to do this type of work, so I gave them what they wanted. I came all the way here for the same reason. I honestly haven't thought about dedicating my life to South Korea as its soldiers or agents do, but

I have decided to do whatever it takes to protect the people I hold dear,” Kang Chan continued.

Song Chang-Wook stared at Kang Chan as he listened, seemingly engraving every word the latter said in his mind. Afterward, he turned his attention to the road ahead.

It took about fifteen minutes to go to the public prosecutor’s office from Samseong-dong.

As Kang Chan got out of the car, Kim Hyung-Jung took out his ID, clipped it on his suit, and wore sunglasses.

“Let’s go,” Kim Hyung-Jung said.

As the three of them headed inside, the cars that the agents were in all stopped in a line in front of the building.

Kang Chan went past the metal detector and got on an elevator with Kim Hyung-Jung and Song Chang-Wook.

Ding.

Reaching the fifth floor, they stepped off the elevator and walked across the hallway, finding doors that looked alike on both sides of it. Perhaps it was because of the atmosphere, but it felt as if the hallway and the doors were trying to discourage people from proceeding.

It didn’t take long for them to find room 506.

The moment they opened the door and headed inside, Lee Seung-Ryul raised his head and jumped up to his feet. “W-what brings you here, Prosecutor-General?”

“I resigned a long time ago, so what are you calling me Prosecutor-General for? I’m here today as Mr. Kang Chan’s lawyer,” Song Chang-Wook answered.

Was he the Prosecutor-General before Kim Seong-Woong?

Lee Seung-Ryul exhaled softly as his gaze alternated between the three. He seemed to have found himself in a predicament. “Please have a seat.”

The only seat available was the metal chair that was in front of the prosecutor’s seat. The investigators had to move another chair next to it to accommodate the extra guest.

The room was quite large.

They sat facing Lee Seung-Ryul. To their left was a drink stand and a desk with a female employee sitting behind it, and to their right were two more desks with investigators on them, both patiently waiting.

To Lee Seung-Ryul’s left was a camcorder they had set up in advance.

“The lawyer is allowed to stay and observe with his client, but the other person must leave,” Lee Seung-Ryul told Kim Hyung-Jung. He sounded firm and determined.

“I’ll be outside, Mr. Kang Chan,” Kim Hyung-Jung told Kang Chan in turn as if he was reporting to him. He then walked out the door. His actions and words made it completely clear to both Lee Seung-Ryul and Song Chang-Wook that he would be standing guard right outside in case he was ever needed.

“Would you like some tea?” Lee Seung-Ryul asked.

“Yes please.”

A female employee quickly stood up and brought over a paper cup with a green tea bag in it.

“Prosecutor Lee,” Song Chang-Wook called.

“Please go ahead.”

“There’s something that I want to talk to you about before we proceed with the investigation. Will you tell your employees to leave us for a moment?”

“As you wish.”

Lee Seung-Ryul looked and nodded to both sides of the room. In response, the investigators and the female employee went outside.

“Please go ahead,” Lee Seung-Ryul said, now left alone with the defending party. He seemed to be having a hard time dealing with Song Chang-Wook.

“I find it impossible that you don’t know Mr. Kang Chan’s case is nothing but false accusations and that you can be countersued for defamation for it. After all, what he did back then can be justified as acts of self-defense. Tell me the real reason you’re acting this way,” Song Chang-Wook asked.

“We’re going to have to investigate him first to determine whether that’s really the case,” Lee Seung-Ryul answered.

“Are you really determined to see this to the end?” Song Chang-Wook questioned, standing his ground instead of backing down.

“For the prosecution’s honor, I have to proceed with this investigation.”

The corners of Song Chang-Wook’s lips curved into a strange smile. Kang Chan looked at him from the side, which was more than enough for him to determine that the man’s charisma was no laughing matter.

“You do know that you and Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong could be throwing that very honor you speak of to the ground by doing this, don’t you?”

“You’re the one who taught us never to surrender to external pressure,” Lee Seung-Ryul argued.

“I also taught you all to execute a planned investigation.” Even though there wasn’t any emotion in Song Chang-Wook’s words, Kang Chan could clearly tell

that he was angry. “Huh Ha-Soo acted to benefit the enemy, and the National Intelligence Service has proof that Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong privately met him twice around the same time. I decided to represent Mr. Kang Chan as his lawyer in hopes of giving the prosecution, my old workplace, one last chance to back down and make things right. I’m not trying to sell my honor just for some money.”

“This will all end if the investigation we conduct on him proves that he’s innocent.”

Song Chang-Wook’s cheek twitched for the first time. He seemed to be holding back his anger. “If you really want to go through with this, then you leave me no other choice. The moment I get up and leave this room, the National Intelligence Service will arrest you and Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong for espionage. It will all be on the evening news.”

“I’ve never acted to benefit the enemy,” Lee Seung-Ryul countered.

In response, Song Chang-Wook took out his phone and pressed a button three or four times.

[We have to do whatever it takes to get that guy named Kang Chan involved in this and put Moon Jae-Hyun and the ruling party in a predicament.]

That was Huh Ha-Soo’s voice.

How does this gentleman have that?

Song Chang-Wook appeared to be just as surprised as Kang Chan.

[Please don’t worry. The moment I lay my hands on them, not only Kang Chan but even Moon Jae-Hyun won’t be able to get out of it.]

Lee Seung-Ryul didn’t even seem to be aware that his mouth was hanging open.

[We should hasten the process of making our own world. That would make you the next Minister of Justice of South Korea, wouldn’t it?]

[I’m only doing everything that I have to do.]

Afterward, Song Chang-Wook pressed another button and put his phone in his inner chest pocket. “At the time of this recording, North Korean special forces infiltrated our country and launched multiple terrorist attacks. We also have evidence that Huh Ha-Soo met someone named Wui Min-Gook, who’s basically those soldiers’ leader, twice at his own villa. Now that you know all that, do you still intend to proceed with Mr. Kang Chan’s investigation?”

“What on earth is this...?”

“Since the Chairman of the National Assembly has been arrested for acting out of the enemy’s benefit, the National Intelligence Service hoped that the prosecution wouldn’t cause problems as well and lose even more of the public’s faith in them. If it would put you at ease, the NIS at least thinks that Prosecutor-

General Kim Seong-Woong didn't know anything about the terrorist attacks," Song Chang-Wook added.

Lee Seung-Ryul gulped dryly. He looked as if he had come to his senses now.

"If you still plan to investigate Mr. Kang Chan after this, then proceed with the knowledge that the National Intelligence Service came here fully prepared to execute their operation as well. I just asked them to give the prosecution one last chance because I think you would understand the situation if I explained it to you well enough."

"The Prosecutor-General has to give his permission first."

"You can rest easy about that. This doesn't need his approval."

"Are you saying that you'll handle getting the Prosecutor-General's approval?" Lee Seung-Ryul asked.

"No. Like I said, this doesn't need it."

Lee Seung-Ryul, who had only been looking at Song Chang-Wook all this time, turned to Kang Chan. However, he soon quickly dropped his head to the documents, finding Kang Chan's eyes just as fierce—if not even fiercer—than Song Chang-Wook's.

"I used to work for you in the past, so let me ask you this one last time. Are you absolutely certain that this does not need approval?" Lee Seung-Ryul asked.

"I trust the National Intelligence Service's capabilities."

Lee Seung-Ryul dropped his gaze to the documents again and tightly gritted his teeth. After a few moments, with his head still hung, he finally answered, "Alright."

"Will Mr. Kang Chan be cleared of suspicion?" Song Chang-Wook asked.

"I'll see to it that this investigation gets closed."

"Does that mean we can go now?"

"Yes."

Chapter 206.2: I'll Go

What on earth is going on right now?

Kang Chan—the person who was supposed to be investigated—couldn't even say anything.

Is this why people try their best to get a good lawyer?

Kang Chan could only smile bitterly.

"Let's go, Mr. Kang Chan," Song Chang-Wook said as he stood up. "I don't see any reason to spend a second longer in a place like this. Do you?"

In response, Kang Chan immediately stood up and headed to the door. He heard Lee Seung-Ryul stand up behind him as well and say goodbye to Song Chang-Wook, but he didn't really want to see that.

When Kang Chan opened the door and left the room, he found Kim Hyung-Jung standing adamantly in front of it. The two investigators and the female employee were also outside but a bit far away from them. They all looked flustered.

"Is it all over now?" Kim Hyung-Jung asked Kang Chan.

"Yes. I think everything worked out properly."

"You went through a lot."

"I didn't do much. How did you make this happen, though?"

Song Chang-Wook came out of the room before Kang Chan could hear his answer. He didn't really have to know and wasn't in a hurry to either, so he just moved on.

They took the elevator to the ground floor. As soon as they got out of the building, they got in the car and headed to Samseong-dong.

Could it be?

Kang Chan discreetly looked to the side, wondering if Song Chang-Wook was crying. He couldn't be too sure, though, since Song Chang-Wook wasn't saying anything. Still, as far as he could tell, the man's lips were trembling, and he had tears on the edges of his eyes. At the very least, he seemed to be holding back his tears.

Quite a lot of people had gathered at Samseong-Dong.

When they got out of the car, Kim Hyung-Jung immediately approached Song Chang-Wook.

"Thank you for all you've done," Kim Hyung-Jung said.

"No, I should be the one thanking you for accepting my request even though it was completely unreasonable."

Song Chang-Wook shook hands with Kim Hyung-Jung, then turned to Kang Chan and held his hand to him. "If you love someone, you're bound to find yourself feeling upset every now and then because they can't understand how you feel."

Kang Chan didn't know why, but he kept meeting people he had trouble predicting.

"Working for the country will be even more upsetting, considering, almost no one will acknowledge what you've done for it. Still, talented people like you have to do your best for the sake of the country," Song Chang-Wook continued.

Kang Chan couldn't respond. He didn't really know why Song Chang-Wook was telling him all that or why he appeared to be choked with emotion. Moreover, he didn't really know what Song Chang-Wook meant.

"I'll get going," Song Chang-Wook said. He didn't seem to have any lingering regrets anymore when he turned around and got in the car that was waiting for

him. The people Kang Chan had met so far were all extraordinary, but even so, few left an impression as intense as Song Chang-Wook did.

“Let’s head up, shall we?” Kim Hyung-Jung offered after seeing Song Chang-Wook off.

They still had to be wary of the dangers in their surroundings, so Kang Chan agreed and followed Kim Hyung-Jung up the building.

“Attorney Song Chang-Wook is the descendant of a Korean independence activist named Song Hee-Jae—commonly referred to by his artist name Baekesan. He provided the funds to establish South Korea’s government alone,” Kim Hyung-Jung explained.

Kang Chan felt even more touched upon learning about that. People’s feelings truly did change easily.

“How did you get the recording that he presented earlier?” Kang Chan asked.

Kim Hyung-Jung just smiled in response.

Even though Kang Chan and Song Chang-Wook had left, Lee Seung-Ryul still couldn’t concentrate on his work.

Overwhelmed by Song Chang-Wook, he let Kang Chan go. Now that he had to report to Kim Seong-Woong, he felt afraid and worried that he just committed something outrageous.

The office was filled with a heavy atmosphere. It was as if lead had just been poured into the room.

‘I did something crazy.’

What kind of person was Kim Seong-Woong?

If Kim Seong-Woong hadn’t helped Lee Seung-Ryul, he wouldn’t have had anyone to depend on.

‘What should I say? Should I just arrest Kang Chan now even though I don’t have a warrant?’

Whenever Lee Seung-Ryul thought of something like this, he vividly remembered the recording that Song Chang-Wook played for him.

Wiretapping was illegal.

However, unlike the United States, South Koreans paid more attention to the conversation that was recorded than the man who actually committed such a crime.

As Lee Seung-Ryul massaged both of his temples with his thumb and index fingers, the door opened, and his junior prosecutor came inside. They looked pale with fright. It would be wrong to scold them now just because he failed to hold back his anger.

“Sunbae-nim!” the junior prosecutor called.

“I don’t know what’s going on, but let’s talk later,” Lee Seung-Ryul said. He frowned as he lowered the hand that he had put in front of his face.

“Unfortunately, this can’t wait. The Prosecutor-General is...”

Lee Seung-Ryul’s ears perked up.

The investigators and the female employee focused on their conversation, seemingly trying to figure out what all the fuss was about.

Around dinner time, Kang Chan and Kim Hyung-Jung went to the barbeque restaurant in front of the building with Seok Kang-Ho, who had been waiting for them.

Perhaps because Wui Min-Gook hadn’t been caught yet, the security remained fairly strict.

“Are you going back to France?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked Kang Chan.

“I have to. I’ve already started training, so I plan to push through with it.”

After ordering some meat, they were brought charcoal for the grill and side dishes first.

“Mr. Kang Chan, I hope this matter doesn’t anger you too much. We have our own rules, and it took some time for the President to make a decision,” Kim Hyung-Jung said.

Why did they need the President’s permission to get me a lawyer?

Chkk.

Seok Kang-Ho began cooking some meat on the grill, making Kang Chan suddenly feel hungry. He hadn’t smelled this in quite a while.

“Oh my!”

Kang Chan turned to one side of the restaurant when he heard people talking. The commotion seemed to have been caused by the news shown on the large TV mounted to the wall.

Kang Chan blanked out when he began reading the captions.

[Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong arrested for attempting to sexually assault a waitress.]

The captions continued.

[He’s also suspected of drug addiction. The police have sent an analysis request to the National Forensic Service to analyze his hair and saliva.]

On the screen was a video of a man trying to molest a woman several times. Their faces were blurred to make it difficult to identify them.

“Why would someone in such a position try to do something like that?” one of the people asked.

[Prosecutor-General Kim Seong-Woong denies being involved in the incident, claiming that he only drank two glasses of beer.]

“At any rate, men have to be careful of how they act, regardless of their age!” someone exclaimed.

Kang Chan looked at Kim Hyung-Jung. Seok Kang-Ho also had a similar expression on his face.

“We decided to put all the blame for this incident on him to prevent the entire prosecution from collapsing. The Director worked hard to get this approved,” Kim Hyung-Jung explained.

Am I important and talented enough for them to do this?

Kang Chan found it hard to accept this situation.

“Mr. Kang Chan,” Kim Hyung-Jung called.

Kang Chan frowned when the meat that Seok Kang-Ho had put on the grill began to smoke.

Considering how this conversation is going, he should've held off on cooking the meat until a little later.

“I sincerely apologize for the hardships that this has put you through and for our inability to prevent them from involving your parents in this.”

Kang Chan was basically attacked all throughout the evening without being able to do anything. He was probably feeling something similar to wondering what he needed to do to pay people back after receiving an enormous bribe.

Chkk.

Seok Kang-Ho silently put more meat on the grill.

“So that’s why attorney Song looked very upset,” Kang Chan commented.

“He was the one who requested ending this as a personal matter. It’s not an official duty of his, but attorney Song is in charge of the National Intelligence Service’s legal matters,” Kim Hyung-Jung added.

Chkk.

Kim Hyung-Jung and Kang Chan picked up their chopsticks when Seok Kang-Ho started cooking even more meat.

“Let’s eat first,” Kim Hyung-Jung said.

Emotion and meat were two different matters that should be attended to separately.

The three ate their fill.

It didn’t feel right to head back up to Kim Hyung-Jung’s office, so they went to the cafe in front of it instead.

Kang Chan felt bad for the agents assigned as their security detail, but since they only had to be wary of Wui Min-Gook, he doubted things could actually be that dangerous.

As they were drinking coffee, Seok Kang-Ho and Kim Hyung-Jung asked Kang Chan about what he had learned and who was part of the training. Kang Chan told them all about it.

“Phew! Finish your training already and come back for good,” Seok Kang-Ho said afterward.

“Believe me, I want this to be over as well.”

“How will you endure the training with that attitude?” Seok Kang-Ho grumbled and laughed. The two laughed with him.

“Has Wui Min-Gook gone completely into hiding?” Kang Chan asked.

“We think so. I issued an order to secretly tighten the security of important government institutions and facilities because those are the ones he’ll likely target, but contrary to our expectations, he still hasn’t shown himself,” Kim Hyung-Jung responded.

Kang Chan didn’t know someone could be this talented in keeping themselves off the grid.

“I have to ask, does your training include learning to control your attitude or your expressions?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked.

“Pardon?” Kang Chan asked as he picked up his cup of coffee, unable to understand what Kim Hyung-Jung meant.

“I feel like you’ve changed. It’s not only your expression, either. It’s like you’ve become somewhat more serious than before. Ah! It’s times like this that make me really jealous of those who can properly express how they feel.”

Is it because of the Blackhead?

That was something that Kang Chan should talk to Seok Kang-Ho about alone, though, not something to mention here.

After spending some more time with Kim Hyung-Jung, Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho headed to the cafe at the intersection.

It was about time they talked about that damn rock.

Chapter 207.1: What’s The Purpose? (1)

‘This must be what happiness feels like,’ Kang Chan thought. He was still in the coffee shop at the intersection with Seok Kang-Ho and had a cup of coffee in front of him.

“The National Intelligence Service is full of scary people,” Seok Kang-Ho suddenly remarked.

“I didn’t expect them to take care of it that way either,” Kang Chan replied in agreement.

After taking a sip of the hot coffee, Kang Chan began to explain the recent events, including what happened while he was dealing with the Blackhead.

“What? Is everything over now, then?” Seok Kang-Ho asked in surprise.

“For now, at least.”

“What do you mean ‘for now?’ We won’t be seeing more earthquakes any time soon, will we?”

Kang Chan tilted his head in thought for a moment before giving a slight shake.

“No, that’s not what I meant. All I’m saying is that you also have one of the missing energy sources, and either Sharlan or Smithen has the other one. That’s why I doubt this will be the end of it. There could be aftereffects, too, which I’m quite worried about.”

“Let’s be optimistic. You stopped the earthquakes, and the issues with the prosecution have been taken care of, so you never know. This could really just be the end,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

“I guess you’re right,” Kang Chan agreed.

It would’ve been nice if Kang Chan brought the goggles, but he didn’t see them among the clothes that he had changed into earlier in the hospital.

“Are you heading home for now?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“I don’t know. Don’t you think it would be even more strange to my parents if I suddenly appeared and then left just as quickly the next day?”

“What time will you be heading back, then?”

“At dawn, probably.”

“If so, then I see your point. Even I would be worried if my son who was supposed to be in France suddenly came back home in the middle of the night just for him to tell me that he was leaving again at dawn,” Seok Kang-Ho mused.

While they were on the subject, Kang Chan told Seok Kang-Ho that the United States could be targeting North Korea. The chances of it happening were low, but Kang Chan still wanted Seok Kang-Ho to at least be aware of it.

“How are the men in Jeungpyeong doing, by the way?” Kang Chan asked.

“You should’ve seen them, Cap. Cha Dong-Gyun came and cried so miserably that just watching him broke my heart. It was also one hell of a struggle trying to stop them from causing trouble because they said they wouldn’t let you be taken by the prosecution,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

Kang Chan would always feel as if he was indebted to them whenever he heard about moments like this. He tried so hard not to open his heart, but the soldiers still managed to break through his walls. This sense of camaraderie was such a rare sight in Western cultures.

“Let’s go to a sauna and have a soak in warm water,” Seok Kang-Ho suggested. “That should help you sleep soundly on the plane later.”

“We still have time. I was thinking of meeting up with Choi Jong-Il for a bit before leaving too,” Kang Chan said.

“Oh, right! Why don’t we call Hee-Seung to take us to him, then?”

“Let’s do that.”

They still had around three hours before midnight, so they had plenty of time left.

Kang Chan asked Woo Hee-Seung to come over, then asked him where Choi Jong-Il was.

“He’s at the hospital, sir,” Woo Hee-Seung replied.

“Which one? The police hospital?” Kang Chan asked.

“Yes, sir,” Woo Hee-Seung responded.

“Let’s head over there, then,” Kang Chan said.

Kang Chan stood up and got in Lee Doo-Hee’s car. They then went straight to the police hospital. It wasn’t too far, taking only thirty minutes on the road before reaching it. Fortunately, it didn’t have visiting hours restrictions or other rules that would prevent them from seeing a patient.

The room that Choi Jong-Il was staying in was a four-person ward.

When Kang Chan opened the door and entered, Choi Jong-Il, who was lying down on a bed, shot his head up to look. He then gritted his teeth through the pain and forced himself to sit up. Approaching the bed, Kang Chan saw a friendly and soft-looking woman in her early thirties standing next to Choi Jong-Il.

“This is Mrs. Choi. Mrs. Choi, this is our captain. And this is Mr. Seok Kang-Ho,” Woo Hee-Seung introduced everyone to each other.

The three awkwardly exchanged greetings.

“How are you feeling?” Kang Chan asked.

“Bearable if not for my wife,” Choi Jong-Il joked with a glance at the woman. He then quickly turned back to Kang Chan.

What is it with men becoming so powerless when they’re around their wives?

Kang Chan just grinned.

“Thank you, sir,” Choi Jong-Il’s wife told Kang Chan with a solemn expression.

What? Her husband returned home with a bullet in him, didn’t he?

Even, so, she didn't look like she was being sarcastic.

"This man has always been anxious whenever he's at home recently. I even thought he had a death wish and was cheating on me at first," she said.

Kang Chan initially thought she was soft-looking, but her eyes were anything but.

"When I learned that it was because he was obsessing over something for the country, I couldn't help but feel proud that I married him," she added.

First, it was Kim Hyung-Jung, then Song Chang-Wook. Now, even Choi Jong-II's wife was moving Kang Chan's heart as if they had rehearsed it beforehand. The reason South Korea was still standing was these kinds of people silently fulfilling their roles.

"If there's ever a dangerous mission that has to be done in the future, please choose my husband first. I'm not saying this just because he's my husband, but I wholeheartedly believe that he will do what's asked of him as a member of the special forces," Choi Jong-II's wife politely requested.

Choi Jong-II and Woo Hee-Seung just silently listened, waiting for Kang Chan's response.

"Oh, right! Let me offer you some tea," she said.

"No need. We already had some before going here. I'm thinking of having a smoke outside together with your husband before I leave, though. Is that okay?" Kang Chan asked.

"Of course!" Mrs. Choi replied goodnaturedly before quickly turning her head to Choi Jong-II. "What are you doing? Hurry up and escort him outside."

Kang Chan smiled at the humor of the scene. It was nice to see that Choi Jong-II had a wife who understood his work and firmly stood by his side. Having such a woman in life didn't seem too bad.

Lee Doo-Hee brought over a wheelchair, and the group went behind the hospital and settled themselves in a corner of the parking lot.

"When will you be leaving, sir?" Choi Jong-II asked.

"I'm going back in at dawn," Kang Chan replied.

"You must be busy. You didn't have to stop by..."

"It's fine. I just wanted to see you for a bit before I leave again."

Now that they were together, the memories they had of the operations they participated in and completed seemed so vivid that it was as if they had just taken place yesterday.

"Your wife's personality is no joke, huh?" Seok Kang-Ho mischievously said with a grin. Choi Jong-II just smiled abashedly.

"Mrs. Choi was incredible in the 606," Woo Hee-Seung chimed in.

Kang Chan did remember hearing they used to be in the special forces together.

Woo Hee-Seung was about to continue, but catching Choi Jong-Il's gaze, he decided to keep his mouth shut. Kang Chan didn't think it was right to keep asking about someone else's wife if the husband didn't want to speak of it any further, so he dropped it.

The conversation naturally shifted. They discussed how grave Choi Jong-Il's injury from the operation was and how much support he was receiving from the hospital.

Some time had passed when Kang Chan's phone began to ring.

"Hello?" he answered.

- Where are you? Do you have time to talk right now?

Kang Chan unknowingly smiled upon hearing Jeon Dae-Geuk's gruff laughter.

"I'm at the police hospital."

- Ah, so you went to see Jong-Il. When are you going back?

"Probably at daw."

- I get off duty around the same time tomorrow. Can't you stay just a day longer?

"I'll be back before you know it anyway," Kang Chan reassured him. "I'll see you then."

Jeon Dae-Geuk sounded as if he regretted not getting to meet with him.

"Mr. Jeon, I'm already grateful enough for what you've done for me. There's absolutely nothing I'm upset about, so you don't have to worry about anything."

- Fine. If you say so. Thank you, though, and have a good time at your training. Don't forget to use everything you learned for this country.

"I will, sir," Kang Chan replied.

It seemed as if there were posters that read, "Reassert Kang Chan's feelings of patriotism," hanging on a wall somewhere today.

After finishing his call with Jeon Dae-Geuk, Kang Chan went with Seok Kang-Ho to the sauna they usually went to. He soaked in warm water, got a sports massage, and had a facial because Seok Kang-Ho kept on insisting on it.

"The purchase of the building is going smoothly. I heard DI will be moving in next week," Seok Kang-Ho informed.

Time seemed to fly as they chatted about various topics while wearing the shirts and shorts that the sauna provided.

"It's already been a month," Seok Kang-Ho murmured.

He sounded as if he was saying, "There are still five months left," in the background.

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

Amid their conversation, Kang Chan received a call from Lanok. This man really never seemed to sleep.

“Yes, Mr. Ambassador,” Kang Chan answered.

- Mr. Kang Chan. It seems the National Intelligence Service has properly wrapped things up with the prosecution. I trust there are no other issues.

“No, sir. I think everything’s been taken care of.”

- I see. Are you ready to depart?

“Yes. I’ve been waiting.”

- Then I’ll see you at Exit 3 of the Nonhyeon Station at around four in the morning.

“Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.”

- I should be the one thanking you. You saved Europe, after all. I feel bad that I do not have the capacity to compensate you with something on the same level as that feat.

“I didn’t do it because I was expecting anything in return,” Kang Chan reassured him.

Lanok chuckled. “It’s like you to say that.”

They were currently speaking in French, so Seok Kang-Ho couldn’t understand their conversation. Kang Chan even got a few curious looks from passersby.

Chapter 207.2: What’s The Purpose? (1)

After having a simple home-cooked-style meal with white rice and some side dishes, they headed for Nonhyeon Station. Seok Kang-Ho wouldn’t have gone home even if Kang Chan told him to, so he opted not to say anything instead.

“Here you go,” Seok Kang-Ho said, offering something in his hand.

“What’s the occasion?” Kang Chan asked.

About twenty minutes before Kang Chan was supposed to meet with Lanok, Seok Kang-Ho brought over two cups of hot cocoa and set them down in front of Kang Chan.

“You’ll have to sleep as soon as you get on the airplane, won’t you? If you have a warm cup of this, they say you’ll sleep better and recover from fatigue faster.”

“Are you the type that can’t sleep if you have some coffee before going to sleep?” Kang Chan asked out of confusion.

Profusely denying the notion, Seok Kang-Ho replied, “Of course not. I have to have a cup of coffee before getting in bed if I want good sleep.”

“Why did you buy something like this, then?” Kang Chan now had a tinge of annoyance in his voice.

“Hey, hey! No complaining. Just have some of this today. It’s the thought that counts, isn’t it?” Seok Kang-Ho grinned.

The two chuckled amid their nonsensical small talk.

“Right! Next week is the students’ College Scholastic Ability Test.”

“Oh yeah?” Kang Chan recalled agreeing to buy Kim Mi-Young rice cakes for good luck.

“The school seems to be looking forward to it,” Seok Kang-Ho began. Kang Chan just looked back at him, waiting for him to continue. “From the looks of it, they’re hoping that Mi-Young will get a perfect score on the exam.”

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho burst out laughing.

Kang Chan couldn’t imagine how it would feel to get the highest score out of all the students on a mock exam—and not just scoring at the top, but getting all the answers right and getting a perfect score. He shook his head from side to side. Such a notion seemed like something from a completely different universe from the one he was in.

He still had about half of his hot coca left when a sedan stopped right in front of him.

“Well, I’m off now,” Kang Chan bid him goodbye.

“Have a safe trip. When you suddenly crave some meat, come by Korea for a bit, like what you just did,” Seok Kang-Ho joked.

Kang Chan just grinned in response. Seok Kang-Ho grinned as well.

Goodbyes were harder when they were dragged out. Kang Chan quickly stepped into the car, and they left right away.

Arriving back in Niaffles, France, Kang Chan began to focus on his training again. Two days later, he was informed that he would be traveling to Israel. The issue was that he wouldn’t be able to use his phone for the next two weeks.

He wasn’t worried about Kang Dae-Kyung, Yoo Hye-Sook, Seok Kang-Ho, Kim Hyung-Jung, or even Michelle. He could just tell them about it, and everything would be fine with them. His main problem with it was that he didn’t want to tell Kim Mi-Young something so sudden when the most important exam of her life was just around the corner. Nevertheless, Kang Chan still decided to text her.

[I have to go to France because of some urgent business. Unfortunately, I’ll probably be out of reach for about two weeks because of it. I hope you do well on the exam, and I’ll call you once I’m done.]

It made Kang Chan’s heart heavy, but he thought this was better than suddenly going off the grid and not contacting her.

His training in Israel was mainly focused on retaliation. He was taught how to make his opponent abandon the will to fight back and the steps and methods to deal with oppression. The lessons didn’t suit Kang Chan’s personality, but that didn’t mean Israel was going to abandon their ways of doing

things. At the very least, he saw no downsides to know about their methods. Spending two weeks with the other trainees here made him feel as if he was on friendlier terms with them as well.

After the two-week training, Kang Chan returned to France. It would be Monday tomorrow. Much to his surprise, the training program gave him Sundays off.

Kang Chan checked the time zone differences. Afterward, he called Yoo Hye-Sook.

- Channy!

The phone only rang once before Yoo Hye-Sook answered the phone with a breathy voice.

“Mother, is something the matter?” Kang Chan asked worriedly.

- I’m just happy to hear my son’s voice.

This kind of love isn’t something you come across every day.

Kang Chan’s heart was once again filled with a warm sensation.

Yoo Hye-Sook had to check several times if everything was okay and that he was perfectly fine and healthy before he got to speak with Kang Dae-Kyung.

After his parents, he called Seok Kang-Ho and Kim Hyung-Jung. They both assured him that there wasn’t anything special going on in Korea right now that he had to be concerned about.

Lastly, Kang Chan looked for Kim Mi-Young’s number and gave her a call.

- Hello?

“Hey, Mi-Young. How was the exam?” Kang Chan greeted.

- You’re so mean!

Kang Chan had to stifle a laugh that threatened to escape.

- When are you coming back?

“I think it’s going to take longer than I thought. I might have to stay for about five months,” Kang Chan replied.

- What about school?

“I was enrolled, but I might end up taking a leave of absence.”

Kim Mi-Young remained silent for a moment. Kang Chan understood why she would feel upset.

- Can I go to France during the vacation?

Kang Chan wasn’t expecting such a question from her. Quickly coming up with an answer, he said, “My schedule here is so tight that I’m not sure I’ll have time. I’ll have to check to see if I have any free days.”

- What about calls? Can I call you anytime?

“I’m available after attending to all my appointments for the day in this timezone. If I don’t answer, it’s most likely because I have something going on. If I miss your call, I’ll do my best to call you back as soon as I can.”

How did she manage to endure not calling him until she was done with her exam? There was definitely a scary, stubborn side to students who excelled in their studies.

After that, they spoke about various other topics for about thirty minutes. She told him about how she felt waiting to call him until the exam was over, acted sulky for not being able to see him, and asked him how he was doing.

- Can I call you every day starting tomorrow?

“How about you text me when you can talk? Then I’ll call you when I’m free. Isn’t that better?” Kang Chan asked.

- Okay, I’ll do that.

Strangely, listening to her reply in a cuter, high-pitched voice put Kang Chan in a better mood.

Starting the next day, Kang Chan always spoke on the phone with Kim Mi-Young after his lessons were over from around thirty minutes to an hour. Honestly, it became a source of comfort and motivation for him.

Casual chatter, what happened during her day, current hot issues in Korea, books she had read yesterday, and Eun So-Yeon becoming a huge star in Korea were among some of the topics they talked about. Before dropping the call, she would always say in a hushed tone that she missed him. It made Kang Chan think that her way of liking someone was as straightforward and sincere as the way she focused on her studies.

A week later, Kang Chan was informed that he would have to stay in Germany for the next two weeks. Hence, he told Kim Mi-Young that he wouldn’t be able to contact her for the next couple of weeks again. She was naturally upset, but she surprisingly didn’t sulk too much about it.

In Germany, Kang Chan was taught about the division and instigation of public opinion, and how important it was to have control over the media.

Do they really believe that works?

The strategies were so simple and crude that Kang Chan doubted their legitimacy, but after seeing examples in history, he couldn’t help but acknowledge their effectiveness.

After the two-week education period in Germany, Kang Chan returned to Niafles again. He finished up his calls with the people who had been waiting to hear from him, then put down the phone and gazed out the window, lost in thought.

Why do these people do this training program?

Kang Chan couldn’t immediately answer.

He knew that information warfare was always happening in places that most people couldn't even imagine, and numerous operations facing armed opposition were likely constantly being carried out behind the curtains. However, that didn't reveal what the ultimate purpose was behind gathering and training people from six countries together. To this day, he still had no idea why they would do such a thing.

Is it just so we would get to know each other?

The only people whom Kang Chan had met in Israel and Germany were a few instructors and the employees who served him food.

What could people who would never act without multiple calculations running through their minds have to gain through this training?

The other trainees didn't seem to be contemplating this question at all.

Knock, knock.

While mulling over his thoughts, he heard a rapping at the door. Turning around, he saw Frederic stepping into his room.

"I hope I'm not bothering you," Frederic greeted.

"Take a seat," Kang Chan briskly replied.

Does this punk have something to say to me?

Frederic sat opposite Kang Chan, then faced the living room window. "I heard of your exemplary performance in England."

Kang Chan just glanced at him in response. He didn't expect something like that to remain a secret forever anyway.

"The United States also has a faint idea about what you did. England could have been targeting them with the device, after all. The results of the biopsy also brought the energy sources to their awareness."

This was a different side to Frederic's normally nonchalant and good-natured attitude, but Kang Chan couldn't really care less.

"What are you trying to say?" Kang Chan abruptly asked.

Frederic looked at him in the eyes.

"Do you have a cigarette?"

This son of a bitch!

"Should I get some from my room?" Frederic offered.

When Kang Chan shook his head, Frederic brought over some cigarettes and an ashtray that Kang Chan kept in one corner of his room.

Click.

After lighting up his cigarette, Frederic exhaled a cloud of smoke. In a serious tone, he finally asked, "Monsieur Kang. How much do you know about Lanok?"

Chapter 208.1: What's The Purpose? (2)

Kang Chan's gaze grew sharper as Frederic leaned back in his chair, accentuating his muscular Caucasian physique.

"France occasionally holds this training with only one goal in mind: to introduce their new talent to the world. The other countries joined in simply so they can evaluate you," Frederic explained.

"Is that why France is the training's host?"

"You really are unaware of its significance, huh? No wonder... but I did expect you not to know." Frederic gave Kang Chan a strange smile, seemingly finding the situation interesting. "You should do whatever it takes to meet the standards of the other countries' intelligence bureaus participating in this training. After all, they know everything about you. They even know that you were part of the operations in Mongolia and France and that you shot Jang Kwang-Taek dead in North Korea."

"Why are they still conducting this training when everyone already knows about me? On that note, you're all quite odd as well for joining even though you already know everything."

"The training is Lanok's way of announcing that you're his successor, and we should treat you as such from now on. You should consider it as the other countries' way of announcing that I and the other agents were all nominated as our respective homelands' successors as well," Frederic said.

Kang Chan still couldn't really understand what the significance was of being the successor in intelligence bureaus.

"Monsieur Kang, as our governments proceed with negotiations, there will be times when they have to express their displeasure or demand unofficial conditions. They leave those matters for us to handle. You being here means that if France ever faces a problem in the future, we're supposed to first contact France through you."

Unless it was related to the battles he fought in Africa, Kang Chan's knowledge about France was probably only around the same level as an ordinary citizen. Why would the DGSE want other countries to contact him about France-related matters first?

"The position you're in gives you the authority to make decisions to some degree, so you being here also means that France is letting everyone know that it's prepared to spare no effort in retaliating should another country try to mess with you."

Kang Chan couldn't help but smirk.

This lousy training was quite strange.

On one hand, Kang Chan finally understood why the French agents who guided him here told him that they were supposed to treat him with the same respect as they gave the DGSE's assistant director. On the other, however, he still had no idea what this fucker was trying to say because he kept beating around the bush.

"We've been planning to attack North Korea. There's a low chance of us actually pushing through with it. However, if someone were to poke the hornet's nest, then the United States and China will be forced to fight each other for nonsensical reasons," Frederic added.

"All of this will end if the United States doesn't stir things up."

"Maybe, but maybe not."

Kang Chan gave Frederic a sharp glare, thinking that he was stalling for far too much. Honestly, he was beginning to wonder if he would ever get to learn about Lanok's actual position. From the looks of it, though, that didn't seem likely to happen.

From what Kang Chan had gathered, Frederic seemed to be trying to warn him about the United States' stance on the recent global matters by cleverly adding him and Lanok into the mix.

"I'm sure you know how I handle things by now, Frederic, so let me give you one final warning. Stop beating around the bush and tell me what you want to say already," Kang Chan said.

"Lanok dreams of dominating the world, and he will be sending you to the frontlines for his plan, monsieur Kang."

Dumbfounded, Kang Chan burst out with laughter.

Lanok wanted to dominate the world?

In this day and age, people no longer just yelled 'Yes, sir!' and knelt if someone told them to kneel. Countries with strong economies and military power exerting their powers on weak countries wasn't anything special either. That already happened numerous times in the modern world.

Actually, no! In some sense, Kang Chan thought that it was only natural for strong countries to flex their power.

Either way, the United States was making a big deal out of this the most.

"I suggest you don't take this lightly, monsieur Kang. After all, a world war is just right around the corner. We'll have it on our hands soon enough," Frederic warned.

"Let's make one thing clear, Frederic. I know that the countries that once had an advantage in the world could be alienated once the Eurasian Rail is completed.

Even so, threatening people with war isn't that wise. Threats like that can no longer overwhelm and make a country submit to your will. I don't know what the United States' true intention is behind their plan to attack North Korea, but I hope you're well aware that I won't just sit back and watch it all unfold if you ever involve those I hold dear in this."

"We have no hidden intentions. I just hope that you'll look at the reality a bit more level-headedly. After all, you've gotten the most attention from the intelligence bureaus across the globe recently, and you're the only person to ever successfully make everyone remember their codename."

"You're making me uncomfortable."

Frederic smiled as if he was dumbfounded. "It seems people are right about you always going off the mark from everyone's expectations. To be fair, who could have expected that someone would kill Jang Kwang-Taek and charge straight into Chinese territory to wreak havoc in one of their airports?"

If these fuckers knew that much, then they would also know about everyone in his life, including Kang Dae-Kyung, Yoo Hye-Sook, and even Kim Mi-Young.

"Frederic, there's something that's caught my curiosity," Kang Chan began.

Frederic looked at Kang Chan with an expression that seemed to say, 'Oh?'

"Do you know where Wui Min-Gook is?"

"Wui Min-Gook?" Frederic asked in response.

Considering he had so much intel, it was very disappointing that he didn't know anything about Wui Min-Gook.

"You should get going. See you tomorrow," Kang Chan said. Fortunately, he didn't like anyone here, which was quite convenient for him. After all, that meant he wouldn't ever have to worry about them—not even after they parted ways.

Sometimes, ignorance truly was bliss.

The next day, Kang Chan was unusually bored. He felt as if he was wasting his time while he was attending his lessons. It made him focus a bit more on his morning workouts, which actually gave him some level of comfort.

He definitely learned English and the international situation and economy. However, much to his disappointment, that didn't really change the purpose of the training.

Talking to people in South Korea was his only solace.

He had never done this while he was in Africa, but it had now become the most important part of his daily routine.

After two weeks, he was sent to Russia.

Kang Chan wondered if he would get to meet Vasili, but aside from their instructors and the employees who took care of their meals and accommodation, he didn't really meet anyone else.

While in Russia, they were taught about all kinds of weapons and their utilities, which only further bored Kang Chan. He was basically forced to sit through PowerPoint slides about things that he had seen and held so many times back in Africa that he had grown bored of them.

After the two-week training, they headed straight to China, which was unexpected.

They probably didn't plan it this way so they could decrease how much they were spending on flights. Either way, this only gave Kang Chan enough time to send everyone a message informing them that he would be having a hard time contacting them for two more weeks.

In China, they were taught about the systems of countries across the globe, which was quite preposterous. However, Kang Chan surprisingly liked the lessons. He learned about capitalism, socialism, democracy, communism, and countries' ideologies and responses to religion.

Remembering how his enemies moved and acted back in Africa made him focus on his classes.

By the time they had finally returned to France, Andrei had removed his mask and could eat soft food. He was likely still in pain and felt as if he was chewing on his own flesh when eating meat, though. Fortunately, he had amazing tenacity and durability.

After dinner, Kang Chan thought of calling back home, which he hadn't done in a long time. However, before he could, someone knocked on his door three times. The door soon opened, and Pierre came in.

"Do you have a moment to talk?" Pierre asked.

"Yes. Please have a seat."

Kang Chan gestured to the table. Pierre sat across from him.

"Christmas is in three days," Pierre began. He probably wasn't here to ask Kang Chan to help him prepare a Christmas party, so Kang Chan just silently waited for him to continue.

"The training ended early."

"I'm not going to the United States, then?" Kang Chan asked.

"Yes."

Something was clearly going on that Pierre couldn't talk about. Kang Chan thought that Pierre would tell him about it if he just asked, but he didn't really want to know.

"We're thinking of gathering everyone for a meal before dismissing them," Pierre said.

"Pierre, I don't think that's something that I should decide."

"I have already reported that the training has officially ended, which means you have officially become the DGSE's assistant director. You're two ranks higher

than me. According to DGSE's rules, while the assistant director is in Niafles, all employees of the Niafles branch will be under their command."

"Didn't you say that the training isn't done yet?" Kang Chan asked.

"The training is over, and I have already reported it to the Intelligence Bureau and the DGSE[1]. From this moment forward, we are to inform you of all our commands and wait for your permission and approval before we can issue them. We obviously don't have to do that for general tasks, but since the DGSE is responsible for the training, only you can decide how it ends."

Pierre lived a tough life.

Pierre was basically telling Kang Chan that they had to put someone—who didn't know any better—in a high-ranking DGSE position and that he had to decide whether to have a meal with the others first before parting ways. At this rate, Kang Chan felt as if Pierre would soon ask him to pick the menu. Hence, he decided to quickly wrap up this matter.

"Pierre, as I'm sure you're well aware of, I don't really know much about this line of work, which is why I think it would be best to leave this matter in your capable hands. Is there perhaps anything else I can help you with?" Kang Chan asked.

Pierre seemed to be hesitating.

What could the person in charge of the Intelligence Bureau's Niafles be so hesitant about?

Pierre probably wasn't worrying about how much they should cook the steak, or what kind of wine they should serve.

Chapter 208.2: What's The Purpose? (2)

"Monsieur Kang, throughout the DGSE's history, no foreigner has ever joined this training as France's representative or gone up the ladder to become DGSE's assistant director," Pierre began. Noticing that Kang Chan was looking at him, he continued, "It wouldn't be a stretch to say that High Commissioner Lanok risked his entire political career for this. After all, for as long as you're doing well, you will be responsible for all of France's important intelligence work."

High commissioner?

If Kang Chan heard Pierre right, then he just called Lanok 'High Commissioner.'

Kang Chan was more bothered about that title.

"We've only known each other for a short while, but I think it was enough for me to learn about your character and personality. Unfortunately, a lot of people in the DGSE won't understand you. High Commissioner Lanok definitely sent Anne and Louis to the DGSE because he was worried about this," Pierre added.

Kang Chan had never even thought about it. Was the situation really dangerous enough for Lanok to send Anne to the DGSE to protect Kang Chan even though the DGSE's very first step in dealing with dangerous people was to remove them?

“The DGSE's current Director General is very ambitious, monsieur Kang. He still isn't powerful enough to fight the High Commissioner, but the moment he gets the chance to, he will definitely cause everyone trouble.”

“Why are you telling me all this?”

“I'm certain that the High Commissioner chose you for the development of France. If it turns out I'm right, then the best thing you can do is to establish yourself within the DGSE as soon as you can and bring stability to it. I was hoping to ask you to do this.”

“Pierre, can I refuse to become the DGSE's assistant director?”

“You can't. Not while you're alive, at least,” Pierre firmly answered.

“But I don't even know anything about France's internal situation.”

“Don't worry. The High Commissioner will continue to support you.”

“Can the DGSE remove me?” Kang Chan prodded on.

Even though Kang Chan was asking completely different questions in an informal way compared to before^[1], Pierre looked more comfortable with that.

“Monsieur Kang, please get your hands on the Foreign Legion's special forces.”

Kang Chan cocked his head. To him—someone who knew more about the Foreign Legion than anyone else—Pierre's statement meant the same thing as telling him to completely take over France.

“You have to establish your position while the High Commissioner and Anne can still protect you. If you succeed, your position alone will serve as a shield that can protect the High Commissioner and Anne. It will also solidify France's foundations for development, which is in line with the High Commissioner's decision,” Pierre continued.

“How do you suggest I accomplish that?”

“Unfortunately, I cannot help you with that. You're going to have to do this on your own.”

Kang Chan could see Pierre's strong will in his eyes. He wasn't determined just because of reasons as conventional as simply being devoted to France. Only people risking their lives could have this level of resolve.

“Pierre, it seems telling me all this puts your life at risk,” Kang Chan commented.

“That's right. The DGSE is that powerful.”

“Why still tell me all of this, then?”

“I believe that if the High Commissioner was in my position, he would’ve made this kind of decision for France. I’m also just following my sense of duty, which is pushing me to pass on necessary information to you for France’s sake. However, I’m also doing this because I want to trust you,” Pierre answered so quickly that it was as if he had already prepared those answers beforehand.

“How much authority do I have as the DGSE’s assistant director?” Kang Chan asked.

“Enough for you to even issue orders to kill the leaders of African countries.”

Kang Chan took a deep breath. That kind of authority made it difficult to call his new position as just the assistant director.

“Do I actually have enough power to issue that kind of order?” Kang Chan asked again.

“A new phone number will be saved to your phone. If you call it, you’ll be immediately connected to the DGSE so you can issue all the orders you want.”

“How many people are above the assistant director?”

“Two Deputy Director-Generals and one Director-General.”

Damn it! No wonder I didn’t want to do the training!

“The United States and France have a military agreement that gives us the authority to use the US military’s Osan air base at our discretion. Likewise, you’ll have the authority to call your own private plane to Osan whenever you want. You’ll also have the authority to issue an emergency decree on the Foreign Legion, mobilize them, and even issue orders to kill and assassinate anyone with level 2 classification in the DGSE, which is everyone below the Deputy Director-Generals,” Pierre explained.

This is bullshit!

Kang Chan didn’t want to have this much authority at all. He couldn’t even understand why Lanok suddenly gave him this much power.

Pierre looked even more puzzled than him, though.

“You don’t seem that surprised,” Pierre commented.

I am surprised! I’m so surprised that my heart is pounding right now!

However, Kang Chan didn’t let his emotions show. He felt as if his ability to hide his emotions had become even more effective after absorbing the energy of Blackhead, that damn rock.

Buzz— Buzz—Buzz—

Amid their conversation, Kang Chan's phone briefly rang.

Could it be?

Noticing that Pierre was looking at him, Kang Chan immediately held up his phone and checked the caller ID.

000-001-0003.

For the first time in his two lives, Kang Chan realized that people could pressure others with mere numbers.

"You should call back to confirm who called you," Pierre said.

After Kang Chan looked away from Pierre, he called the number that left him a missed call.

- We await your orders, monsieur Kang.

Kang Chan couldn't help but smirk.

"Anne, you don't have to act so stiffly."

- I will be your direct contact to the DGSE. I look forward to working with you.

"Is Louis doing well?"

- He's in charge of executing your commands. Louis and I have been assigned the confidential tasks that you'll order.

What's going on?

Kang Chan could only smile.

- Monsieur Kang, this is the only phone call we'll have before we officially start our duties. After this, your calls will be automatically recorded. Before that, however, I have one last favor to ask you.

Anne sounded different from what Kang Chan remembered. This difference would be very clear in Western cultures, but it seemed even more evident in Anne.

- Please protect my father.

However, she sounded as if she reverted to the Anne that Kang Chan knew when she said those words.

The least he could do for someone asking him for such a sincere favor was to give some thought to his answer.

"Anne."

- Yes, Monsieur Kang.

"When I told the ambassador that I was going to Mongolia, he asked me a question."

Kang Chan remembered the emotion that he felt at that time.

“He asked me if I would behave the same way for you as well—if I would protect and rescue you as I did for the agents. I promise that I’ll protect your father the same way I protect you.”

- Thank you, Monsieur Kang.

“I didn’t expect to feel happy about becoming the DGSE’s assistant director. I’m glad I get to work with you.

- Louis always says that he’s thankful that you helped me become who I am today.

Kang Chan just laughed in response.

Now that things had turned out this way, he was given no choice but to join another fight that he couldn’t back out of.

He had a lot of work to do in this new life of his.

“Anne, I’d like to make two requests.”

- Go ahead, Monsieur Kang.

Pierre quickly looked at Kang Chan.

“Look into Wui Min-Gook’s location. He’s a North Korean special forces soldier who sneaked into South Korea. I also want you to find and look into how I can meet Gérard in the 13th regiment of the Foreign Legion’s special forces. Keep it a secret from him.”

- I’ll have your orders executed immediately.

Kang Chan hung up. Pierre finally looked relieved.

“Pierre,” Kang Chan called.

“Yes, Monsieur Kang.”

“Doesn’t this put you in danger?”

Pierre didn’t answer.

“People might try to remove me if they find out what kind of relationship I have with Anne, which is why I can’t help but wonder if this also puts you in a tough spot,” Kang Chan continued.

“Establishing your position will also keep me safe.”

Kang Chan laughed, finding Pierre’s answer quite appalling. In the end, Pierre was ultimately telling him to quickly spread his influence over the DGSE.

“I don’t like to drink, but for some reason, I feel like we should at least have wine together,” Kang Chan commented.

For the first time since Pierre came into the room, he smiled like an ordinary person.

“It seems you completely understand how French people feel now. For some reason, I sometimes find myself feeling as if you’ve lived in France for quite some time already. I’m actually feeling that way right now.”

“Then let’s have wine. Ah, but before we do, there’s something that I’m curious about.”

“I’ll answer to the best of my ability.”

“Is there any other reason you only told me that I have become the DGSE’s assistant director now?”

Pierre immediately stiffened. “Unfortunately, I don’t know anything about that, Monsieur Kang.”

“Let me ask you just one more thing, then. Can I trust you?”

Kang Chan knew that was a childish question. However, he still wanted to hear his answer—even if it was just a lie to evade this situation. Pierre’s answer right now would be an important factor in deciding what to do if they faced an unexpected situation in the future.

At the very least, that was what Kang Chan experienced during the battles he fought in Africa.

“I will let you decide on that, Monsieur Kang.”

Kang Chan smirked. Pierre smiled as well, looking as if he was admitting his defeat.

“I think I need to drink wine now,” Kang Chan said afterward.

“I’ll have it prepared,” Pierre answered and walked over to the phone.

Kang Chan missed the somaek[2] that he drank with Seok Kang-Ho. These fuckers definitely lacked such beverages. But more importantly, these fuckers didn’t have Seok Kang-Ho, and South Korea did.

Chapter 209.1: I Couldn’t Leave Here (1)

Kang Dae-Kyung was still busy a day before Christmas since he had to wrap things up for the year during this season. The nature of the automotive sales industry required the disposal of excess inventory before the new year.

Interestingly enough, even though some of his employees were actually National Intelligence Service agents equipped with firearms, they were quite enthusiastic about selling cars. He had lived an ordinary life all this time, so he never had the chance to run into people like them until recently. Hence, he couldn’t help but find it quite fascinating watching them perform in the service industry and deal with customers.

To top it all off, they not only got along extremely well with his already existing employees but also made efforts to guarantee their performance was top-notch. They would even bow their heads down to rude customers to appease them.

“Sir, it’s time,” an employee said, interrupting his reverie.

“Oh, is it?” Kang Dae-Kyung responded in surprise.

Kang Dae-Kyung glanced at the clock. He then finished up the documents he was checking on his computer.

“Deputy Kim,” he hesitantly called.

“Yes, Director Kang?” the employee replied.

“...Nevermind.” Kang Dae-Kyung was about to ask the employee if he was tired of tending to these tasks but thought against it. Asking them such a question would do nothing but dampen their spirits.

Kang Dae-Kyung stood up from his desk and turned off his screen. At the same time, Deputy Kim took Kang Dae-Kyung’s coat from the hanger for him.

“You don’t have to do these small tasks, Mr. Kim,” Kang Dae-Kyung insisted.

Kang Dae-Kyung couldn’t help but feel apologetic about the employee’s situation. Agents like Deputy Section Chief Kim went through countless trials and rigorous training to be selected and employed by the government. Yet here he was, holding Kang Dae-Kyung’s old and simple top coat.

“Let’s go, sir,” Deputy Section Chief Kim politely replied.

With huge incidents taking place one after another, the agents decided to move with him. However, Kang Dae-Kyung didn’t expect them to escort him so closely that they seemed like his personal secretaries.

Kang Dae-Kyung couldn’t have any peace of mind as they made their way to the parking lot.

It had already been a month since he last spoke to Kang Chan.

Kang Chan texted him a while ago to let him know that he wouldn’t be able to call for two more weeks because of a sudden change in his schedule. Still, Kang Dae-Kyung was his father. He couldn’t just think, “I see,” and mindlessly accept it.

Yoo Hye-Sook sighed all the time, even in front of the TV and while making hot soup for breakfast. In the middle of the night, she would quietly leave the bedroom and head to the living room to thump her chest out of sheer concern. During moments like those, Kang Dae-Kyung pretended not to notice and just cracked silly jokes.

Yoo Hye-Sook’s sighs were especially deeper on mornings after she had worrying dreams. Just like back at the hotel, she said she felt uneasy and that she kept having nightmares about a red monster rushing toward her son. However, whenever she was on a call with Kang Chan, she would try not to show any of her concerns.

They were proud of their talented son. They were happy for him. However, they had never once let go of their worries. When they saw their son running beside the van during the shootout at the underground parking lot, Kang Dae-Kyung was so anxious that he felt as if his heart could melt away at any moment. While Yoo Hye-Sook shouted “Channy!” at the top of her lungs, Kang Dae-Kyung clenched his teeth to hold himself back from doing the same. By the time they arrived at the hotel back then, the tension had already given him a stiff neck.

It was embarrassing. As a father, he had to act firm and dependable, but he missed his son too much. He liked how his son’s sharp gaze turned softer when looking at Yoo Hye-Sook, when he would

randomly come to him with problems to discuss out of the blue, and when he would call to ask him for help so he wouldn't hurt Yoo Hye-Sook's feelings. Kang Dae-Kyung truly missed his son.

I miss him.

When Kang Dae-Kyung extended his hand to stroke the head of his all-grown-up son and embrace his son's sturdy shoulders, despite the awkwardness, Kang Dae-Kyung felt a happiness that couldn't be found anywhere else.

Kang Dae-Kyung was sure that Kang Chan was fine. His son would return safe and sound no matter what difficulties he was going through. Soon, their little family would once again get to sit together at breakfast and order chicken while watching a movie on Saturdays.

Kang Dae-Kyung's office was on the second floor, so they generally just used the stairs to get to the underground parking lot. He went back home with Yoo Hye-Sook, who came down a bit later. The agents were quite good at managing their schedules, so he never had to wait too long, and she was never particularly late.

As Deputy Section Chief Kim walked out of the office, he checked if the agents in the underground parking lot were in position. Only after getting confirmation from them did he and Kang Dae-Kyung go down the stairs.

"You should be home with your family on days like this too, Mr. Kim. I'm sorry," Kang Dae-Kyung said apologetically.

Deputy Section Chief Kim gave him a good-natured smile.

"I don't think you're aware of this, sir..." Deputy Section Chief Kim trailed off and checked if there were any other people below or above them before continuing. "... but the agents who guard you and Mrs. Yoo can take time off or apply to change positions at any time. However, once I make such a request, about twenty people will rush to take my place."

Kang Dae-Kyung gazed back at Deputy Section Chief Kim, unable to understand what he meant.

"We are all prepared to give everything we have if it means being able to help your son even just a tiny bit," he added.

Kang Dae-Kyung nodded and quickly looked back at the stairs in front of him. As a father, hearing statements like that made him feel eternally grateful. However, it also made him miss his son even more.

He felt the yearning even more on days when Christmas carols were playing in the streets everywhere.

Creak.

Deputy Section Chief Kim opened the door to the underground parking lot, checked the security outside, and escorted Kang Dae-Kyung out.

Kang Dae-Kyung thought about having dinner out with Yoo Hye-Sook. As he approached the car, he quickly glanced at Deputy Section Chief Kim. All three agents assigned to the area were standing around it, which was quite unusual. Moreover, Deputy Section Chief Kim looked as if he was masking a smile.

‘What is it?’

Kang Dae-Kyung tried to read his expression as he walked closer to the car. However, before he could decipher it, a laugh escaped his lips.

Kang Chan was right in front of him. Kang Chan smiled brightly as soon as he saw him.

The moment Kang Dae-Kyung saw his son between the agents, he felt as if the rest of the world disappeared. Kang Dae-Kyung could only see his son.

“Father,” Kang Chan greeted.

“You punk...” Kang Dae-Kyung trailed off.

He was all grown up. His son grew up before he knew it and was now hugging him.

“I’m sorry,” Kang Chan apologized.

“You should’ve told me you were coming!” Kang Dae-Kyung fussed. He was happy. More than anything in the world, he was elated to be embracing his son right now.

‘I have to check his face. Is he hurt anywhere?’

How did his son grow up so much in that short amount of time?

“You didn’t call your mom either?” Kang Dae-Kyung asked.

“Nope,” Kang Chan replied with a grin.

Kang Dae-Kyung chuckled in disbelief. He was smug for not being the only one who would be taken by surprise and pleased at how thrilled Yoo Hye-Sook would be.

Creak.

Just then, the door to the parking lot opened again. A female agent entered first, followed by Yoo Hye-Sook.

“Come here,” Kang Dae-Kyung mischievously said, standing in front of Kang Chan. Quickly catching onto what he was doing, Deputy Section Chief Kim stood next to Kang Dae-Kyung to help hide Kang Chan. Kang Chan bent over and hid behind Kang Dae-Kyung, then carefully peaked over his shoulder to look at Yoo Hye-Sook.

It looked as if the agents were all gathered around Kang Dae-Kyung, so Yoo Hye-Sook seemed taken aback.

“Honey?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked worriedly.

“Are you done with work today?” Kang Dae-Kyung responded.

“Yeah,” Yoo Hye-Sook replied with confusion. She looked to his sides with a scared expression. As she did, Kang Chan’s face popped up from behind her husband’s shoulder.

“Huh?” she exclaimed in shock, frozen as if under the effect of a spell.

Kang Dae-Kyung moved aside, and Kang Chan took Yoo Hye-Sook into his arms.

“Mother, I’m sorry I wasn’t able to call you,” Kang Chan greeted.

Yoo Hye-Sook could only sob.

“I missed you,” Kang Chan said with a soft smile.

“Mmmm.”

She was trying not to cry, which made her sound strange. However, no one found it hideous.

Her son had been running beside the van with a hobbling leg during the shootout. One day, he suddenly changed and began living an entirely different life. As his mother, she had to watch him through it all.

Yoo Hye-Sook clutched onto Kang Chan’s back and cried her heart out. Everyone present understood how she felt. The female agents sniffed with red eyes. The male agents’ eyes were tearing up as well, but they glanced around their surroundings to hide them.

“Are you feeling better now?” Kang Chan asked with a smile.

“Yes,” Yoo Hye-Sook responded after wiping her tears and then glaring at Kang Dae-Kyung. She clearly looked upset.

“What?” Kang Dae-Kyung asked.

“You knew, didn’t you?”

“I didn’t.”

The atmosphere calmed down a bit.

“Father, if it’s all right with you, I was thinking of taking all the employees to dinner with us,” Kang Chan suggested.

“That’s a good idea. What about you, dear?” Kang Dae-Kyung asked.

“Of course. I was hoping for that too,” Yoo Hye-Sook agreed.

Kang Chan turned around.

“Who’s in charge here?” he asked.

“I am today, sir,” Deputy Section Chief Kim swiftly replied.

“Woo Hee-Seung is outside too. Come to dinner with us,” Kang Chan said.

“The three of you should take this time to have a cozy family dinner today. We will accompany you next time,” Deputy Section Chief Kim politely declined.

“It’s okay. Let’s go together,” Yoo Hye-Sook insisted.

“If you’re alright with it, I’d like to have you all join us,” Kang Dae-Kyung added.

After receiving a nod from Kang Chan, Deputy Section Chief Kim lifted his left hand to his ear with a pleased face and spoke over the radio.

“Do you think we should make a reservation for a restaurant?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“I’ve already prepared everything. I’ll be your escort today, Mother,” Kang Chan determinedly said.

“Really?”

“Let’s go. Woo Hee-Sung knows where it is. Just tell all the employees to follow him,” Kang Chan instructed.

“Yes, sir,” Deputy Section Chief Kim replied.

When the agent who would lead their convoy finished preparing the car, Kang Chan got into it with Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook.

“Where are we going?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“I made a reservation at the International Hotel out front,” Kang Chan replied.

“Did you ask for time off?” she asked.

“I didn’t have to. I’m already done with my training,” Kang Chan answered.

“Really?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked, suddenly filled with hope.

“Yes. I couldn’t call you because my schedule was pulled forward, but at least I finished my appointments early,” Kang Chan responded.

Kang Dae-Kyung glanced back at Kang Chan and then turned forward again.

“I’m glad to hear that,” Kang Dae-Kyung said.

Chapter 209.2: I Couldn’t Leave Here (1)

Upon reaching the entrance of the International Hotel, agents rushed toward them from behind and in front. But that wasn’t the end of it.

The hotel valet immediately took Kang Dae-Kyung’s car, and two managers stood at the entrance to greet Kang Chan.

“This way, please.”

People created an encirclement around Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook to escort them to the elevator and up to the highest floor. One side of the floor was completely blocked and had a long, connected table with chairs arranged at exact distances from each other.

Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook seemed quite surprised. There were more chairs than expected.

“I was thinking of calling the employees assigned to the apartment as well as the ones who are off today, so I asked them to prepare a lot of seats,” Kang Chan explained.

“Good job. You should never forget to be grateful to people working hard to help us and keep us safe,” Kang Dae-Kyung praised.

“I won’t, Father,” Kang Chan responded.

Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook sat down where an employee directed them, and Kang Chan sat across from them.

A moment later, Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee entered, followed by Deputy Section Chief Kim and the other employees of Kang Yoo Motors, the employees from the foundation, and the ones who were off.

Although there were a few people he had never met before among them, most of them were familiar faces by now, and they had grown on each other. Hence, Kang Chan sat down with a welcoming smile.

“Thank you for all your hard work,” Kang Chan said gratefully, standing up. The agents all looked proud.

They were currently being served a course meal. The wine came out first, and everyone enjoyed their food in a comfortable atmosphere.

Kang Dae-Kyung thanked everyone with a toast, and Kang Chan followed with the second toast, thanking the agents for protecting his parents.

They exchanged various jokes and enjoyed themselves with a Christmas carol being played by a quartet in the background.

Yoo Hye-Sook looked happy throughout the entire evening.

“Mother, I’m going to drop by Jeungpyeong for a bit in the morning,” Kang Chan said in the middle of the meal.

Yoo Hye-Sook looked up at him with a suddenly frightened expression. Kang Chan smiled at her softly.

“I’m just going to visit one of the agents I worked with. He got injured. I’ll be back right after,” Kang Chan assured her.

With a sad expression, Yoo Hye-Sook nodded. She had seen agents getting shot up close during the underground parking lot shootout, so she understood.

“All right, good idea. You should definitely visit. Since there might be traffic during the night, you can come back tomorrow,” Kang Dae-Kyung responded.

“I’ll call you after I check how things go,” Kang Chan said.

“Got it.”

After the two-hour meal and about twenty minutes of teatime, the gathering came to an end. Everyone stood up to say goodbye, and Kang Chan shook hands with each agent.

“Thank you,” Kang Chan said.

“Thank you for everything you’ve done, sir,” the agents replied.

Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook didn’t understand why the agents were thanking Kang Chan for his efforts, but they could tell that the agents were being sincere.

Afterward, Kang Chan hugged Yoo Hye-Sook one more time.

“Thank you for coming back safely, Channy,” Yoo Hye-Sook said, becoming emotional again.

“I’m so happy to see you again, Mother,” Kang Chan responded.

Kang Dae-Kyung happily stroked Kang Chan’s hair. He missed doing this.

After saying goodbye to his parents at the hotel, Kang Chan went to the office in Samseong-Dong as promised.

Jeon Dae-Geuk, Kim Tae-Jin, Kim Hyung-Jung, and Seok Kang-Ho were already waiting for him. Jeon Dae-Geuk, who was upset because he missed seeing Kang Chan the last time, was especially welcoming. He greeted Kang Chan like an uncle who hadn’t seen his nephew in a long time.

“How was dinner?” Jeon Dae-Geuk asked.

“Good,” Kang Chan replied with a grin.

Jeon Dae-Geuk couldn’t take his eyes off of Kang Chan. It was as if just looking at him gave him joy.

“We should leave now, sir. We don’t want to be late,” Kim Hyung-Jung urged.

“Yes, let’s go,” Jeon Dae-Geuk replied.

The group came down from the office. Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, and Jeon Dae-Geuk got into the same car while Kim Tae-Jin and Kim Hyung-Jung took another.

“Mr. Seok, thank you for coming with us,” Jeon Dae-Geuk said.

“After hearing about it, I naturally had to go. I’m glad the captain is here to come with us too,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

“I’ve come to realize a lot of things after hearing the news from Manager Kim. It also brought to my attention that we still don’t properly honor those who sacrificed for our country.”

“I’m sure it will slowly improve.”

It took a while for them to exit the highways, which was unexpected.

“We’ll be late at this rate,” Seok Kang-Ho commented, sounding quite worried.

“Just step on the pedal. Worst-case scenario, we’ll get ticketed,” Kang Chan ordered him.

“Hang on. Keep going at this speed,” Jeon Dae-Geuk said as he pulled out his phone. He called a number and began to explain where their car was and where they were headed.

Five minutes later...

Weeoo. Weeoo. Weeoo.

... two police cars quickly sped toward them and drove next to the car that Kang Chan was in.

I didn’t know we could do this.

Thankfully, instead of being late, they were thirty minutes early. As they entered the Jeungpyeong base, the late Choi Seong-Gon’s barracks opened, and his former deputy and a pale-faced Cha Dong-Gyun trudged out.

When Kang Chan approached them, Cha Dong-Gyun saluted him.

“What are you doing?” Kang Chan asked. Noticing the bed and an IV drip through the open door, he glared at Cha Dong-Gyun.

“I can’t just stay here, sir,” Cha Dong-Gyun said emotionally. He seemed to be holding back his tears after seeing Kang Chan.

Jeon Dae-Geuk, Kim Tae-Jin, and Kim Hyung-Jung all stayed silent.

“Let him go,” Kang Chan told the deputy, then turned back to Cha Dong-Gyun. “Be firm. Show him your resolve.”

“Understood, sir,” Cha Dong-Gyun replied. Everyone who heard his response became sure that seeing Kang Chan gave him the courage to stand back up.

“Are you going to come with us?” Kang Chan asked, noticing Cha Dong-Gyun wearing a first lieutenant’s memorial uniform.

“Yes, sir.”

Not long after, The soldiers’ barracks opened and soldiers neatly dressed in uniforms came out to greet Kang Chan’s group.

“Ha. It’s like watching younger siblings reunite with their eldest brother after losing their father,” Jeon Dae-Geuk said with a sigh.

Kim Tae-Jin smiled wryly.

The joy on the soldiers’ faces and the regained energy in their eyes was a sight that was hard to put into words.

“We’re going to be late. Let’s get going,” Kang Chan said.

The soldiers boarded the prepared bus, and Kang Chan’s group got back into the sedans.

The sedan Choi Seong-Geon’s former deputy and Cha Dong-Gyun were in led the convoy, followed by Woo Hee-Seung and Lee Doo-Hee, Kang Chan, Kim Tae-Jin and Kim Hyung-Jung, then the bus.

After leaving the base and about twenty minutes on the highway, they came across an apartment for military personnel. It was a worn-down 4-story apartment without an elevator.

Passing by it and going on for about five minutes on a winding road, they finally reached a church. Kang Chan and the rest stopped in front of it.

The deputy entered first. A woman dressed in a choir director uniform came out, nodded, and went back in.

It was a cold day.

Kang Chan could see his breath in front of him, but no one cared about the cold.

They all waited for about ten minutes. The woman earlier then opened the door and told them they could enter now.

With Kang Chan at the front, they all trailed inside, and the gazes of the people in the church naturally turned to them.

The few soldiers among them jumped up from their seats upon seeing Cha Dong-Gyun and the deputy.

“They are colleagues of Lee Yoo-Seul’s father. She will be singing a solo today. Everyone, please welcome Lee Yoo-Seul with applause,” the woman announced.

Applause rang out loud amid the surprise.

Kang Chan and his group stood at the central staircase while the other soldiers stood at attention in the back. Accompanied by music, Lee Yoo-Seul appeared and began to sing a song titled “You Were Born to Be Loved.”

Lee Yoo-Seul was the daughter of the fallen soldier who had broken his finger. Unable to accept her father’s death, the second-grader in elementary school suffered from severe depression, which had caused her to lose her ability to speak.

The soldiers prepared this ceremony for his daughter. They all came together with Kang Chan when Seok Kang-Ho informed them about it.

A woman in the front row trembled and began to weep in sorrow. Lee Yoo-Seul, who was singing, began to sob as well. She choked up and began to cry.

“Daddy!”

As if pulled by something, Kang Chan instinctively moved forward. The stage was at chest height for him.

“C’mere, kiddo,” he said.

“Waah! Waaaahhh!”

“It’ll all be okay,” he soothed her.

Lee Yoo-Seul bent down to Kang Chan and got in his arms, gripping his neck tightly and crying.

Kang Chan walked down the central aisle and took Lee Yoo-Seul to the other soldiers.

“We won’t ever forget your dad either,” he told her.

“Wah! Waahh!”

“Your dad was a truly great man. You don’t have to force yourself to forget him,” Kang Chan said softly.

Lee Soo-Yeul cried her heart out in his arms. Cha Dong-Gyun approached them.

“Yoo-Seul, Uncle will be like your dad, okay?” he said.

After that, the soldiers began to come over one by one and pat her back.

“Your dad probably wants to listen to you sing, but we can stop here if you want,” Kang Chan told her.

“Will Daddy really listen to my song?” Lee Yoo-Seul asked.

“Of course,” Kang Chan reassured her.

Amid thunderous applause, Kang Chan brought Lee Yoo-Seul back onto the stage. Lee Yoo-Seul seemed to have regained her composure after seeing the soldiers in their military uniforms.

“Daddy! Make sure you listen!” she shouted.

The young girl’s heartfelt wish filled the church before traveling up toward her father.

Chapter 210: I Couldn’t Leave Here (2)

The sadness in Lee Yoo-Seul’s eyes prevented Kang Chan from leaving the church even after comforting her. Hence, he picked her up instead and watched the rest of the ceremony with her. Surrounded by soldiers in formal attires, Lee Yoo-Seul remained in Kang Chan’s arms for quite some time after she stopped crying.

“Come here,” Lee Yoo-Seul’s mom said with puffy eyes when the ceremony finally ended, but Lee Yoo-Seul shook her head.

“Please let her be. If it’s okay with you, I would like to hold her for a little longer,” Kang Chan replied.

Lee Yoo-Seul’s mom pursed her lips, struggling to hold back her tears. “Did anyone see my husband’s final moments? Was he lonely or afraid?”

Jeon Dae-Geuk looked out the window, and Kim Tae-Jin wiped his eyes as if he were wiping away his sweat.

“I was with him,” Kang Chan answered. The entire special forces team with him listened to what he was about to say.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t save him. None of us here could’ve survived in that dire situation if it wasn’t for Yoo-Seul’s father,” Kang Chan continued.

Lee Yoo-Seul’s mom covered her mouth.

“He was braver than anyone. He never even showed anyone that he was struggling. I’m sorry.”

“Please don’t be. I was frustrated because no one ever told me what happened in his final moments, but you all coming here today shows that he wasn’t lonely and that he died honorably, which puts me at ease.”

Tears fell from Lee Yoo-Seul’s eyes again, perhaps because her mom was crying.

“Yoo-Seul, your dad saved me and everyone here. I’ve never met anyone as brave as him,” Kang Chan said.

Lee Yoo-Seul burrowed into Kang Chan’s arms. She was still a child, after all. She cried for about ten minutes, then fell asleep in his arms.

Kang Chan took her to her family’s old compact car and laid her down.

“If you’re going through a hard time, please contact us anytime,” Kang Chan told Yoo-Seul’s mom.

“I’m already grateful enough to have you all here remembering my husband. It gives me the courage to continue living.”

Lee Yoo-Seul’s mom bowed to Kang Chan and the soldiers several times, then left the church. As she did, Jeon Dae-Geuk approached Kang Chan and patted his back.

Kang Chan’s party headed back to the military camp after. As soon as they arrived, the soldiers took off their formal attire and put on clothes for cold weather. They then lit a bonfire in the yard.

Swoosh!

The flames soared up. As they listened to the sound of the wood burning, Yoon Sang-Ki and the general’s former aide handed paper cups to everyone.

“What’s your plan now?” the sharp-eyed Cha Dong-Gyun looked at Kang Chan as he broke out in a cold sweat.

Smirking, Kang Chan looked at the soldiers. These fuckers had already found a deep place in his heart.

No matter their age or rank, they could trust each other with their lives.

“Cha Dong-Gyun,” Kang Chan called.

“Yes, sir?”

Jeon Dae-Geuk, Kim Tae-Jin, and Kim Hyung-Jung focused on what Kang Chan was about to say.

“I need the strongest special forces team in the world—soldiers that are full of so much pride that they can suppress the pain that you all saw today. If you are all okay with it, then I want to turn South Korea into the center of the Eurasian Rail.”

Cha Dong-Gyun’s expression hardened as he looked at Kang Chan.

“Living up to our name? We have already defeated the Spetsnaz and SBS, blew up China’s airport, and even infiltrated North Korea to kill Jang Kwang-Taek. As you all can guess by now, the intelligence bureaus across the globe are already aware that we did all that. Still, I need a special forces team that’s even stronger than that,” Kang Chan added.

The soldiers’ faces reddened, perhaps because the wind was blowing the firelight from the bonfire toward them.

“With your confidence and help, I can make South Korea the center of the Eurasian Rail. However, nobody will ever know your names and your families will likely go through the same pain that we just witnessed and felt today.”

Unable to suppress his excitement, Jeon Dae-Geuk’s hand trembled. He had dreamed of this moment his entire life.

He had always hoped that someone would stand on the frontlines and lead them.

Kang Chan wouldn’t fail to take responsibility for such a goal because he didn’t just say them due to a fleeting feeling. He had the capabilities and qualifications to actually make it happen.

Still smirking, Kang Chan looked at the soldiers. “Do you want to try becoming that team?”

Cha Dong-Gyun smiled at him, then slowly looked around their surroundings. “The God of Blackfield just gave us a chance. If any of you don’t want to be a part of this, feel free to back out now.”

No one answered or moved.

“Kwak Cheol-Ho!”

“Yes, sir!” Kwak Cheol-Ho answered energetically when Cha Dong-Gyun called him.

“You’re going to be in charge of the men’s training until I recover.”

“Please leave it to me!” Kwak Cheol-Ho answered firmly.

“Fuck! We’re really dead meat now!” one of the soldiers exclaimed.

“It would’ve been great if we could have soju on this kind of day!” another responded.

“Hey! Would our enemies rest just because it’s Christmas?”

“I know they won’t! I’m just saying that it’s a pity.”

They exchanged absurd jokes despite the lack of alcohol. The heartwarming atmosphere showed how close they were.

“Thanks.” Jeon Dae-Geuk patted Kang Chan’s back even though he knew it would take more than that to accomplish Kang Chan’s goal.

Kang Chan’s party spent thirty more minutes with the soldiers before leaving the military camp. The soldiers saw Kang Chan off with extremely encouraged looks.

Kang Chan and his party arrived in Seoul around an hour past midnight.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho sat at the specialty coffee shop at the intersection, which was full of people.

“You were cool today,” Seok Kang-Ho said.

“How can I leave those kinds of men alone? I’ve been put in charge of something else as well, so we’ll go at it together.”

“You’re in charge of something?”

Kang Chan told Seok Kang-Ho that he had become the assistant director of France’s DGSE and told him all the authorities that he now had. He told him everything, even the advice that Pierre told him.

“Ha! I expected nothing less from you,” Seok Kang-Ho commented afterward.

“What do you mean?”

“You attracted attention even back in Africa. It seems you do that wherever you go.”

“I’m tired of it, to be honest.”

No matter the situation, Kang Chan always felt reassured for as long as he was with Seok Kang-Ho.

“Shouldn’t you tell Manager Kim about your position in the DGSE?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“I’m going to discuss that with the Ambassador first. I feel like I can’t just rashly talk about it.”

“Good point.”

It took them thirty minutes to finish their coffee.

“Are we going to get a bit busier from now on?” Seok Kang-Ho asked himself.

“Yes, and it’s all because of you!” Kang Chan exclaimed.

“Huh? What did I do?”

“Didn’t things end up like this because you said that you lose your will to live if you don’t go to operations?”

“Phuhuhu.” Seok Kang-Ho responded with a strange laugh. He then suggested, “Let’s go home.”

“Sure.”

The two got in a taxi and returned to their apartment complex. They parted ways in front of their apartments.

Kang Chan opened the front door and went inside, unexpectedly finding Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook sitting in the living room and watching TV.

“Channy!” Yoo Hye-Sook exclaimed.

“Huh? You haven’t gone to sleep yet?” Kang Chan asked.

Kang Chan lightly washed up, changed into something more comfortable, and then went back out to the living room.

“You must be tired. You should get some sleep. We’re going to bed as well anyway,” Yoo Hye-Sook said, looking quite upset that she had to sleep now. It seemed she stayed up just for Kang Chan.

“We should watch that movie together if the two of you are okay with that. What movie is it?” Kang Chan asked.

With Kang Dae-Kyung being reliable and being there for Kang Chan and Yoo Hye-Sook hugging him attentively, Kang Chan really felt like he had finally come home.

“Should we order chicken, then?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked.

“That sounds good.”

The three ordered chicken and watched a movie together, which they hadn’t done in a long time.

After asking Kang Chan if he properly comforted his injured colleague, the three talked about various other topics. Yoo Hye-Sook ended up making Kang Dae-Kyung laugh because she looked at Kang Chan more often than the movie.

The movie ended at about three in the morning.

“Goodnight,” Kang Chan said.

“You too,” Kang Dae-Kyung replied.

“Goodnight, Channy,” Yoo Hye-Sook added.

Kang Chan went into his room after Yoo Hye-Sook happily went inside their bedroom.

“Phew!”

The moment he sat on his bed, he felt as if everything returned was back to normal. Thinking too much would do him no good, though, so he lay down.

Still feeling very sleepy, Kang Chan forced himself to stand up as soon as he woke up. He then wore workout clothes and left the apartment.

After warming up and stretching from side to side, he took a deep breath.

The atmosphere was definitely different.

I'll get some rest later!

He found it strenuous to exercise, and his body seemed to be screaming at him. However, he didn't let those stop him.

Kang Chan had to do what he could.

If he rested right now because he found working out difficult, then that would mean he would let himself stop during a crucial moment for the same reason. If he wanted to overcome the difficulties that come with saving someone and running over for the precious people in his life, he shouldn't stop now.

“Huff huff. Huff huff.”

Kang Chan gasped for breath as soon as he returned to the yard of his apartment building.

Barely standing back up, he saw Woo Hee-Seung smiling at him and holding a bottle of water.

Kang Chan had no reason to refuse.

After drinking some of it, he looked back at Woo Hee-Seung. “Did something good happen?”

“Not really.”

Kang Chan couldn't help but smirk.

Woo Hee-Seung was clearly smiling about something, but Kang Chan wasn't the type to pry further once a person said it was nothing. Woo Hee-Seung probably wasn't smiling for a special reason anyway.

After working out, Kang Chan went up to his apartment.

“Channy! Go take a bath before you get sick,” Yoo Hye-Sook said.

Kang Chan smelled delicious food. He then saw Yoo Hye-Sook smiling. Nothing could make Kang Chan want to return home more than these things.

After washing up and changing, he sat at the table and ate with his parents.

“What are your plans today?” Yoo Hye-Sook asked Kang Chan.

“I’m thinking of dropping by the embassy. Do you two have any appointments?”

“Yes. We have to go to the orphanage, so we’ll probably return around the evening.”

The little things made Kang Chan happy.

After washing the dishes, they drank tea together and finished their breakfast.

Kang Chan then went into his room and talked to Lanok. They decided to meet up immediately.

Kang Dae-Kyung and Yoo Hye-Sook were in the living room.

“It’s cold outside, Channy. You should wear something on top of your suit,” Yoo Hye-Sook suggested.

“Is it that cold already?”

Now that Kang Chan thought about it, it would be too cold to go out in his suit alone.

Yoo Hye-Sook went into their bedroom and brought over a thick coat that Kang Dae-Kyung normally wore.

“Wear this for today. I’ll buy a coat for you,” Yoo Hye-Sook said.

“When did he grow up enough to wear my clothes?” Kang Dae-Kyung wondered.

The way she offered it to him made it impossible for Kang Chan to refuse.

Kang Chan said goodbye to his parents, then headed to the embassy.

“Mr. Kang Chan,” Lanok said as he gave Kang Chan a French greeting. He then led him to a table.

“Are you feeling better?” Lanok asked.

“I rested the way you do, so I don’t feel that tired anymore.”

“Hahaha. Are you talking about resting while traveling?”

“That’s right.”

Lanok laughed loudly as he poured Kang Chan some tea. They then took a sip from their respective cups.

Kang Chan first told Lanok about his conversation with Fredric, Pierre, and then his phone call with Anne. He then said, “Honestly, I want to know exactly why you put me in such an important position, Mr. Ambassador. That way, I would know how to act going forward.”

Click.

Lanok looked straight at Kang Chan as he put down his teacup. “It’s been quite a long time since I started to dream of connecting the Eurasian Rail to the world, Mr. Kang Chan. My wife died and Anne got injured when I started dreaming about it.”

Lanok was talking about the time he was shot in his car. It seemed he had already started planning to build the Eurasian Rail back then.

“The time has come for us to officially prepare to establish the Eurasian Rail. This will result in intense competition, and I don’t exactly suit the role of directly participating in such matters,” Lanok explained. “No one is suitable for that role in all of France either. If we miss even a moment in this intense fight, then we will inevitably be ousted. To that end, I think you’re the perfect fit for this role. I also believe that if ever someone of talent emerges in France someday, you’ll protect them.”

Kang Chan sighed softly. He didn’t want to say anything else since the situation had already progressed this much anyway. Right now, Lanok was like a true mentor to him.

“Mr. Ambassador, can I tell South Korea’s National Intelligence Service about my position in the DGSE?” Kang Chan asked.

“You should go with what you want to do for that,” Lanok said as he picked up his teacup. “You’re going to get much busier next year. Consider this a friendly reminder, but if you ever need to issue something to the DGSE, you don’t have to call me or let me know about it unless you don’t need my opinion for it.”

That sounded extremely burdensome to Kang Chan, but he didn’t really say anything else about this either since he had already decided to do this anyway. He believed that Lanok wouldn’t just sit by and watch him make the wrong decision in dire situations.

“Do you have any other appointments today?” Lanok asked.

“No, I don’t.”

“Would you like to have lunch with me, then?”

Kang Chan smiled as he agreed.

With Anne now in France, he didn’t have anyone to eat with during Christmas anymore.

Spending some time with Lanok, Kang Chan told him about his experience in Russia, Germany, and Israel. He also told him what happened when he removed the Blackhead’s energy. Afterward, they had a two-hour lunch.

Lanok burst out with cheerful laughter from time to time as he listened to Kang Chan. Amid it all, he happily held up his wine glass and suggested a toast. He seemed to really enjoy eating with Kang Chan, which they hadn’t done in a long time.

Was Lanok feeling lonely?

Without his mask, Lanok seemed to be revealing his loneliness.

After eating dessert, Kang Chan had coffee, and Lanok some black tea.

“Thank you. I enjoyed this meal,” Lanok said.

“I really missed spending time with you, Mr. Ambassador.”

Smiling strangely, Lanok held up a cigar. “I don’t know what you’ll end up doing from now on, but that just makes me feel excited. I’m looking forward to it.”

After lighting up and puffing on his cigar, he exhaled smoke into the air.

“I’m thinking of working for South Korea for the time being,” Kang Chan said.

“That’s a great choice.” Lanok nodded without even a hint of hesitation. “Show them what you’re capable of. Eventually, the time will come when what you have to do becomes clear.”

“Will you help me?”

“My goodness! You’re being all political with me now. It seems your training worked.”

The two laughed.

Today, Lanok was welcoming Kang Chan like Jeon Dae-Geuk. Although Kang Chan had spent the most time with him lately, they didn’t really get to spend those times bonding.

Kang Chan thought that he should go to a maeuntang restaurant in Anseong or to a villa in Gapyeong—where he spent a lot of nights—with Lanok someday.

Kang Chan left the embassy at around half past three in the afternoon.

The roads were quiet because of the holidays. At times like this, Kang Chan always thought of Seok Kang-Ho before anyone else.

Seok Kang-Ho swiftly answered when Kang Chan called him.

- It’s me. Where are you?

“I just left the embassy. You?”

- Come to the office. You should see how it looks.

“Sure. I’ll meet you there.”

- Take Hee-Seung with you. He knows how to reach the office directly from the basement.

“Alright.”

After ending the call, Kang Chan called Woo Hee-Seung and headed to the building that he bought.

“The basement parking lot has been nicely renovated. It’s even a lot more convenient than the one in Samseong-dong now,” Woo Hee-Seung said.

“Really?”

While on the road, Woo Hee-Seung explained what changed with the building. Kang Chan couldn’t really understand things like this by just hearing it, though, so he only got what Woo Hee-Seung meant when they arrived.

An automatic door had been installed at one side of the second floor of the basement parking lot to create an area that ordinary cars couldn't go into. Inside it was a set of double doors.

Kang Chan admired Michelle's refreshing way of dealing with matters.

As Kang Chan expected, there was a private elevator past the double doors.

"Since a separate door was installed outside the area of where people use this elevator, normal people don't even know that there's an elevator in here," Woo Hee-Seung continued.

"Can we use the other elevators as well?"

"Yes. They are also connected to the top floor, but they require people to input a card first."

Kang Chan looked at what floor the elevator was at right now. It seemed to be working properly.