

LIFE, ONCE AGAIN!

Chapter 6

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Daemyung started talking easily with the other kids. Maru just excused himself a minute or two later to return to his seat.

“Ohh~ What a champ.” Dojin smacked Maru’s shoulder with a smile. “He was bothering me, too.” he continued.

“Why didn’t you talk to him, then?” Maru asked.

“I mean, it was entirely a personal problem. I didn’t want to really do anything.”

Maru thought the same way in the past. Being bullied... was a personal problem. But at the same time, it was an entirely easy problem to get rid of. That is, if someone helped from the side a little bit. He was just ignoring it because it was bothersome. He remembered what the woman said before about him being a nice person.

Maru didn’t think of himself as a nice person. No, not at all. He was just a bit more responsible than others. After all, in the past, he completely ignored Daemyung’s plight. But now?

“I’ll call you a good guy from now.” Dojin told him.

A good guy? It made him laugh, but it wasn’t that bad of a nickname.

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“We’re choosing our clubs today, so start thinking carefully about it, alright?” the teacher announced to the class. He appeared out of nowhere during lunchtime to say this and left without saying anything else.

“What do we do?” one of the kids asked.

“Just get into the soccer club or whatever.”

“Do they have a PC bang club or something?”

“I heard they have a game research club here?”

The kids were talking quite a bit among each other. Maru took a look at the list as well. There were over 50 clubs introduced in it. Since classes didn't have any morning or night study sessions, clubs were quite active in this school... or so says the literature teacher.

[Students from other schools even come to visit during festivals. I'm talking about the ones from the all girls high school next door. They used to be called the 'Dongsung Girls School of Industry', but they changed to 'Dongsung Global High School'. Last year, they caused quite a bit of commotion by coming with their dance club. Heard they wiped the floor with the dance club at our school. That's why our dance club here's been working their asses off this year, or so I've heard. So if you guys want to lose some weight and befriend girls, go there.]

Maru could remember just barely as well. There were a few clubs that worked very hard to look good in the festival.

'The music club people were something else.' he recalled. He could remember hearing them sing right at the entrance of school during the festival.

“Yo, Maru, what you planning on doing?” Dojin asked.

Maru didn't really have much of a plan. Previously, he picked the movie review club. It was a very average club whose sole activity was to go to see movies on Saturday, and then play games in the PC bang afterwards.

'It wasn't horrible,' at least he got to watch movies every month. Maybe he should try for the same club? Nothing else really caught his eye. As he read

the description for the movie club, the bell rang. English class, the war against sleep, was about to begin.

“Have some mint candy.” Dojin threw him some candy. Maru popped it in his mouth without hesitation. It helped. The coolness definitely helped.

A chubby lady entered the classroom. She was their English teacher. Not anyone extraordinary, but a simple average teacher who chatted with the students every once in a while. The woman put on a few pop songs in the background and went on with teaching. In the middle of it, someone knocked on the door.

Knock knock. The class was interrupted by a group outside.

“Ah.” the English teacher motioned the group in without saying anything else. She seemed to know what was going on.

“Hey, hey. Those of you who are sleeping, wake up.” the teacher said.

Maru raised his head to look at the door. There were a few students walking in with a nervous face. Seniors, maybe? There were two girls, and two guys. The two guys walked in stiffly along with a girl. The last girl walked in confidently as if she owned the school. Maru’s attention naturally went towards the last girl. She had quite the long hair, almost long enough to break school regulations. Wait, hold on a second. She just curled her damn hair.

The girl had clear eyes, a pink nose, and a mouth that seemed to burst out into speaking mode at any second. She took the podium almost as if she was the teacher and called the other three over.

“Come on, guys. We don’t have time.”

“Ah, right.” the other three responded. The four of them took their positions rather quickly.

What’s going on? Maru watched the four with his arms crossed.

“One, two, three.” the girl said. And.

“Hello! We are the acting club, ‘Blue Sky’!”

Well, that was loud. Loud enough to wake up all the sleepy kids, including him.

‘Ah... the acting club.’ come to think of it, there was one, wasn’t there? The high school acting club. He couldn’t remember much about them other than the fact that they went to some sort of a competition.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Lee Yunjung, the president of the acting club. I’m a second year.” The girl said. She put a lot of emphasis behind ‘second year’.

“We came to see you juniors because we wanted to promote the acting club a bit. Our acting club’s talented enough to have won a gold medal in the national teenage acting competition in the past. We’re looking for new members willing to make some memories with our club.” she continued.

“The acting club’s nice. They even have their own room, and they have their own segments during festivals, too,” even the English teacher butted in a little bit. The teacher motioned the girl to continue.

“We’re a bit short on members because all of our third years decided to quit. Anybody here watch a play before?” the girl scanned the class with a hopeful look. But no one raised their hand.

Plays, huh. Maru’s seen quite a few of them in the past. There was a time when he’s worked for a short time as a road manager in his time job hunting right after college. It wasn’t all that great. He was basically a servant for the actors and the directors. He even had to complete all sorts of random tasks for the chief manager as well.

He wasn’t even in charge of just one actor, either. He was almost like a taxi driver for all sorts of actors. He’d taxi a side character on stage, and start

completing all sorts of other jobs like carrying cameras, all the while suffering the treatment of a slave. At the time, he had to visit Hyehwa station (famous for plays) a lot to pick up side characters whenever the show ran short.

Naturally, he's ended up watching a lot of plays in the process. He even dreamed of being an actor at one point, but he quickly gave up on that idea after getting a nice desk job at a small company.

Right then, Maru's eyes met with the podium girl's. Her gaze intimidated Maru enough to raise his hand.

"Ah, you've seen it?" The girl asked.

"Yes."

"How was it?"

"Well, some were fun, some not so much."

He decided to be honest. Thankfully, Yoonjung seemed content with that answer. She just seemed to be happy that there was someone who watched plays in the class.

"How many people were there?"

"A few monodramas. Most of them were under eight people."

"Whoa." Yoonjung leaned forward. She seemed to want to jump out to talk more with him right then and there. Maru flinched and leaned back a little from the pressure.

"You must like plays." Yoonjung said.

"What? Ah, no, not really."

"Really?"

"Yes..."

“Do you hate it, then?”

“Uh... not really.”

“Then let’s say you like it.”

She just decided on an answer right there. Quite the decision maker, wasn’t she? Deciding what people likes or hates just then and there. And...

‘So energetic.’ she was one of those kids that made him feel alive just being near them. The type of people that dragged others to match their pace in a conversation.

Maru took a look around the classroom. The students were focused at Yoonjung almost as if class was right about to end. The girl had a talent. The talent for drawing attention.

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Yoonjung took a deep breath before continuing.

“Let’s cut the BS for a sec. All sorts of people are needed in a play. We have costumer designers, prop masters, stage managers, and actors... Of course, we make our own props and costumes in our plays, since we are a club.”

BS? Maru found himself smiling at the girl’s straightforwardness. The other kids looked pretty surprised as well. To think a girl like her would say something like that... Yoonjung didn’t notice the crowd’s reaction, though.

“It’s hard. We have to get together at all sorts of times to work. We might spend a ton of time making props, and make our own costumes if we can’t rent it. We made our own props last year with planks and hammers. We needed to build a restaurant, you see. It took awhile to make something that resembled a house. Some of us got hurt as well. If you look here...”

The girl extended her hand out towards the class. There was a long scar on her left pinky finger.

“Hey, Yoonjung, stick to the script,” the other girl pointed out, as she poked Yoonjung from the back. Yoonjung jumped back in surprise almost as if she were scalded by hot water.

She seemed to be the type that fell into her own stories. Maru didn’t dislike that. Those people were annoying occasionally, but more often than not they energized the group they were in. People like her... often shone brightly in a group. Yoonjung inhaled for a second before talking again.

“That’s why we’re requesting people to join the acting club. Things will get hard, sure, but I promise it’ll be worth it. I can’t even describe to you the feeling you get when you perform an act you’ve been preparing for months. Soon... you’ll even begin to love that entire process.”

She was shining. Even the seniors standing next to her were. As she talked more about acting, they started standing straighter. Prouder.

“Of course! It will be difficult. I keep saying this for a reason. It won’t be easy at all. That’s why we aren’t looking for anyone...”

Right when Yoonjung said around this much, a different girl jumped in. She was a girl with relatively short hair. Almost boyish. But this girl acted more like a girl than Yoonjung. She even had makeup on. Well, just enough to warrant trouble with teachers.

“Of course it’ll be hard. But it’s not just that. Plays are made by all sorts of people. Actors aren’t everything. Staff don’t require as much work as Yoonjung said. Since they just help out in between plays or practice. But without them, plays wouldn’t even be possible. So... if you’re interested, please give us a visit.” The girl finished with a slight bow.

She seemed like a pretty calm and collected girl to Maru. If Yoonjung was the type that yelled “charge!!”, this one seemed to be the type to hold Yoonjung back. The type that was persuasive. When both girls stopped talking, the guys

stepped forward. They seemed lackluster due to the energy the girls showed right before.

“We are the staff. We decided to help the crew more after our first year acting. You’ll be able to see a bunch of stuff when you come to our club room. They’re years of work that’s been created by our seniors. Like Danmi said earlier, we welcome anyone interested. We’re looking forward to working with you for one, maybe even two more years in this club,” said one of them.

The other one stepped forward. Unlike the first boy, who had sparty hair, this one just had a flat nose.

“Please come if you’re interested. We even have a teacher that we hire to teach us acting. I’ll leave the form here. We’re accepting till tomorrow, so please come. Ah, and of course, you’re always free to visit us in the club room. And... if you’re worried about your looks, don’t worry about it. Just look at me.”

The boy grinned. This one seemed to be the more charismatic of the two.