

MEMORIZE

MEMORIZE EP.21

Momentary Separation. (3/3)

Please continue reading on

She could see the dark clouds brewing through the window. The clouds weren't pitch black yet, however fogs whirled around faintly with the occasional drizzles. Kim Han-Byeol could feel her emotions settle with the raindrops slowly falling on the window.

The place wasn't snug, but still held an air of comfort. Though the sentimentally did not fit the situation, she felt better when compared to being chased by those strange things outside that forest.

'Looking back.... I really liked the rain when I was a child.'

Since her childhood, Kim Han-Byeol liked rainy days. During rainy days, she would listen to music under the umbrella, enjoy the simple pleasures of her placid life. She suddenly desired a cup of coffee. No matter how momentarily, a sip from a warm cup of coffee could take her away from this horror.

She felt sad as she stared at the world behind the window. It seems like evening had already come, with shadows being cast from her body. Mental fatigue weighed her down after facing one too many things in a single day. Rubbing her tired eyes, she turned away from the window. A huge room, about 70 square meter in size could be seen. The room had everything a room could possibly contain, food, water, beds, toilets and even a shower.

They had fled without a sense of the world and entered the first city they saw. However, before she entered, Kim Han-Byeol felt a strange dissonance from the city. The place was too quiet like no one lived in it. Of her first impression of the city, she thought it would lead to her death. During her introspection, they found a medium sized building. Its roof was painted black, but it was singled out by the party. Maybe it was luck, but something had attracted them to it and when they entered the building, it was filled with all the necessities.

Her body and mind screamed for sleep, but the situation was still tenuous at best. An-Hyun was busy looking after his sister, An-Sol, who was still in a stupor. And Lee Yu-Jung....

She found Lee Yu-Jung quickly enough. Lee Yu-Jung was holding the knife she had left by the main entrance. She gave out a light sigh, guessing the reason for her actions.

"Unni."

"Hmm."

"Please put down the knife."

"Don't want to."

Lee Yu-Jung acted like she didn't hear and proceeded to unlocked the main door. The main door opened with a loud 'Chu-kuk, and An-Hyun rushed out of his bedroom with a

surprised expression. Seeing Lee Yu-Jung holding the knife, his eyes narrowed.

"It's pointless. Please put down the knife and wait."

It looked like Kim Han-Byeol's voice finally reached Lee Yu-Jung as she stared daggers at her.

"Why?"

"....."

"I will go fetch Su-Hyun Oppa so you guys just wait."

"Oppa, Su-Hyun Oppa."

She whispered that name over and over in her heart. The image of him, appearing in Kim Han-Byeol's head. When she first saw him, she thought that he was the same as her. At the clearing, she felt something was different about him. Always composed, and confident. And those calm eyes. Maybe it was because of that, she was compelled to listen to him on that hill. Staring blankly at Lee Yu Jung for a while, Kim Han-Byeol spoke.

"Unni, you are not the only one that's worried about Oppa. There is nothing to gain going back there again. Waiting patiently is just the same as helping him."

"We don't know if he's still waiting for us there. I will say it again, but if you're not going then don't bother me. If you guys aren't going then I will bring him back alone."

"Lee Yu-Jung. Han-Byeol's right. Just drop the knife."

Hearing the harshness in An-Hyun's voice, Lee Yu-Jung turned to face them. Sneering at An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol, she spoke in a sarcastic tone.

"You guys are too much. We don't know if Oppa might be struggling out there alone looking for us."

You guys are too much. There were too many meanings held in this one phrase. This created an uncomfortable prickling sensation in An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol's hearts. An-Hyun closed his mouth, but Kim Han-Byeol didn't. Glimpsing at the collapsed form of An-Sol in the bedroom, she spoke once more.

"There was nothing we could do. It was too dangerous, those things were scrambling at us. If it wasn't for that child, everyone here would have been killed."

"We all know that. We escaped and got Sol here, didn't we? And that's it? The end? We are all safe, so it's done? That Oppa will come here by himself?"

Kim Han-Byeol felt uncomfortable as she watched Lee Yu-Jung's throwing a tirade.

From the beginning, with her shouting and her crude speech, irritated her. Without her being aware, her lips had twisted and with a sneer, Kim Han-Byeol spoke coldly.

"Then leave. Leave and search all you want. You can die for all I care."

She wanted to take it back, but the dam had already burst. An-Hyun look at Kim Han-Byeol in surprise. Lee Yu-Jung was blindsided by that remarked, but soon recovered and laughed out absentmindedly.

"You... You, really, really are a piece of shit. Did Oppa sacrifice himself to save a kid like you? You are such a disappointment. Looking so worried when you told him not to go, what an act."

"I definitely told him not to go. But Oppa went anyways. Why are you blaming me for that?"

"You... Sigh. Nevermind, I don't need to speak to a garbage like you. Just shut your mouth. You bloodless, tearless cold-hearted bitch."

Kim Han-Byeol was slightly surprised by Lee Yu-Jung's unexpected response. She

thought Lee Yu-Jung would scream and fight, but felt her pride being bruised when she was ignored and called trash. Lee Yu-Jung didn't notice it at first but soon became aware of Kim Han-Byeol's rough breathing. Kim Han-Byeol's message was faint but was mixed with pent-up anger.

"Your words are harsh. Was there anything wrong with what I said?"

"Dunno. I don't care. But I don't want to be a hypocrite like you."

"Are you finished?"

"Staring at your elder with such disrespect.

What you gonna do? Should we start tearing our hairs off? Back off. Shut your pretty mouth if you don't want me to scratch that dainty face of yours."

"Everyone stop!"

Watching the increasingly hostile response, An-Hyun snapped out in an angry voice. Lee Yu-Jung and Kim Han-Byeol fell silent at An-Hyun's anger. Watching the two with hollow eyes, An-Hyun stretched out his hand toward Lee Yu-Jung.

"Give it here."

"Don't wanna."

Lee Yu-Jung held onto the knife tightly. An-Hyun sighed deeply and spoke in an exhausted voice.

"I will go look for Hyung with you. I have thought about it, and you are right."

"... Really? Then let's go together."

At the sudden change in An-Hyun's attitude, Lee Yu-Jung was a bit hesitant but had a pleased expression on her face. An-Hyun just shook his head weakly and responded.

"No. It will be much better going alone. Those things might still be out there. Just please look after Sol with Han-Byeol."

"With her? Don't wanna. I can't trust her."

Kim Han-Byeol felt something boiling within her as Lee Yu-Jung continued to disparage her. She has been controlling and restraining herself till now, but the anger within her had finally exploded. However, she kept a cool head. Unlike Lee Yu-Jung, who started shouting and became red when angry, she was the opposite and became colder and scornful. With a frigid tone, she spoke to An-Hyun.

"Don't go. Oppa, if you go you will be attacked."

"You, shut your mouth."

"You shut your mouth."

"What? Me? Say that again."

Seeing Lee Yu-Jung step forward filled with violent intent, An-Hyun immediately intercepted her and snatched the knife within her grasp. Kim Han-Byeol was resolute, and as if the dam had burst, she continued.

"If you don't know, then don't bother going. If I wasn't here before, what do you think would have happened to all of us? Knife, fists, nothing worked. It's obvious you are going to be killed, so why do you keep insisting on going?"

"Really this bitch..."

"You have nothing to say, so you are swearing instead. How are you going to fetch Oppa, do you know where he is? If you have a brain, use it."

"Your are full of it. Or maybe this is you finally revealing your true nature. Can't you remember that the only reason you are here is because of Oppa? Trembling in your hypocrisy, all you think about is your Machiavellianistic tendencies. I can see what kind

of person you are, just by looking at you. You are more abominable than that shit.” Comparing that trouble maker with herself, at these harsher words, Kim Han-Byeol’s expression became agitated for the first time. Anger spiked in her as Kim Han-Byeol voice started to tremble and the tone increased.

“The dead stays dead! What is so wrong about the living trying to stay alive?!” Lee Yu-Jung went ballistic, pushing An-Hyun out of the way, she charged forward. Kim Han-Byeol clenched her teeth tightly and raised her hands for a powerful slap. Bul-Kuk.

“What’s that? What’s causing that noise?”

The main door unfastened and through it, a young man entered. Always composed, and confident. And those calm eyes. With the crossbow hanging on his left arm. Everyone held their breath as they saw him enter. The boiling tension within the room disappeared without a trace.

With a quiet smile, he loosened the crossbow on his left arm. After, he raised his right hand and greeted everyone.

“It’s really good to see everyone is safe.”

It was Kim Su-Hyun.

MEMORIZE EP.22

Trap City. (1/4)

Please continue reading on

A short reunion later, everyone including myself gathered at the central living room. An-Sol was nowhere to be seen, but I could hear shallow breath from the side room so it seems that she was still unconscious.

An uncomfortable tension had settled on everyone in the living room, it felt like the calm before an awful storm. It seems that I did not come at a good time.

I felt unsettled. Although I did not expect an emotional reunion, this tense atmosphere was not what I imagined coming back to. An-Hyun stood awkwardly, while Lee Yu-Jung and Kim Han-Byeol were hissing at each other as if they just finished a heated argument. I did catch the tail end of Kim Han-Byeol’s yell, but the specifics would have to come later.

An awkward silence hung for a while. The first to break the silence, looking utterly spent, was An-Hyun.

“Hyung. I’m not too sure what to say right now. It was all due to you that we managed to escape the forest, and for that thank you very much. And we are truly sorry for leaving you behind like this. Whatever I say, I know that it will all sound like an excuse, but there is one thing I really wanted to say.”

I was satisfied as An-Hyun bowed and apologised. You stood tall when you were confident, but when you had to submit, you prostrated. When someone’s alignment was

True and Neutral, they tended to be head-strong, but An-Hyun at least had some manners. I softly responded to An-Hyun's genuine apology.

"When I couldn't find you.... I was a bit dismayed at first."

"I apologise. I have no excuse for this."

"You can stop saying sorry. I thought something had happened to you guys. Though where is your sister?"

"Yes....What happened was that..."

"Ya, An-Hyun. Wait a moment. I will explain everything. That's alright Oppa?"

As An-Hyun was just about to start, Lee Yu-Jung cut him off and took over. Speaking so casually with me so quickly, she was really quick to socialise. I would have preferred to hear it from the usually calm Kim Han-Byeol, however, she seems unsettled with a frown set perpetually on her brows.

"So after Oppa lured those things inside the forest...."

Getting approval from An-Hyun and giving a single glance toward Kim Han-Byeol, Lee Yu-Jung started her explanation. Her explanation was spotty, but it was simple, short and to the point. From the beginning, I had a rough idea of the situation at hand and didn't need additional explanation on certain parts. But....

"A ghost like thing appeared out of thin air?"

"Yes. But thinking back to it now, it's a little bit tricky to say that it was really a ghost. It kinda didn't feel completely transparent. The figure had wings attached to it and could move around freely. And no matter how much An-Hyun slashed at them with his sword, it wouldn't go down."

I needed a more detailed explanation on this part, so I turned towards An-Hyun. His eyes were closed, trying to recall the image from that scene. His head twitched for a moment, as he opened his mouth to speak.

"It's like what Yu-Jung just said. I stabbed at it with all my strength, but it felt like cutting nothing but air."

Cutting nothing but air. Only a rough outline was visible, and it wasn't completely transparent. It also had wings. Taking these three things to account, a single memory crept into reminiscences.

It was a Wraith. Hearing about an opaque, invisible figure with wings, it immediately reminded about a Wraith. A monster immune to physical attacks. Wraith phased

through a person's body, inflicting pain and agony through the mind. For An-Hyun to withstand several of their attacks... it looked like they were adjusted for the Rite of Passage.

I became curious as I listened on. There was nothing the party could do to defeat a Wraith, how was it possible from them to escape? I decided to leave this be and ask about An-Sol.

"Then it's because of those things that your sister is hurt?"

An-Hyun nodded at my inquiry. As he continued with his story, I could not hide my astonishment. Wraith, seeing An-Hyun's resistance, had focused their attacks on him. In agonising pain, he dropped his sword and shield. In this critical moment, the person that saved the party was An-Sol.

I pressed him for more details on this, but An-Hyun couldn't give a clear answer. Lee Yu-Jung, as well as Kim Han-Byeol, shook their heads. All it summed up to was An-Sol screaming, when a flash of white light engulfed her whole body and the monsters vanishing. An-Sol had lost consciousness and collapsed on the spot, and was still unconscious.

I nodded after hearing their story. An-Hyun paused, his face full of worry as he sought solace.

"Hyung... Sol is fine, right? She will regain conscious, right?"

"How is she right now?"

"Her breathing evened out. Her heart rate is normal. But she cringes as if in pain, and moans occasionally."

Magic Overdrive. Surely she couldn't have found her magic already? It was an unbelievable event, but the possibility wasn't zero. When I first started out, my Magic stats were so low that I suffered much. After passing the Rite of Passage and entering Hall Plain, it took me numerous hours to get a sword skill.

But An-Sol was different, she had 75 points to her Magic stat from the beginning. The subconscious world was a field that couldn't be researched, and there was always something that I didn't know about. However, there was one thing I could confirm and that was her body wasn't trained to deal with 75 Magic stat. There was a limit to what I could do, and if she didn't fight it, I was certain I could help her.

"I will have to see first, but I don't think this is something major so don't worry too much."

"Then, then about now....."

Looking at the muddled An-Hyun, I was about to raise myself when to help An-Sol when a soft hand latched onto my wrist. Feeling its smoothness on my left wrist, I turned my head to the source and saw Lee Yu-Jung puckering her lips.

“Ya, An-Hyun, how can you say such things to Oppa? He just came back. Oppa, are you hungry?”

“Hmm? Just so so. But first An-Sol....”

“We took turns watching her. It isn’t like Oppa is a doctor, so it’s fine to check on her later. You heard our side of the story Oppa, so tell us yours. I will make a small meal so you can tell us while you eat. How ‘bout it?”

I wondered about the sudden change. Compared to her usual attitude this was a bit strange, but seeing she was waiting on me, I felt slightly at ease. Lee Yu-Jung’s proposal also loosened the tension surrounding An-Hyun and he nodded with a small smile.

“Please drink some water. I drank from it before, but there is still plenty left.”

“Hmm? Ah, thank you.”

I thought nothing of it as I stretch out my hand to accept the water Kim Han-Byeol took from her pouch. However, Lee Yu-Jung snatched it before I could receive it, and returned it back to Kim Han-Byeol. Looking deadpan at this sudden act, Kim Han-Byeol spoke sharply.

“What are you doing?”

“What are you thinking giving him something you were drinking? I’m going to give Oppa a new one. You drink that thing.”

“You guys right now....”

Even before I could finish speaking, Lee Yu-Jung stood up and walked off to the kitchen.

Soon, a rattling of preparation could be heard in the kitchen. Sounds like she was well prepped to cook. Hesitantly, I looked back at An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol. An-Hyun had revert back to his awkward look earlier while Kim Han-Byeol stared at the floor, aloof. It was unexpected, but I projected a calm voice and immediately change the topic.

“Did everyone else eat?”

“... Yes, Hyung. We already ate. We were too hungry.... ha ha.”

“No, that’s fine. You didn’t know when I would be back... It would have been rather foolish to wait for me.”

Replying to An-Hyun who was scratching his head and looking apologetic, a new water bottle was suddenly placed in front of me. The food seems to be made in an instant, as a small dish was gently placed in front of me. I wondered if this was the same Lee Yu-Jung I knew. On the small dish was a cracker-like biscuit with canned tuna on top. In her own way, she tried to make it pretty. Lee Yu-Jung personally opened the water bottle for me and spoke with a forced liveliness.

“Ta Da~! A special cracker made by Lee Yu-Jung-nim!”

“Oh. It looks delicious. Let me try a bite....hk!”

A salivating An-Hyun stretched out his hand in anticipation, but it was quickly slapped away by Lee Yu-Jung’s lightning fast hand. An-Hyun grumbled as he rubbed the reddening spot on his hand, but one glimpse at Lee Yu-Jung’s razor-edged eyes, he pulled his hands back.

“So cruel and doing this over food of all things...”

“I made this for personally for Oppa, so why are you trying to eat it. And Oppa hasn’t touched his food yet, where did you learn your manners from?”

“Che”

“Oppa. Try it. I can guarantee that it’s tasty.”

“Ee, Hm? Yes, thank you. I will enjoy it.”

Laughing out loud at the scene of An-Hyun grumbling with Lee Yu-Jung turning away in disgust, I took a bite. I could taste the cheap tuna and biscuit flood my taste buds. I couldn’t say that it was delicious, but it was edible. Of course, this wasn’t the time to be picky about food, and it was decent enough so I chewed it up.

Fortunately, the mood seems to have lifted a bit. Feeling their burning gazes as I tried to grab another cracker, it felt like I needed to quickly get on with my story.

I certainly couldn’t tell them I wasted over twenty Deadmen. This required a suitable level of dramatisation. After telling Yu-Jung that the food was delicious, I launched into the story of how I lured the Deadmen deeper into the forest.

“Hyung. Does that mean you were almost bitten?”

“I ran in an S loop between the trees, trying my best to escape. I really didn’t expect one of them to jump out so suddenly on my left. If my left hand was just a centimetre off, I would certainly be bitten. Just think back to it makes my heart race.”

“Amazing.... We were so close to losing Oppa forever.”

“Ke ke. Hyung. It was hectic. Lee Yu-Jung went ballistic before Hyung came. She was scrambling like crazy, I mean she just grabbed the knife and was trying to head out to rescue you, saying we wouldn’t know if you were still waiting for us or not.”

“Me kill you? I wasn’t that extreme!”

“See. You just confirmed it. I just saying you tried, that’s all.”

“Come on!”

My coiled heart loosened as Lee Yu-Jung and An-Hyun bickered and laughed among themselves. I almost sighed in relief at this light-hearted moment, but the cold and aloof Kim Han-Byeol caught my eyes. She stared at us, colder than before and a cold frost settled at the corner of my heart.

I thought it was nothing much, but still, I felt that Kim Han-Byeol’s last clamour shouldn’t be passed over lightly. I decided to end it here and move onto another topic with An-Hyun.

T/N: In Korea, it is good manners to start eating only after the Elders at the table start first.

Also seeing as these terms are being used so often right now, just a reminder:

Hyung (older brother) – a way for younger guys to refer to older guys.

Oppa (older brother) – a way for younger gals to refer to older guys.

MEMORIZE EP.23

Trap City. (2/4)

Please continue reading on

After the discussion ended, An-Hyun led me to An-Sol to checked on her status. Gazing at the sleeping figure lying on the bed, I felt like an intruder. Laying my hand on her forehead, her state was expected, An-Sol’s magic was depleted. She would be back to normal before long, but I decided to help her out.

“I think it there should at least be one person looking over An-Sol till morning.”

“I will do that.”

An-Hyun obviously volunteered for the role and I nodded in agreement. Looking outside the window, darkness had descended completely. An-Hyun's eyes were already red from fatigue. He must be spent both emotionally and physically. He was hanging in there, but any more would be thrown over the edge and would become troublesome tomorrow.

"You look tired. Just go and sleep for a bit. I will look after her."

"Hyung. Aren't you tired?"

"Later. Let the ladies have a deep rest today, the two of us can set up a rotation for An-Sol. I will wake you up after you slept enough, we can change shift then."

"Ah. Rotation. We can do that. Then Hyung, I leave my sister in your care."

I nodded silently. An-Hyun staggered out of the room and closed the door on his way out. There was still things that I wanted to ask him but seeing how fatigued An-Hyun was, I thought it better to ask him the next time we were free. My mind was a mess thinking about Trap Point and with the party's current attitude, I need some time to sort it out. But before that, I needed to do what I came here for.

Checking that the door was closed properly, I calmly activated my magic. Like a ripple on a still water, a faint red light swirled from my right hand. Slowly laying my hand on the middle of her chest, I began to transfer magic inside her. Seeing as I was healing her already, I decided to throw her a freebie.

If magic flowed in a counter direction, or when the magic circuit following the vascular system got twisted, it was usually most troublesome to fix. However, settling a simple Overdrive and straightening out some tangled circuits were an easy thing to do. An-Sol's body twitched as my pure fire attribute magic flowed into her.

Magical attribute changed depending on the person's alignment. The magic I could feel from An-Sol was vivid like a clear white light. At the first touch of my overwhelming magic, Sol's magic acted skittishly and was uncomfortable with it. To avoid a backlash I made my magic as soft as possible and gently embraced her magic. It's fine, It's fine, It's here to help you. Isn't it friendly? Just stay calm. With a constant soothing feel, my magic kept on caring for Sol's magic. As if Sol's magic realised the assistance, it rushed towards to where my magic was.

To prevent her from reacting badly I nursed her magic as delicately as possible. Feeling her magic wiggling back and fro as if it wanted to be petted, I thought that was quite cute. Inspecting once more, I calmed the traumatised parts and relaxed the tangled places. By the time the process was about to reach its end, her pale face recovered some of her healthy red glow and she looked comfortable. Perhaps she is having a sweet dream?

Only one issue was left. After my final inspection and as I was trying to withdraw my magic, An-Sol's magic seems to have attached to mine. When I tried to take my hand off her, her internal magic pulled onto me, tell me not to go and pet her more. I barely shook it off and panted from the exertion.

Treating her took about an hour. A usually quick process took longer than expected, as I performed a thorough inspection and took to revitalising as well. Nothing came to my sense outside the room. It seems like everyone was in deep sleep. Giving both my arms a stretch I slumped to the floor, nothing needed my attention right now so it would be good to close my eyes for a bit.

How long has it been? Hearing someone entering the room, I opened my eyes. The room was pitch-black. Turning my head I caught sight of a dark outline peeking from the door. Seeing Lee Yu-Jung had a bob cut and Kim Han-Byeol's hair was shoulder length. The outline had neither of such hair style, so it must be An-Hyun.

"You must be tired today. Go back to sleep."

I greeted him with a calm voice but he didn't reply for a while. I could see him staring blankly at me. About a minute later An-Hyun slowly moved his lips.

"No, it's fine. I was so worried I couldn't sleep. Hyung. How is Sol?"

"She seems a lot better. I think by tomorrow she will wake up. So don't worry so much."

"Really? That's a relief. Then Hyung,"

An-Hyun was fidgeting. I waited calmly, presenting him with the opportunity to speak. I didn't know why but it felt like this was the correct move.

"Hyung. There is something I want to speak to you about. But this isn't the place for it."

"Sure. Should we go to the rooftop?"

"Yes."

An-Hyun didn't look like he slept much. Probably worried about An-Sol and everything else that had happened. From the seriousness in his voice, I got up immediately.

Lee Yu-Jung was sleeping in the lounge, hugging the blanket tightly to her. Kim Han-Byeol wasn't here, it seems she was sleeping in a different room. I unlocked the door softly, trying not to wake her, and walked to the rooftop with An-Hyun.

My head felt clearer after breathing in the cold night air on the rooftop. We were silent as we stared at the pitch-black city in front of us. An-Hyun spoke first.

“Hyung. This city is too quiet.”

“It is, it’s suspiciously quiet. We can’t let our guard down.”

I could see a forlorn An-Hyun making a self-deprecating smile. From his expression, I could guess the topic he wanted to breach. I waited as this was something he had let out first.

“Hyung, I think you are amazing.”

“Nah. I’m as human as you, that’s neither here nor there..”

“No, not that. What I wanted to say wasn’t about that.”

An-Hyun shook his head three times in rebuttal. Dissent was evident on his face, with a glimpse of powerlessness underneath. It’s not like I couldn’t understand his feelings but his intention was still vague that I decided to quietly wait for him continue.

“When Hyung left today I thought about a lot of things. When Hyung was still around I felt we got along well. Even without Hyung, I thought if the five of us worked together we could escape.”

“I thought so too.”

“Yes, but that didn’t happen. Hyung entrusted me to look after the others. But I couldn’t lead them very well. I collapsed after meeting those strange beasts and Sol was hurt because of it. And I am sure you felt the tension between Yu-Jung and Han-Byeol. Those two fought, to go save Hyung, or to stay put.”

An-Hyung spoke at length looking wretched. But he didn’t stop.

“And the thing I hated the most... was that I couldn’t do anything back then. I couldn’t even stop those two from fighting. The best I could force out was that, I will go. I couldn’t do anything and all I could do was volunteer. I felt so frustrated.”

“.....”

“If Hyung wasn’t here I would still be thinking in the same vein. What to do tomorrow. Would I lead well? I just wanted to die rather than struggle with this burden.”

“An-Hyun.”

I tried to stop the outpour of emotion from An-Hyun but he quickly shook his head no. He still had more to get off his chest.

“But at that moment Hyung appeared. Like a miracle. When I saw Hyung do you know what I felt? Thanks? No. Apologetic? No. I felt relief. If it was Hyung he could do it. With Hyung, we had something to believe in. It’s like magic, as soon as Hyung came back the tension subsided and Sol’s condition improved. Hyung is always calm and resolute. Like something unshakable? You feel different from us. I don’t know what it is but there is definitely something different.”

My stomach clenched as An-Hyun finished his monologue but I had managed to look unruffled. An-Hyun relaxed as he emptied all his worries, I replied with a quiet voice.

“Then can I say something as well. It won’t be as long.”

“It’s fine to be long. I will listen.”

Seeing him reply with a hollow voice, I smiled and placed my hand on top of his head. Shocked he looked up and faced me.

“Your doubts and burdens, it’s fine to feel like that. Rather, I think it’s fortunate you have these feelings.”

“Fortunate?”

“Look back, think what it was like in the forest. You didn’t try to be the centre of attention like that trouble maker, or try to suppress others. When you gave a simple opinion, Yu-Jung and Han-Byeol thought over it and commented about it. You and I thought over all the different opinions and chose the best methods.”

“.....”

“We all got your back. We all have a burden, but it doesn’t mean you need to carry all of them alone. Even if things go wrong, the blame lies with all of us, not you alone.”

“But...”

An-Hyun tried to respond but I raised my hand and stopped him. Catching my signal, An-Hyun closed his lips.

“You see me as someone amazing but I also think you are amazing. Getting your fear prone sister all the way here and stepping in when necessary. Just like how An-Sol depends on you, you also want to depend on. I, Yu-Jung and Han-Byeol also have something we depend on you for. With the five of us here, we can escape this place. Isn’t that what you first told me? But what you said after was quite contrary to the first message. Is it really wrong to depend on each other?”

I tried to keep it short but saying this and that made it quite long. However, I couldn't stop and had to finish what I started.

"This burden, we will all carry it with you. So do what you can do, and that will be enough."

"Do what I can do..."

"Yes. What you can do, so don't worry about everything else. We will take care of the rest."

I faced the night air as An-Hyun slowly digested my words. The cool night air today felt itchy. After An-Hyun spent enough time to drink a cup of tea, he lifted his face to look at the surrounding.

He had troubled eyes when he came up to the rooftop but now it was like the first time I had seen him, dark and rugged. He looked relieved as if a few of his burdens were lifted from him.

MEMORIZE EP.24
Trap City. (3/4)

Please continue reading on

The dawn ushered in a bright new day. Having conversed with An-Hyun into the early mornings, we returned to the room and kept a nursing shift through the night. I told him to get some more sleep as An-Hyun was forcing himself to stay awake. He laid by the corner in the lounge for a brief rest but had fallen into deep sleep. With this, I closed my eyes and reflected for a bit.

Though there was nothing to be afraid of right now, being caught off guard was the enemy. Of course, this could just be paranoia, but I was just the kind of a person who took everything to the extreme. For the past 10 years, I never ate till full or slept deeply that now it had now become a habit. Thinking I should get a move on, I was about to rose myself. I could hear a person close to me and so slowly opened my eyes to a figure sitting silently next to me. That figure was no other than An-Sol.

"Ah!"

She was looking around restlessly, and when our eyes met, hers became as wide as a saucer. Really, I am not your enemy, there's no need to be that surprised. So I greeted her,
trying to sound as non-aggressive as possible,

"Morning. You okay?"

“Ah, good morning.”

I laughed with how disarrayed she was but still managed to utter a good morning. Ah, what was wrong with me. Why is it that whenever I see her, my heart becomes weak? Something about her just made me want to protect her. Seeing me slowly raising myself up, she budged hesitantly and spoke in a soft voice.

“O, Oppa.”

“Hmm.”

“I am sorry....”

“Hmm?”

What is this kid saying all of the sudden? Yesterday, today, it feels like the only thing I been hearing apologies. I gave her a puzzled look which caused her to look down.

“I... what happened... because of me.... It must been difficult...”

Her speech was so muddled that anyone who heard her without knowing the context would misunderstand. Seeing her stuttering like this, I began to worry about this her future. Will she be able to cope with the divergent people within Hall Plain? Will she really become the Brilliance Priest? The symbol of all the female Players and equivalent to the Shadow Queen and the Princess of Execution? Such an unlikely tale. With a look of detachment, I answered her.

“There is no need to apologise. Rather, I heard you did exceptionally well saving everyone.”

“Ah, not really! I don’t remember what happened!”

If I show what I was really thinking inside, she would wilt again, so looking friendly as I can I nodded. Colour returned to her face when she heard my compliment, she smiled a little as she waved her hand furiously. She was really the type to wear her heart on her sleeve. How did she grow up to be so pure and natural?

Suddenly I heard someone call me from behind.

“Su-Hyun Orabeoni. If you are up, please have some breakfast.”

“?”

“Huh? Orabeoni? Why are you looking at this maiden with such puzzled eyes?”

“?”

“Why are you looking... Damn, yeah I get it, I will speak normally. An-Hyun told me you were watching over Sol. As thanks, I made breakfast. Everyone else ate already so don't worry about the others.”

“Yeah. That's the Lee Yu-Jung I know. Thanks.”

Nodding and opening my hand to accept, she placed the plate in front of me with a red face. The menu was the same as yesterday, crackers with tuna on top. I want to tease her, saying that this might be the only thing she knows how to make, but looking at her cool eyes I felt that discretion was the better part of valour.

“.....”

“.....”

I bit into one of the crackers. Lee Yu-Jung and An-Sol just sat there silently, watching me eat. I put down the cracker I was nibbling on, with unease evident on my face. Lee Yu-Jung blinked expectedly for me to eat more, while An-Sol still sat innocently mumbling about. Everyone seems crazy today.

“Am I some kind of monkey in the zoo? Stop staring.”

“No, no. It's just the way you eat is fascinating.”

“The way I eat?”

Was it fascinating? Hmm. Was my eating habit that strange? It was the same as usual... Thinking nothing of it, a thought suddenly struck me.

An-Hyun chews lightly and swallows everything, but Oppa is completely different. You sneak your food in bit by bit, chewing slowly and swallow a small amount. You don't even eat a lot, so why do you eat like that?”

I couldn't answer immediately. Lee Yu-Jung's eyes were unexpectedly sharp. To tell the truth, there was a time I was low on supplies while being chased by Fairies in the Fairy Forest. I kept cutting my food smaller and smaller, eating just enough for me to last the day. This had become a habit. In a caravan, or an expedition, or even before a battle, I never ate till I sate my hunger as to maximise my senses. Satiety had the effect of dulling the senses.

I could never tell them exactly what happened, so I decided to change the subject.

“It's just a bad habit. When I can, I eat a lot, but in a situation like this, I usually eat in small portions. Rather, I can't see the other two, where are they?”

“An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol? An-Hyun said he will keep watch outside and Kim Han-Byeol said she will be on the roof.”

Seeing Lee Yu-Jung easily answering my question, it seems she didn't suspect much. Inwardly, I gave a sigh of relief. But following the gaze on my back, I saw An-Sol looking at me with vivid eyes. When our eyes met, she laughed out awkwardly. Just what was going on today?

I felt An-Sol was like a child. When a child first meets a stranger, they instinctively become suspicious. They were afraid and nervous of the possibility of being harmed. Approaching a child carelessly would result in tears.

However, becoming friends with a child was easy. At first, you had to set a distance and show that you mean no harm. When the child became curious and toddle toward you, that was the most suitable time to become a friend.

That was just a brief review on An-Sol... Biting on another cracker Lee Y-Jung made, I shifted track on my unsatisfying thought process and was plunged into another theory. Setting the 24:00 time as a counter, today was the second day since we entered the Trap Point. Meaning this place was safe till the clock struck midnight today. Although no one spoke, they all seems to be enjoying this place.

“I wish those two would come in early, there are things we need to discuss.”

“What? You mean what we are going to do from now on?”

“Something like that.”

“What's it about Oppa. Tell me and Sol first.”

Lee Yu-Jung was crouching with her arms around her knees, looking at me with a puzzled expression. An-Sol looked anxious by my forthcoming proposal. I didn't know what kind of resistance I would face, by I would tackle it head on. No matter how difficult it would be to convince them, they had to know the truth.

“We should probably leave this City today.”

Just as I expected, they froze on the spot when they heard my proposal.

“I was out on a quick patrol. It's just like you said Hyung, it's frighteningly quiet.”

Entering the main door, the first thing An-Hyun confirmed was that the City was suspiciously quiet. Hearing I had something to discuss, we all moved to the living room.

Fresh air seems to have set settled Kim Han-Byeol, as she had recovered her usually aloof expression. After checking everyone was here, I spoke.

“Everyone I am sure the an Angel told you something about this Rite of Passage.”

“Maybe. I don’t really remember anything. I was busy fighting with those winged things that I didn’t hear anything.”

I had a bitter smile on my face as I saw Lee Yu-Jung shaking her head in doubt. Putting her aside, for now, I turned faced An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol. They thought for a while before they spoke in turns.

“I read the situation but there were too many things to remember.... Like how we have to find our own water and food, that death in this place was real so we should be careful, and to survive we must head to the warp gate at the centre... and there was something else.”

“We have to endure this place for seven days.”

Kim Han-Byeol finished off for An-Hyun. These were the exact words I was waiting for.

“Yes, exactly that. Survive for 7 days. Miss Kim Han-Byeol, do you perhaps remember any other clauses?”

At my question, Kim Han-Byeol’s face scrunched up trying to remember

“I do. I remember the angel telling me to never stay in one place for too long. Either to keep moving for 7 days or go straight towards the centre.”

I nodded in agreement and was about to speak, but Lee Yu-Jung cut me off.

“But Oppa Isn’t it safe here? There is a house, food to eat and a place to sleep. Don’t you remember what happened yesterday? We faced nothing but hardship after coming out of that forest.”

“Yes but, Hyung. Do we really have to leave this place? We don’t really have to believe everything the angel said to us.”

Lee Yu-Jung looked hopeful, being vouched by An-Hyun. They already disliked the idea of heading out once more. Turning a blind eye to their hopeful gazes I responded calming to their counterpoints.

“With everyone being so comfortable, I think you are all becoming slothful. Then let’s think in reverse.”

“Think in reverse?”

“Yes. An-Hyun had just come back from his patrol and knows that this city is too quiet. The forest was filled with tense moments, and even outside of it you were attacked. We might face the same thing again if we go out, but...”

“When we go out it would be the same. But.....”

I paused temporarily for effect and continued.

“The angels want us to act in a certain way and this isn’t it. They also warned us to remember? Survive for 7 days or go towards the central warp gate, and never stay still. We need to grasp what the Angels really want from us. Putting two and two together about the Rite of Passage and our situation we are obviously going against their wishes. Don’t you find it strange right now? Compared to everything else outside this city, it’s too comfortable. There’s a lot of food and not even a hint of monsters as well. This must be a trap. I think that the longer we stay here, the more likely that something might happen to us.

“... So Oppa, you want to leave this place because it feels bad.”

“I know it’s difficult to accept this on a hunch I have. But this place is just filled with this uneasiness. I think we should rest as much as we can, grab some supplies and leave. Preferably today if we can.”

Though I was trying to persuade them, I didn’t really have the confidence to convince them to my side. Trying to persuade someone in the face of danger or telling them to leave their safety was very differently. Moreover, I felt my persuasiveness was lacking in this situation. My argument wasn’t completely devoid of logic, but a chunk of it relied too much on prediction and feelings. But there was nothing I could do about it. This was just the difference between those who experienced Hall Plain and those who didn’t

For a moment no one spoke, they were all hesitant and it was clear to see they didn’t want to leave. I could kill the boss monster with ease, but I wanted them to at least go through the course the Angel had prepared for them. The more comfortable they are now, the more they will suffer in Hall Plain. An-Hyun stared hard at me and then looking to everyone else.

“Everyone’s opinion different... So let’s decide by majority.”

“A Majority vote?”

“Yes. But I will put two conditions on this vote.”

“What conditions?”

I felt amused by this unexpected suggestion. A majority vote, something I haven't heard in a long time. Kim Han-Byeol responded positively, though still looked at him expectantly. An-Hyun nodded and replied.

"It's not much of a condition. First, everyone can choose either yes to leave, no or abstain. But they must state the reason for their choice. And second, whatever was decided must be followed without any complaint."

Hearing An-Hyun's explanation, Lee Yu-Jung energetic spoke out, certain that the vote will go her way.

"Yes, Yes! No objection. A vote, yes a vote is great. Let's vote right now. Can I go first?"

"Yeah, it's best to get something like this out of the way. First, let me put down Hyung's vote as yes and we already heard his explanation."

"I have no objection to that."

"Then... Is there someone with a different opinion? If there isn't, we will do continue like this."

As Kim Han-Byeol, An-Sol and I agreed, An-Hyun also nodded in agreement. Looking expectantly at everyone, Lee Yu-Jung began to speak.

TN:

For the past couple of chapters, some characters were described as rude in their speech or disrespectful. Like how Lee Yu-Jung is described as talking casually etc.

오라버니 – Orabeoni is a formal version of Oppa.

MEMORIZE EP.25

Trap City. (4/4)

Please continue reading on

"I am absolutely against this. Look around you, between the forest and here, isn't the answer is obvious? I don't want to risk my life because of Oppa's bad feelings. I don't want to face the dangers outside this city like yesterday."

I thought maybe she would go along with my plan but I was wrong. Lee Yu-Jung voted against leaving and I was sure that the opposing vote would start coming out one by one. My mouth was becoming dry, still, I decided to be patient and let the chips fall.

Next was Kim Han-Byeol. I was hoping she would vote for my side so I turn my attention to her. Looking at me intently, she spoke with her usual cool tone.

“I really do not want to leave. However, after seeing the results he produced, I don’t think it will be bad following his reasoning. Rather, his judgement hasn’t lead us astray. I don’t think there is enough precedent as evidence but he is skilled. I can’t pick whether to agree or disagree. Therefore I will abstain.”

Kim Han-Byeol abstained and took the easy way out. Lee Yu-Jung looked confident that we would remain in the City as her face was all smiles. With the outcome uncertain, I decided to prepare for the worst. If the Boss Monster showed up, it would be trivial to beat it up. The problem was doing it without getting caught.

There was just An-Hyun and An-Sol left to vote. An-Hyun comforted his sister, stroking her hair.

“Sol.”

“Hm?”

“What would you like to do?”

Hearing An-Hyun, An-Sol looked troubled. She folded her fingers in uncertainty, counting the votes. Catching my eyes, she flinched in surprise and her face became red in embarrassment. She quickly turned her head away but afterwards kept stealing glances at me. Maybe she was sick?

“Sol you definitely against it~? Right? It’s safe and comfortable here. If we go outside the monsters roar~! And rush after us!”

I wonder when Lee Yu-Jung started to treat An-Sol like a child. Noticing that, An-Sol cheeks puffed up and her lips were puckered as she shook her head. Glancing at my way once more, she spoke in a soft voice.

“I... I want to support Su-Hyun Oppa.”

Oh.

“Then! Support! Huh? What? You agree with him?”

Lee Yu-Jung was nodding excitedly, then as An-Sol word registered in her mind her expression changed and lunged at her looking like a wolf trying to eat her alive. An-Sol swiftly clung to her brother. An-Hyun, even Kim Han-Byeol looked at her in shock. An-Sol shrank back from all the looks she was receiving and just mumbled for a while before speaking again.

“Yes, I agree.”

“Why! Just why!”

“Hik!...”

Beating back the vicious Lee Yu-Jung, An-Hyun spoke softly to the frightened An-Sol.

“Sol, tell everyone why you voted yes.”

“Um.... Hu... Just because. I just feel like we should. Because...”

Hearing that it was based on her feeling, An-Hyun’s expression changed for an instant. It was a short moment but I definitely saw it. I wondered why this would make him react like that.

“Ya! How can you base it on a feeling...”

“Shut up!”

Lee Yu-Jung became quiet when An-Hyun raised his voice. An-Hyun looked extremely serious. Frowns marred his brows as he looked at An-Sol. Unable to withstand the serious look she was receiving, An-Sol just bowed her head and pointed her finger towards me.

“Before it felt vague... But today in my dream I saw Su-Hyun Oppa.”

“Everyone please stay quiet for a moment. Sol, finish your story.”

“We were all sleeping in this room when a giant monster appeared. It looked like an alien and came to this exact building... everyone was in danger. We couldn’t do anything and it looks like we would all die, no, I was sure I saw everyone die. But then my dream suddenly changed.”

“How did it change?”

“Like a spring being unwound, the dream reversed back to the beginning and Su-Hyun Oppa appeared. When the monster came this time, it was different. Su-Hyun Oppa told everyone that he would stop the monster so we should all escape. I was being carried by Oppa out of the city and I looked back because I was worried about Su-Hyun Oppa but then the dream ended.”

“Do you remember anything in your dream?”

“I think I heard something terrifying at the end? Maybe a shout? I think I heard a sound but... I don’t know.”

We were silent as the grave as we focused on her story. Having come back to the past, for the first time I looked at her with in a new light. There were things that I didn’t know but this was beyond me.

In terms of her Attributes, she had 75 Magic and another 100 on Luck. My Magic was at 96 points and it was nothing to scoff at. If I entered Hall Plain as I was, this amount of Magic point would allow me to be one of the best Mages. With my Third Eyes, I had barely managed to see 1 second of the past. But through her dreams she had seen both the past and the future.

There was a subtle difference between me and An-Sol. I could see exactly what had happened in the past and see it whenever I wanted to. An-Sol's dream lack the certainty and seems to activate randomly. This must be all thanks to her extremely high Luck point.

With this, it solved one mystery I wondered about. The reason why I couldn't find the party during my first time in Hall Plain. Somehow, they had all managed to gather together and had reached this City. They had exceeded their two safe days and been attacked by the Boss Monster. An-Sol must have been the only survivor left.

"Haa...."

An-Hyun gave a loud sigh. Having finished her story, An-Sol seems unsure as she looked at everyone for their response. Tapping his fingers on the floor, An-Hyun was deep in thought. Looking perturbed he spoke to all of us.

"I also agree with Hyung's opinion."

"What, why? You also said you didn't want to leave...! Are you taking your sister's side now?"

Lee Yu-Jung couldn't believe what was happening and immediately tackled the issue. An-Hyun replied apologetically.

"I am not taking sides. This might sound funny or not but..."

Dipping his face, indicating An-Sol who was still clinging onto him, he spoke.

"I was with Sol for 19 years. There were so many things that happened and every time her feelings were uncannily accurate."

Of course, with 100 Luck point, she gained intuition and clairvoyance and it was also possible to predict the future. Though rank did support the skill to a point.

Lee Yu-Jung frowned and lamented.

"This feeling and intuitions. I had enough."

"I am not lying. Whenever Sol was feeling uneasy, some bad always happened. The dream is a bit unusual but... Anyways, there are 3 yes votes, 1 against and 1 abstain."

As we all agreed, we are going to follow the opinion with the most vote. Everyone get up, let's head out now."

"We are going to leave right now?"

"With Sol dream, it's best that we leave as fast as possible. Everyone, pack only the essentials. Hyung, just in case can you go out on patrol?"

"Ok. Will do so. If everyone is done, shout."

Seeing the change in An-Hyun from yesterday, I felt content. Equipping the crossbow on the left arm, I shook the dust off and left.

There was a subtle difference about An-Hyun. He undertook to patrol the area this morning and was overall strangely proactive. The private exchange from yesterday was not enough to completely change his inner troubles. However, looking at his recent attitude, he seems to have taken my word to heart and was doing the best he could. Happily humming at his positive change, I began to look around.

Just as An-Hyun said, the best time to leave was now. Bumbling about and procrastinating had to be absolutely avoided so that we could avoid travelling in the dark. Leaving in the morning and finding a safe spot by the afternoon would be a much better alternative. With the bustling and hustling about below, it seems like they were planning to bring as much as they could carry.

Breathing in the still chilly air, I felt refreshed. If this party was made of Park Don-Gul, Lee Bo-Rim and Lee Shin-Wu I am sure they would be throwing up a racket trying to stay. However, things had turned out for the better, with the party being composed of high-status Players. A moment of silence pleases for Park Don-Gul and his party.

We had survived the passed the forest, which was the most physically demanding area of the Rite of Passage and broke through the psychological barrier that was the Trap Point. If we remained vigilant against the randomly appearing Boss Monster and the other survivors, we would have a much easier time heading toward the central warp gate. Other monsters would definitely appear as well...

"Excuse me..."

When I was about to recollect all the monsters that could appear while we headed to centre, I heard someone calling for me. Turning around, I saw Kim Han-Byeol with a small bag on her back. It seems her preparations were over.

"Yes. Are you ready?"

“I finished my preparations but the others are still getting ready.”

“I see. Then I will keep watch for a bit longer.”

“... Could we talk for a minute?”

I was bewildered by her sudden request to chat. Nodding I gave a positive reply.

“Yes, anytime.”

Searching my face, she slowly approached me. I wondered what she wanted to speak to me about. Carefully judging my expression, she cautiously spoke.

“Did you perhaps... Did Yu-Jung Unni or An-Hyun Oppa tell you anything?”

“About the fight you and Yu-Jung had?”

“That... and anything else?”

I shook my head as I had not heard anything particular about Kim Han-Byeol.

“I see. Well...”

Her story wasn't anything special. All of it was just about her rejecting Lee Yu-Jung's proposal of going out. I felt a bit bitter when she said the remainder that survived should try and stay alive, but knowing that it wasn't her true intention I could let it pass easily. Rather than looking like a shallow-hearted bastard, I thought to let it go was better. No matter, this was such a common occurrence in Hall Plain there was nothing to get upset about.

“... I am sorry. I was just so angry back then. Looking it from your side, it must have been really unpleasant...”

It's the first hearing such dead response from her usual tranquil voice. It looks like she still wanted to maintain a relationship with Lee Yu-Jung but it was difficult for me to butt in. Smiling, I gave her a reassuring answer.

“No, don't worry about it. Rather, I think you did alright.”

“.....”

“Really. You gave a calm judgement to the situation at hand. If they went out then and there, Lee Yu-Jung and An-Hyun would have definitely been attacked. I don't think you need to apologise for this.”

“But...”

“I am worried about Yu-Jung as she is very hot tempered, it’s quite fortunate that you are here to calm her down. If the same situation arises next time, please stay your course. I think that will be much better.”

“... Thank you.”

We caught each other’s gaze as we finished speaking. I could see that her smile had returned. She had smiled for a brief moment but at that moment, she was beautiful.

Unexpectedly... I was reminded of ‘her’ in Hall Plain.

MEMORIZE EP.26

Meeting Some People I Know. (1/3)

Please continue reading on

Warning: Some disturbing content in this chapter, reader discretion is advised.

Amongst the monsters appearing in the Rite of Passage, a monster called Mankey had a similar appearance to simians. Unlike Deadmen, these Mankeys were proper monsters. They were covered in soft furs so they had a non-existent defence, however, they were cunning and moved around in packs of 4 or 5. This monster was difficult for a beginner to handle.

“U-ki! U-ki-ki!”

And currently, we were fighting 5 Mankeys that were as big as us. They were bulky with extremely long tail, though powerful they weren’t as nimble. They had a surprise jump attacks, but most of the damages could be mitigated by avoiding the monster’s landing points.

“U-ki! U-ki-ki!”

“Be careful!”

An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol was engaged in a difficult battle with three of these Mankeys. Lee Yu-Jung and I were each taking care of one of these Mankeys, so we were at a numerical disadvantage. But it was only numerical.

It was then. In their back and forth struggle, I saw one of the Mankey An-Hyun was battle slip away and was readying for a jump. Judging its readiness, it seems it was targeting me. Usually, preying on the precarious Lee Yu-Jung was the normal course of action, though it looks like these Mankeys didn’t like to attack women.

These Mankeys had a strong desire to breed that they became crazy when they saw females, especially Fairies (I personally thought that they went out of their ways to catch

Fairies.) They went stir crazy when they saw human females that these monsters planned to kill all the guys first and then capture the girls.

“Hyung! Yu-Jung! One of them disappeared!”

An-Hyun shouted in a loud voice. His situation was slightly alleviated as his frantic fight against 3 monsters was reduced by one. He was still a novice yet he took his eye away from this life and death battle.

Hearing An-Hyun’s shout, Lee Yu-Jung took a more defensive posture. Handling one of these monsters was difficult, but hearing that she might have to engage two of them, her body instinctively cowered. Soon the crouched Mankey jumped high into the air with a shriek. This was the moment I was waiting for.

Ping!

Without delay, I pulled on the string. With a sharp sound resonating in the air, the bolt pierced the Mankey’s head. There was the advantage of extra force while falling from the sky, however, the monster hadn’t thought about the disadvantage of being unable to move freely. Or maybe it thought it was impossible to be hit so easily. I was currently let the kid’s practice right now if I became serious....

‘Ugh. There’s no point speaking my mind.’

“Oppa! On your side!”

I know, I know. While I was aiming for the monster in the air, another Mankey tried to blind side me. Without looking, I avoided the attack by a sheer millimetre and with the bolt in my right hand stab the other Mankey’s head. A clean counter. I could feel the bolt smoothly penetrate the flesh of the monster.

“Klllllll...”

Kung!

With a mournful cry, the Mankey in front of me collapsed. At the same time, the corpse of the Mankey in the air landed. In 3 seconds I eliminated 2 of the monsters. I quickly recovered the bolts and observed the situation. Everyone was still fighting.

Like before An-Hyun was fighting with a sword and shield combo, while Kim Han-Byeol was wielding a slightly thin long sword though her attacks were rough. Lee Yu-Jung was dashing around with two sharply trimmed daggers.

An-Hyun was in front, engaging with his sword and shield and when an opening appeared, Kim Han-Byeol pierced through. When they broke through, An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol attack simultaneously. While the tactic was rough on the edges, the results

spoke for themselves. On the other hand, Lee Yu-Jung was struggling with reach and was having trouble attacking. She frequently managed to land a blow on the Mankey's arm, but more often than not she only slashed air as the Mankey retreated back.

It has been only 3, 4 days since they grabbed a weapon, expecting anymore was impossible. Rather, it proved that they were high stat Players as we made fast progress through the Rite of Passage. Exhaling lightly, I aimed my crossbow toward the Mankey Lee Yu-Jung was fighting. I wasn't going to finish it off, rather make an opening for her to take advantage of.

Ping!

"Kiiiiii!"

The bolt flew and pierced into the right chest of the Mankey. Unlike the Deadmen, the Mankey's could feel pain. It gave off a pained shriek and staggered back. Lee Yu-Jung's eyes lit up as she saw the bolt in the Mankey's chest and she took the opening. Leaning low, she pushed into attack range, show off her 50 agility points.

"Die! You fucking pervert monkeys!"

Spewing profanity, Lee Yu-Jung attacked like she met her lifelong enemy, her daggers crossed. At the same time hearing a below from An-Hyun, it seems he was going for the final blow.

One, two, three, four, five seconds. After five seconds, the Mankey's the party was fighting all collapsed. The Mankey Lee Yu-Jung was fighting had a large X slash on its chest. The Mankey An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol was fighting was littered with cuts and wounds. The shallow wounds afflicted from the beginning of the battle had affected them to the point a single blow was enough to end it. Ah, this must be what it's like training people.

The three looked at the Mankey I killed, shook their heads and slumped to the ground. They breathed heavily while trying to relieve their tension. It was understandable seeing how their usual tempo of one enemy had increased to five.

"Ah... Shit. I am covered in Monkey blood. I feel like crap."

Shaking the blood out of her bob cut hair, Lee Yu-Jung spat on the ground. Lying on the ground plastered in blood, she looked strong and beautiful like the Goddess of War. An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol was no different. Their clothes were torn and dried blood spattered their whole body here and there. The only people who were better off was An-Sol and me.

Closing my eyes, I began to get lost in my thoughts.

It has been 3 days since we left the City. We had survived for four days and today was the fifth day. If we kept going at this pace, we might be able to reach the Warp Gate by the sixth, or by the latest seventh day.

During the five days together, our life was monotonous and also a spectacle. We walked, and fought, and rested, and walked, and fought. Repeat and rinse. The first monster we encountered after leaving the City was Mandragoras, in that battle we almost lost An-Sol. The monster appeared out of nowhere from the ground, with its mouth wide open. Everyone screamed in shock except for me.

An-Hyun ran in without a plan and was hurt from the thorns, thankful I was able to respond in time. Through that incident, Kim Han-Byeol and Lee Yu-Jung seems to have realised something as they grabbed the weapons available at the Safe Point and declared they would fight. An-Hyun expressed his displeasure at the girls fighting, but they were determined.

I didn't know if they felt troubled relying on me and An-Hyun to fight all the battles or if they genuinely wanted to help. But one thing I could see clearly in their eyes was a strong desire to survive. Seeing as both of them needed the practice, I readily nodded my head.

From then on, we left the Safe Point and passed by the forest and came upon a person. The exact place we found her was the stomping ground of these Mankeys. She was quite pretty but unfortunately, we were too late as she was already dead. Her body was almost stripped naked, with her clothes torn in pieces. Bruises could be seen all over her body. Steam could be seen rising from her pubic area, with white semen flowing out. It looks like she was raped by the Mankeys just short while ago before we arrived. Seeing blood trickling out from her mouth, she seems to have killed herself unable to endure what was happening.

Looking at the scene, Lee Yu-Jung became mad with anger desperately asking to destroy all the monkeys. By chance, we happened upon five Mankeys with their genitalia exposed and immediately fought them off. Mostly likely these Mankeys must have heard Lee Yu-Jung's rant and came at us. With the girl dead and having smelt fresh female prey, in their excited state they wouldn't have left us alone.

In conclusion, victory was ours. Thinking we should be more carefully from now on, I snapped out of my thoughts.

"Sol, can you give Unni a towel and a water star?"

"What did you say?"

Lee Yu-Jung immediately jumped onto Kim Han-Byeol's mistake.

"Ah, sorry. I was tired so it didn't come out right. Not a water star, a bottle of water."

“Yes... Unni it must be difficult.”

“Bullshit. Look at Oppa, how can he kill those Monkeys so easily? Gimme the crossbow! I wanna use it!”

I chuckled awkwardly at Lee Yu-Jung’s tantrum. If it’s unfair, why don’t you become stronger?

‘Me, I had no one to help me in the beginning. I crawled through with only my sword.’

Of course, I couldn’t actually say that, so I just chuckled awkwardly.

With their little experience in handling the weapon, they seem to have realised there was something different about how I fought. Kim Han-Byeol was sitting cautiously regulating her breathing, while An-Hyun was breathing heavily looking at me seriously.

“Hyung, were you part of the special forces? How can you fire the crossbow so well?”

“... You learn everything in the army these days.”

“Oppa, don’t joke. Shooting probably, but learning the crossbow?”

“You haven’t even gone to Seoul. Tell it to me after you go to the army. You think it’s a place where they teach you only how to shoot guns? Guns, swords, Taekwondo and all kind of martial arts including techniques with daggers, darts, bow and crossbow.”

An-Hyun, Lee Yu-Jung and An-Sol had a strange expression on their face after hearing my explanation. Seeing Kim Han-Byeol smile, it seems she was the only person to realise I was speaking nonsense. Though there was nothing to worry about. With the team set in stone, this much was permissible.

“Ah... I don’t know. I want to rest right now, I don’t need this headache right now.”

“If you are going to rest, sit or stand up. What if you get attack right now?”

“Don’t know, don’t know, don’t know, don’t know. Sol. Can you get me a chocolate, please? I am hungry.”

“Sol, give me one as well.”

“Me too.”

“Yes~. I will bring it right now~.”

At Lee Yu-Jung, An-Hyun and Kim Han-Byeol’s request, An-Sol moved quickly to get it. At An-Hyun’s strong insistence, An-Sol was left out of the battle. Instead, she was our

helper. She seems content as her she liked to help people and these small request didn't bother her.

I slowly sat down as I observed An-Sol smiling brightly as she handed out a water bottle.

Human's adaptation to their surrounding was astounding and with a deep desire to live, the synergy between this two aspect created an amazing effect. I felt these words were true. Even if they were high stat Players, these girls were living ordinary lives just a few days ago and now were wielding weapons proficiently against monsters. I laughed as I remember the first time I defeated these monsters and shuddered at the thought of taking a life for the first time.

Though a slight cause for concern but after having fought through so many life and death battle with these monsters, they didn't feel any mercy for them. But if their opponent was a person? Will they be able to fight decisively without hesitating? If there was an opportunity, I wanted to the party have such an experience. Though I don't think we will have that chance.

"Hey, I think it's time to go. Let's keep a steady pace till we find a yellow roof. Hyung you alright?"

"Yeah."

These Rest Rooms will become more difficult to find as we get closer to the Central Gate. There was no need to demoralise them, so I just replied simply. Lee Yu-Jung looked slightly at ease as she nodded. Dusting off her cloth as she was about to stand up, I followed suit. But I stopped what I was doing. Currently my magical detection was off for practice reason, however, I could hear several footsteps.

I turned my head toward the bushes where I heard a noise.

"Huh, who the hell are you."

At that moment, we saw four people appearing from the thickets.

TN:

망키 vs 원숭이

Phonetically 망키 sounds like monkey. Bit of a problem here but 망키 is also Korean translation for Pokemon Mankey.

Also, there was a bit of word play:

"솔아. 언니 수건 하나랑 물 한별만."

"아아, 소리. 힘들어서 말이 잘못 나왔어. 한별이 아니라 한 병만."

물 한별만 (water star) vs 한 병만 (water bottle)

Or 별 vs 병, they sound really similar but different enough. Though it's difficult to fully capture this in English. So I just did it literally.

MEMORIZE EP.27

Meeting Some People I Know. (2/3)

Please continue reading on

A total of four people appeared from the thickets, with a ratio of three guys and one girl. They all had disheveled hair and their clothes were in poor shape like a vagabond. I didn't mean this as an insult as our own clothes were in a similar shape.

I quickly looked over the four of them. The one at the furthest left was a guy with short sports hairstyle and was holding a large bow in his right hand. He looked like a guy who knew how to handle a bow. His lips were pressed tightly and he looked at us with his hollow eyes. I felt he was a guy with a very reserved personality.

'Huh...?'

I didn't know what it was but he seemed quite familiar. If it was a Player I knew, that meant the person was active in Hall Plain. He looked very common, but for now, I put this aside and went to the next person in a clockwise direction.

Next person was right at the front, his hair was so long that it reached his hips. His face was very slender and he had slim features, if you saw him from the back you would mistake him for a girl. But from his firm chin and sharp eyes, you could tell he was a guy.

In the centre was a girl that was protected by everyone, she looked refined. She looked trouble and was looking around. It seems she was searching for something.

Finally, on the right end, there was a guy spinning his sword and flashing his teeth. His shifty actions really grated on my nerves. The silence was broken as the lead guy with an exhausted voice spoke about us.

"I think they are survivors just like us."

"There is nothing to be amazed about, we met some survivors before."

The person holding the bow replied stiffly. The guy playing around with the sword, tossing it and catching, laughed at us and acted boorishly.

"Tsk tsk... They look what, early twenty? Poor bastards... they are only children."

Hearing that, An-Hyun immediately took a position with his shield and took a step forward. I quickly grabbed his shoulder and shook my head, telling him to wait it out.

Fortunately, An-Hyun understood my intentions. He gritted his teeth and stepped back. Seeing this, that thuggish guy playing with his sword chuckled and his eyes became wild.

“Did you see that? That punk looking bastard. He became angry because of what I said. Ah man, I just can’t say anything can I? Scary.”

“You provoked him first. Step back and look after Jung-Min.”

“... Tsk.”

After being criticised by the bow-wielding guy, he pouted his lips and stayed quiet. However, my party was already cold and stiff by their response. The party was put off by their conversation, talking amongst themselves like we weren’t even there.

Slowly the tension was rising until the long hair man spoke up.

“Hello, nice to meet you. My name is Wu Jing-Min. As you must know by now, I am just another person that got brought into this miserable place.”

‘Wu Jung-Min. The Crimson Canine’s Clan Lord?’

I was startled, remembering who he was. That devilish existence with his trademarked dual wielding. Are you telling me that the person in front of me was that Wu Jung-Min...?

I immediately activated my Third Eye.

< Player Status >

1. Name : Wu Jung-Min(Year(s) 0)
2. Sex : Male(26)
3. Height · Weight : 177.9cm · 65.7kg
4. Alignment : True · Chaos

[Strength 51] [Resistance 43] [Agility 59] [Vitality 48] [Magic Power 55] [Luck 36]

I thought that no one could surpass An-Hyun’s stat in the Rite of Passage, but Wu Jung-Min’s stats broke that idea into pieces. I was astonished as in front of my eyes was that Wu Jung-Min, the Clan Lord of Crimson Canine that was in charge of United Army.

“... An-Hyun. Same as you.”

An-Hyun’s blunt reply cause an uproar in Wu Jung-Min’s party. Rather than that, I sharpened my sense. If he really, truly was that Wu Jung-Min, then I could guess who

that bow-wielding man was as he was a part of the lower half of the 10 strongest in Hall Plain...

Should I kill him now? But I immediately discarded that idea. If I was alone, I would kill him without hesitation. With the party with me, it was impossible. Before I knew it, both my party and Wu Jung-Min's party had drawn our weapons.

That thug spoke to An-Hyun dismissively.

"That's why we can't treat children with kindness. You said you were An-Hyun? If you don't want to die, you better fix your manners."

"Oppa. We don't have time to fight."

"This isn't the first time. We can kill them in an instant, so keep quiet and wait."

The woman at the centre spoke for the first time but that thug interjected. At this she gave him a terrifying glare, daring him to step out of line. The thug clicked his tongue as he got the woman's message.

"Ah~. I get it, I get it. Stop glaring at me. Before I eat you alive. Ah. That's a joke. A joke. Why can't she take a joke... Never mind. You greenhorns. I am Chun Seun-Hyun. I want to ask you one thing, about these five monkeys, did you kill them?"

"If we did what you going to do about it?"

Chun Seun-Hyun. The moment I see you in Hall Plain, you are dead. Thinking on these murderous thoughts, a clear voice rang through the clearing. The voice was filled with sharp hostility. I prayed that it wasn't Lee Yu-Jung's voice. But it was. She had a big ego and seeing an upgrade version of Park Don-Gul, she couldn't help but butt head with Chun Seun-Hyun. Blinking in surprise, Chun Seun-Hyun laughed and clapped his hands in applause.

"Bwahahaha~. Ha.... Keep it in, keep it in. Keke, you bitch I will let it slide just this once. We aren't feeling mighty generous right now. And w~e a~r~e rea~lly bu~sy. Kapish? So just answer our questions quickly and we can all say our bye-bye. Ah. Show some manners when you speak~. Well, you don't really have to. I won't warn you twice anyways."

Lee Yu-Jung had that distinctive smirk as Chun Seun-Hyun finished.

"You maniac. No, you imbecile. You won't give us a warning, so what? You think you are worth something? You poor bastard."

Lee Yu-Jung's retort was refreshing as always. In one way, Chun Seun-Hyun was exactly like Park Don-Gul. Seeing her spewing profanities with her gentle face, Chun

Seun-Hyun stared at us blankly. Chun Seun-Hyun gave a loud sigh and tightened his grip on his sword. I focused on my right hand.

“These bastards are just like dogs, you have to discipline them for them to obey. Anyways, farewell.”

That trash talking Chun Seun-Hyun suddenly lifted his right arm and threw the sword he was playing with. The sword flew fast and was targeting Lee Yu-Jung’s head. At this point, An-Hyun had given up trying to pull Lee Yu-Jung back and had rather moved quickly with his shield in front. An-Hyun was suspicious of Chun Seun-Hyun from the very beginning, having been firmly gripping on his shield the whole time he managed blocked the sword without problem. And me...

Kang!

Ping! Puk.

“Aaaaaaaa!”

The sword smashed into the shield and fell by the wayside. At the same time, my bolt pierced Chun Seun-Hyun’s right arm. Clutching his right arm, Chun Seun-Hyun screamed in pain. The situation was simple, while An-Hyun was blocking the sword I aimed my crossbow and shot that bastard.

Of course, the other party did not stand still. In an instant, the bow-wielding man had pulled on his bowstring and tried to shoot first but from the ‘Ting’ sound I found that it was an empty draw. With great urgency in my heart, I pulled all the strength I had and in a split second had 3 bolts aimed at the bowman’s head. At the same time, I activated my Third Eye.

< Player Status >

1. Name : Seon Yu-Un(Year(s) 0)
2. Sex : Male(25)
3. Height · Weight : 180.9cm · 78.4kg
4. Alignment : True · Neutral

[Strength 45] [Resistance 48] [Agility 62] [Vitality 54] [Magic Power 50] [Luck 50]

Click! Chakka!

Seon Yu-Un. It was him without a doubt. With a class as an Archer, he would become one of the most powerful Players in Hall Plain. In that slight delay between firing and rearming the crossbow, we had both managed to aim our weapons at each other’s head at the same time. In terms of stat points, there was a huge difference between him and

me, but strictly speaking, I was slightly faster. Seon Yu-Un realised that as I could see his eyes trembling.

A cool tension permeated my party. There was a deafening silence and I could feel An-Hyun, Lee Yu-Jung and Kim Han-Byeol gripping their weapons tightly. They all were ready to fight the moment everything went south. In all of this, Chun Seun-Hyun was being a huge distraction as he rolled on the floor screaming.

“Aaaaa, Uaaaak! Kill them! Ya! Kill that fucker now! Kill him!”

“... The person who started this was you. Seun-Hyun. Shut up, you are embarrassing us.”

Chun Seun-Hyun began crying as he was reprimanded by Wu Jung-Min and cradled his right hand. I turned my gaze to Lee Yu-Jung. She was trembling, not having expected Chun Seun-Hyun to actually throw his sword at her. Wu Jung-Min, who was observing the situation silently from the beginning, looked at Chun Seun-Hyun with contempt before turning toward us.

“Let me apologise first. This has been escalated enough, so why don't we stop? There is no benefit for either of us.”

“I want to but your side hasn't dropped your bow.”

“Seon Yu-Un, end this. Release the string and put your bow away.”

Wu Jung-Min put his hand on Seon Yu-Un's bow and forcefully pushed it down. Catching my eyes, Seon Yu-Un complied and let down his bow. After making sure that they kept their word, I slowly dropped my right arm. Though right now, both I and Seon Yu-Un hadn't unloaded our bolts or arrow. Wu Jung-Min lifted both his hand and stepped toward my party.

“Sorry. These guys aren't usually like this but we are in a tight situation right now so we might have been rough. Right now, we want to ask you something... we are really short on time so I will go straight to the main point.”

The party all look at me, even An-Hyun. I nodded slightly.

“What do you want to know?”

“We have been chasing these monkeys till yesterday. For certain reasons, we left our spot for a short while... during that time one of our member was kidnapped by these monsters. Thank you for taking care of them but did you perhaps saw a girl?”

A woman Player... Perhaps her?

This reminded me of the woman that killed herself after been raped by those monkeys.

“Oppa, could it be that woman with that yellow cloth? With that long hair?”

Giving out a loud sigh, I face palmed. Did this girl ever think before speaking? There was dumb and there was this. I tutted at this thoughtlessly speaking Lee Yu-Jung. Hearing what Lee Yu-Jung said, the other parties faces brightened. The woman who complained about the lack of time was the one who asked us excitedly.

“Yes! She wore a yellow cloth and have long hair! Do you know where she is?”

“Ah... Um...”

Lee Yu-Jung looked bewildered and couldn't respond properly. We just looked at each other silently without answering them. We were now certain that it was the dead woman that was raped by the monkeys. There was no easy way to tell her that. As we remained silent, the guys in the other party stiffened and guessed what had happened. However, the woman constantly appealed and begged us.

“Did you pass by on the way here? Or did you at least see her?”

“.....”

“Please. Please. Just tell me where you saw her. She's my younger sister. She's really friendly... and innocent... sniff...”

Seeing tears in her eyes, the party looked toward me.

You did so well by yourselves just now but you just have to give me all these complicated situations. Letting out a miserable sigh, I slowly opened my mouth to answer her.

MEMORIZE EP.28

Meeting Some People I Know. (3/3)

Please continue reading on

“We did see a girl on the way here. But we can't confirm that the person we saw was the same person that was kidnapped.”

I tried to reduce the shock as much as possible but all I could see in the woman's eyes was that she was certain. She nodded quickly and asked again.

“It's fine I am grasping for any thread I can find. I can't be sure about long hair but if she was wearing a yellow one piece, then I am certain it was her.”

“Even if you say it was a yellow one piece... the cloth was in pieces so we aren't certain.”

“Wa... What?”

She began to stutter. Wu Jung-Min, Seon Yu-Un and Chun Seun-Hyun's fists were clenched tightly already anticipating what was to come. But her eye's still held hope. Her voice trembled, trying to deny her premonition.

“Why... why was the cloth torn into pieces?”

“We found the woman collapsed next to a tree. When we checked her... she was already dead.”

“Won Hye-Su...!”

The woman called Won Hye-Su slumped to the ground looking stupor. Chun Seun-Hyun hurried to support her but it was too late as her leg's slumped completely. Everyone could understand loss and seeing Won Hye-Su on the ground, I could only feel pity for her.

Silence permeated the air for a while.

“How did Hye-Yun die?”

Wu Jung-Min seemed to have already accepted reality and asked me with a strong voice. But with misery being reeking into the air, I am sure he was unconsciously trembling inside. I stayed silent for the moment. Though Wu Jung-Min didn't relent and asked me again.

“It's okay. We can guess what happened. Just tell us as you saw it.”

“... We saw blood leaking from her mouth. We think she killed herself by biting off her tongue.”

“Wait. Wait just a moment. That's impossible. There is no way she would kill herself.”

“When we found her, she was almost nude. And... from her genitals we could see those monkey's semen coming out.”

As I finished the atmosphere became cold. I could see the fury in Wu Jung-Min, rage filled his eyes and his fist was clenched so tightly. I felt he was going to explode any moment. Next, to him, Seon Yu-Un had blood in his eyes due to how angry he was. The feeling of loss and ire could be felt clearly.

Won Hye-Su in her stupor, looking blankly in the sky screamed.

“Ha... Haha.... Ha.... HaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

“Hye-Su! Get a hold of yourself!

“AAAAAAAAAAAAA! AAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

Her denial was so wildly that the impudent Chun Seun-Hyun took a step back. Won Hye-Su kept punching the ground, screaming as she fell deeper into denial.

“Impossible! Hye-Yun! Hye-Yun isn’t dead! It’s a lie! A lie! Hye-YuunAAAAAAAAAAAA!”

“Won Hye-Su! Snap out of it! We lost Jin-Tae as well. Don’t you remember? You told us to keep a hold of ourselves and face reality. So how can you do this now!”

“Shut up! Hye-Yun! Hye-Yun is!”

She looked around wildly and then caught my eyes. Her lips were pursed in anger as she suddenly stood up and ran toward me wildly. Shocked, Seon Yu-Un and Chun Seun-Hyun grabbed onto her arms but she still screamed curses at me.

“A lie! Stop lying! There is no way she’s dead! You are lying, right? Right? Say you lied...! Say it, say iiiitttaaaAAAAAA!”

“Hye-Su... Let’s go check for ourselves. So stay calm.”

Chun Seun-Hyun tried to comfort her but Won Hye-Su was already half mad. Staring dazedly at her, I spoke in a soft voice.

“The corpse is that way about 30 minutes by walking. There aren’t many trees there. I am sorry about your sister.”

“You evil bastard! Did you kill Hye-Yun! Huh, did you!?! Stop lying! No. You must have run away like a coward when you saw Hye-Yun being attacked. You ran away when you could have saved her! You fucking coowaarddddDDDDD!”

“What? You crazy bitch... Oppa?”

While Lee Yu-Jung felt bad for her, it seems she couldn’t handle Won Hye-Su swearing at me. I put my hand on her shoulder and shook my head. Lee Yu-Jung looked frustrated but seeing my grim demeanour she pulled back. Wu Jung-Min who had been staring absently into the sky, raise his right hand.

Clap!

Won Hye-Su, who had been pouring curses at me, was slapped. Her cheek was red with her expression filled with disbelief, looking at Wu Jung-Min's hand. Wu Jung-Min looked disappointed as he looked down at Won Hye-Su.

"Stop, Won Hye-Su. This is appalling."

"Wha, what?"

"Face reality... Hu, this isn't it. You probably won't hear whatever I say right now. Stop venting your anger and face what happened."

"Ha.... Yeah. Forget it. It's because she isn't your sister, right~. Yeah. She might just be a girl you met for four days, but, but, but! I am different. We have been together for 20 years! So what? Face reality?"

Won Hye-Su spoke with a maliciously childish voice as she looked at Seon Yu-Un pitifully. Unable to withstand her gaze, Seon Yu-Un turned away. Won Hye-Su started to sob once more. Even my Third Eye would say she was mad right now, her disappointment, frustration, fear and confusion.

"Won Hye-Su, have you gone insane? You know me who threw the sword would sound like a hypocrite but you can't do this! Calm down and snap out of it. Why are you like this?"

"Yeah, I am crazy. I rather be crazy right now. So let me go. I said let me go!"

Her hysteria became worse. Wu Jung-Min let out a loud sigh and spoke in a heavy tone.

"I don't think you are crazy. We lost Jin-Tae as well, so we know how it feels like losing your cherished sister. Anyone who saw your relationship for the past four days will understand what you are going through. And... this person hasn't proven it was Won Hye-Yun yet."

"Yeah, they could be lying to us. They said they only saw part of her cloth. I want to go right now. I am going to go now. Its... it definitely won't be her. There is just no way."

Human's were called rational animals. But Won Hye-Su did an 180 away from her rational thoughts. She had begged, then denied, then was filled with anger and then became hopeful. It was exactly as they said, she was going crazy. Won Hye-Su rejected all talks of her sister's death and only held hope that she was still alive. It's not the first time I saw someone going through this but I was not completely apathetic to it.

"Stop. You saw Hye-Yun being taken by those monkey monsters."

"If you are not going with me, then I will go alone. So let me go. I need to go. I need to go right now."

“... Jung-Min. Let the two of us go for now. Check it for ourselves... see if the corpse...”

Chun Seun-Hyun spoke cautiously but feeling Won Hye-Su’s glare he stopped speaking. When Chun Seun-Hyun released his hold on Won Hye-Su, she began running in the direction I indicated before. The guys in the party looked awkwardly at each other and then swiftly followed after her. Though Wu Jung-Min stayed where he was.

“Sorry for troubling you like this. I have only been with them for four days but Won Hye-Su and Won Hye-Won were inseparable.”

An-Hyun nodded sympathetically. He was holding An-Sol tightly with his right arm, troubled by what he just saw. Wu Jung-Min looked bitter as he turned to turned his eyes on me.

“Thank you for avenging her. For lifting your hand. But... you aren’t lying to us right?”

“What?”

Wu Jung-Min had suddenly turned aggressive and searched everyone’s expression. Then he just smiled and spoke again.

“Well... you don’t look like the type to lie. Then excuse me, I have to head out now.”

“Let me express my sympathies once again. Unfortunately, we are busy as well so we will depart now.”

“Ah, wait. You with the crossbow. Come here for a bit.”

Being stopped suddenly, I turned to face him. I slowly walked toward him. Wu Jung-Min lowered his voice, making sure only I could hear what he was about to say.

“It’s not much of a compensation but... let me tell you one piece of information. Are you going to the Central Warp Gate, right? Don’t answer, just nod slightly.”

As I nodded, Wu Jung-Min whispered quietly in my ear.

TN:

Sorry for the late update but while I was translating 26, I thought releasing 26-28 at once would be better. So here it is.

MEMORIZE EP.29

Why are you doing this? (1/2)

Please continue reading on

“Is your party perhaps also going to the Warp Gate at the centre?”

“I’m not making this up. You won’t make it. Don’t go there. We were able to reach Warpgate two days ago. But we failed at 300 meters. Why? We stumbled about, hesitating what to do. Then we decided to retreat. If we made that decision a little quicker than ... Jin-tae would still be...”

“ ... ”

“You know the about the conditions to survive right? It’s for the best to hold on for seven days. Your party will never be able to beat that thing. If it weren’t for Jin-tae, we would all have been killed by that monster. We were quite a distant from the monster but it knew exactly where we were.”

“That monster...”

The conditions for the Boss monster appearing was dependent on the time stayed in each Points. There was also a chance for random appearance but frankly it was unpredictable. Rather than the Boss monster appearing near the Warp Gate, I was more surprised by the fact that the group managed to reached Warp Gate in three days and managed to survive the encounter.

The situation was quite credible as Wu Jung-min and Seon Yu-un reputation would resound all over Hall Plane in the future. The crying face of Won Hye-su came up in my mind. She heaped curses on me while looking at me but this didn’t offend me.

Because I knew so well what it was like to lose a precious person. I was in the exact same position as her back then. After losing Hyung and her, I went crazy for a while. If I collected all the blood I spilt during that time, it could probably fill a few swimming pools.

“An-Hyun.”

While walking along I could hear Lee Yu-jung calling for An-hyun. As An-Hyun lifted his head to respond, she whispered rather than talk with her usually loud voice.

“Thank you”

“For what?”

“ ... For saving me back there.”

An-hyun tilted his head and remember, “Aha.” Nodding his head as he recalled shielding her.

“Anyway, your temper is a problem. Kill your temper for a bit and let us live in peace. If I wasn’t wary of the guy from the start you would be stuck with a sword in your head.”

“He was so frustrating!”

“It’s what it is. Why don’t you try putting at least half the effort Hyung puts into treating others? Or try to resemble half of Han-byeol’s personality. What’s the point of having a pretty face, when your personality is like a dog.”

“Ha... Half? Really...? Ah.... Hu, Hmph! Su-hyun Oppa is suffering so much because of us. I hate it.”

Yu-jung turned bright red when An-hyun called her pretty and looked away quickly. An-hyun’s looked on surprised at this seemingly girlish act from Yu-jung. This much was a great development already, no arguments had broken out to my great relief.

An-sol who was listening to the conversation between two tightened her grip on An-Hyun’s collar and An-hyun automatically reached out and stroked her hair gently. Seeing the smirk on An-sol’s face, Lee Yu-jung eye’s became sharp. Only the dull An-hyun missed the silent feud surrounding him and was striding forward with careful alertness. Why is it that all the popular men were so block-headed? Tsk, tsk.

We walked at a fast pace for a while and was able to see the Safe Point just as the sun was about to set. And we did not encounter a single monster on the way. The party was happy with our lucky break but this was not something to be delighted about.

We have always been attacked by monsters, except for the short while in the City, after leaving the forest. In serious circumstances, An-sol usually screamed like when she saw the bodies of the Mankeys. I had intentionally led the party into monsters encounters and they were reaping the reward for their efforts.

There were reasonably intelligent monsters surrounding the vicinity of the Warp Gate. Mankey’s were one of the toughest monsters in the Rite of Passage and the party managed to kill five of them. These intelligent monsters probably knew by know that many monsters have been killed by our party. Their sensitive sense of smell allowing them to sniff the dry blood on us.

This was my theory before my whispered conversation with Wu Jung-min. If the Boss monster had been summoned and was wandering around the Warp Gate, all the monsters would have fled that region by now as the Boss monster was on the top of the food chain.

In other words, if we do not encounter any monsters on the way there tomorrow, it was mostly likely we would confront the Boss monsters in front of Warp Gate like Wu Jung-

min's party. It was an ironic situation. We left the City to avoid the Boss monster but we were now throwing ourselves back into the fire.

Of course, there were differences between the two situations. The chance of Boss encounter in the City was 100% but the Boss encounter at the Warp Gate wasn't so certain.

I thought for a while and a question popped in my head. Conditions definitely existed which defined the perimeters for the Boss monster's appearance. And there were many survivors in the Rite of Passage besides us. If so, there was a chance that the perimeters for the Boss monster's appearance were met simultaneously by two or three different groups at the same time. What would happen in such cases? Plus, the situation became even more complicated factoring the high probability of Boss monster appearing near the Warp Gate.

Suddenly I felt like I knew very little about the Rites of Passage. I spent 10 years scraping through Hall Plain and researching everything about it but the Rite of Passage was not part of my research. The only part I remembered was times when other Players occasionally joking about their experiences of their Rite of Passage. Though it was not to the extreme, I still felt quite frustrated.

How much time had passed? We walked for a while and we were soon able to reach the Safe Point.

"It has a yellow roof. But it looks like a hut."

"Thank god we found one today. It's still a bit early but let's rest here for today. Hyung, is that fine?"

"Don't stay over a day. The warning sign is here as well. It's better than last time, right Oppa?"

"I will go in first. I want to wash up quickly and have a change of clothes. Hehe."

"....."

"Hyung?"

"Oppa?"

"Huh? Uh, yeah. Let's."

Hastily answered back, everyone gave me a strange look. I shook my head telling them nothing was wrong.

The party continued to stare for a moment before they returned to their chattering again, and I sighed inside. Immature kids. It was because of this that I was uncomfortable being in a party. If I was alone, I would have already entered Hall Plain. No matter how I pondered, there was no decent plan I could think up so I decided to put this matter aside for now.

I realised then that I had become quite relaxed.

In the past where I did not know much and tried my best to survive all the life and death situation crouching on my doorsteps. But it was different now. The idea of cutting down all problems in my way was deeply engraved in a corner of my heart.

“Oppa, what are you doing? We are going to go in first!”

“... I will be there now.”

I slowly headed in after Yu-jung waved her hand enthusiastically. For now, tomorrow’s problem was for tomorrow.

The night was dark. I was sitting on the stairs leading up to the hut for the watch. It was no longer just me and An-hyun that watched through the night. Now the four of us, An-hyun, Kim Han-byeol, and Yu-jung would rotate our watch. We did keep exact time but if we thought enough time has passed we would call for the next person for the watch.

The first person to watch was Lee Yu-jung and I was next to her. The third was Kim Han-byeol, and the last person was An-hyun. One person kept watching for about 2 hours, though I was certain it couldn’t have been more than 1 hour before Lee Yu-jung came and ask me to take over the shift.

Yup. Seeing her avoiding my eyes as she asked to change shift, she must be feeling guilty about it.

I put my hand into my pocket as it was my habit, and felt a chocolate bar inside. Lee Yu-jung had shoved it into my grasp as an apology. Seems she kept some of the chocolate in secret for herself. There wasn’t any lack of food or water so I didn’t say anything about it. It was about time to change shift with Han-byeol anyways so it seemed to be a good time for a snack before heading back in.

As I tried to open the plastic wrappings, I felt a can of coffee on my right cheek. Turning to see, I saw Kim Han-byeol hunched over staring at me.

“I see you are hiding food and eating it alone.”

“... I got this from Yu-jung.”

“That’s just like her, though I never saw her concede any chocolates before.”

“She didn’t keep her time. I think she gave it to me as an apology.”

Smiling wryly, Kim Han-byeol sat next to me. Snapping the chocolate bar in half, I gave it to her.

“Thank you.”

“Thank’s for the coffee.”

Kim Han-byeol was more comfortable with my presence now since I wasn’t as rowdy as Lee Yu-jung. Though there was still a distance between us, it felt it was slightly reduced. In the party, only we were still speaking with honorifics. Having done this since the beginning, it had become something of a tacit agreement.

“What were you thinking so hard about, you look glum. You didn’t even notice me coming behind you.”

I know you were coming, I just pretended not to. Drinking some coffee, I replied.

“Haha, I was out of it for a while. You said I look glum?”

“Yes. You looked tense after speaking something with that man. Was I wrong...”

Was it? I thought I had a good poker face. Rubbing my face unconsciously, Kim Han-byeol tack on confidently.

“What did he say?”

“... It wasn’t anything important.”

“It wasn’t only me that felt it. An-hyun Oppa, Yu-jung Unni and An-sol all feel nervous. You haven’t said anything after your conversation with that man.”

“I was thinking this and that. Everything will sort itself out, I am sure of it. Even if something happens, we will pull through so don’t worry.”

I finished off the chocolate bar and the rest of the coffee in one gulp. Why was it that the more I talked to her, the more I remember of ‘her.’ I wanted to get away quickly. I told her to keep well and was about to climb up the stairs to the hut.

“Please wait. I want to ask you something.”

In novels, manhwa and drama the girl usually just let the guy go without any issue... Why wasn’t she following the trope? I felt Kim Han-byeol was ready to tackle another

issue and I screamed inside. I should have seen this coming when Kim Han-byeol wanted to trade her shift with An-hyun. I tried to look friendly as I could as I tried to escape.

“I am a bit tired. If it isn’t urgent is it possible to talk about this tomorrow? I want to go in and sleep.”

“I want to ask you something now.”

“I am not running away anywhere.”

With the conversation becoming more seriously, I tried throwing in a joke but it wasn’t well received. Kim Han-byeol staring at me with her usual cold expression. Again, Kim Han-byeol’s face overlapped with ‘her.’ I unconsciously avoided her gaze.

“I feel like if I don’t ask you this today, I will never have the chance.”

“Ah, was it that question you asked back then? It really wasn’t anything...”

“Oppa.”

I closed my mouth immediately. Did I just hear her call me Oppa? Don’t misunderstand, I wasn’t a pervert who enjoyed being called Oppa.

“Su-hyun Oppa. That’s not the question I wanted to ask.”

Kim Han-byeol’s face was still cold and calm but it was giving off a different impression than normal. She was angry right now. Don’t run away, that was the impression she was exuding as she looked at me. I realised that she was being absolutely serious right now. Following suit, I began to observe her calmly. And then she asked her question.

MEMORIZE EP.30

Why are you doing this? (2/2)

Please continue reading on

“Remember when we discovered that hut and Oppa went out to explore the area? We talked about Oppa amongst ourselves.”

“What did you all talk about?”

“About the survivors, we met today. Remember that man who threw his sword at Yu-jung Unni and Oppa hit his hand with your bolt?”

I nodded. Back then, I was preparing for the worst outcome. If Wu Jung-min and Seon Yu-un was going to fight us to death, there was a chance that one or two of the party

member dying if I didn't show my true ability. That's why I was prepared to take out one of the guys before a fight could begin.

"And An-hyun Oppa blocked the sword with his shield."

"Yeah."

"Everyone praised An-hyun Oppa, saying he was amazing, thanking him. But do you know what they said about you Oppa?"

"....."

I had a faint idea what she wanted to speak about but I did not want to hear it. Before I could speak, she preempted.

"No one spoke about it but it was clear that everyone was surprised. An-sol was on the verge of tears because she was afraid. An-hyun Oppa and Yu-jung Unni was shocked to an extent. That's not all. They don't like how straight forward you were with that woman."

"Hmm. I see."

I nodded calmly which made Kim Han-byeol look at me incredulously.

"It's not okay. Isn't this unfair? It's to protect Unni, or you don't have the right to speak to me this way when you forced me to take over everything. Don't you at all feel this way?"

Was it? I must have been too deep in thought to notice this subtle change in the party. I wasn't at all disappointed and didn't want to spend the effort thinking about this issue. It didn't matter as when we entered Hall Plain, early or later, there will come a time when they have to kill.

Kim Han-byeol tone showed her frustration at my current easygoing nature.

"Oppa, you always worry and think alone. You try to handle all the difficult task alone. I know Oppa doesn't have any bad intentions."

"I think there is some kind of misunderstanding. Can you hold on..."

"I didn't mean this as any misunderstanding. I have told you this before but Oppa's judgement was always dependable. I still think so."

Hearing Kim Han-byeol's words I felt a rock sinking in my heart. After leaving the city I saw her staring at me vacantly. Especially when An-hyun and I were discussing what to do next. I didn't think much would come out of it so I left it alone but today I been thoroughly trapped by Kim Han-byeol.

“It isn’t so. We...”

“Oppa. Speak comfortably.”

I stopped my fumbling as Kim Han-byeol cut into my words. I looked at her with wide eyes, seeing her shooting me a dissatisfied expression.

“Uh, yes?”

“Talk more crudely. You speak comfortably with Unni and Oppa but why are you so polite with me?”

“... Okay.”

Though it was for a moment, I had lost my nerve. Me, me that was a Player in Hall Plain for ten years...

I give up. Whenever I see Kim Han-byeol, my heart shakes as I remember Han So-yung. One couldn’t dismiss her Unique Ability Charisma. Whenever I see Kim Han-byeol I felt a subtle emotion rising in my heart. So much so, that her image resembled someone so closely from the beginning.

Clearing my throat I continue where she cut me off.

“I haven’t always laid down the decisions. You, me, An-hyun, An-sol. We are all thinking this through.”

“Please don’t lie. You at least have some decency seeing you didn’t include Yu-jung Unni.”

“Isn’t Hyun struggling more? He was quite amazing fighting those monkeys today.”

“You are doing it again. This might work on An-hyun Oppa or Yu-jung Unni but please don’t do it to me. Please don’t try to change the topic like that. Me and An-hyun Oppa barely managed to kill two of those by working together. But Oppa kills two of them alone and if that wasn’t enough you even helped Yu-jung Unni’s fight.”

Han-byeol pricked my sensitive spot. The resemblance was really there. I couldn’t take her lightly. The gazes she held on me at times was in the end, gazes that was monitoring me. She had only approached me now after preparing firmly as possible.

I sighed deeply inside. I decided to hear her out a little bit more and if it wasn’t going the way I liked I would throw her a fastball.

“It’s always like this. In the forest, in the City and even when we met those strangers today. You are always in the background but when it gets really dangerous Oppa steps

in. If you assume us to be one team, the leader and the pillar is Oppa. Not An-hyun Oppa, you. So I was furious. Why Oppa has to listen to those words.”

‘Was she doing this for me?’

“Perhaps. But I disagree. An-hyun is superb, he is motivated, driven, and decisive. And you don’t need to think so deeply about it. Because if you think about it, we are all leaders, and Rite of Passage is a place where cooperation is important.

“Please stop. Why are you doing this Oppa?”

“I don’t get what you really want to tell me.”

Even when I said I didn’t know, my heart was tingling. I was not able to meet Kim Han-byeol’s cold silent eyes anymore. There was a cold chill around her but I felt like an even greater storm approaching. It was getting bad.

“Stop lying! The person who is truly making the decision and leading us is you! You let An-hyun Oppa handle all the easy incidents while taking care of all the difficult situation by yourself. Why is everyone only thanking An-hyun Oppa and saying his amazing? Why are they all afraid of you when you take care of all the dirty work? And why are you trying to hide all of this?”

“You...”

“At this rate, Oppa will do the same thing in again and again. And there’s the chance that the same is likely to happen again. The important thing is that behind the scenes we are all depending on you. No one will oppose you, so please Oppa, be our team leader. If there are difficult problems ahead that you are trying to solve by yourself, or talking amongst everyone else, please be involved. If Oppa is the leader, no one will complain.”

Kim Han-byeol was almost begging me now. Honestly, I still couldn’t grasp on my bewilderment. If the person in front of me was Lee Yu-jung, I would just smile and pass over the issue knowing that it was her personality shining through. Though I just couldn’t get an accurate impression of Kim Han-byeol. I was still mulling in my head what she had just spoken.

Our standoff continued and the chill of the dawn seeped into our bodies. However, Kim Han-byeol had no intention of leaving. No, rather she had no intention of letting me go without hearing my answer.

Biting my lips, I mulled it over and slowly opened my mouth to answer her.

“I...”

The morning of the sixth day was bright. An-hyun, who was responsible for the last shift of the night watch, woke everyone up to begin preparation for our departure. My joints were quite stiff and my face felt sore with fatigue. I had hardly slept last night, having spent more time with my eyes open than close but my body could handle one sleepless night.

“Good morning. Did you sleep well?”

I had deliberately greeted her brightly in the morning. An-sol was startled at my greeting. She ducked her face, looking uneasy, and ran away. Before I would just laugh at this apparent shyness but have that happen right in front of me, I let out a bitter smile.

Having discovered this, An-hyun scolded An-sol for her lack of manners. Her head was down again, on the verge of tears. Then Lee Yu-jung came and comforted her. Lee Yu-jung started another squabble with An-hyun and with An-sol trapped in between she didn't know what to do.

Stepping back, I watched the scene quietly. Warm. It was really a warm scene. Looking at the three, it would be fine to say the three were all siblings. This scene was warm and comforting enough to forget the hell that was the Rite of Passage.

But I had no place within that scene. I knew that truth better than anyone. They and I were fundamentally different people. When I slaughtered a hundred people in the past, this was what I thought. That I might no longer be human. Drunk in their moment, it was possible they may have forgotten about me.

‘If people who knew me in the past saw me now, they would probably faint in shock.’

I couldn't help but laugh at this self-ridicule. Remembering the murky past, I felt a bit melancholic. Clueless about my state, An-hyun smiles happily as he approached me. Hearing the grumbling behind An-hyun, it seems that An-hyun was the winner of their verbal fight.

“Hyung. Do you think we can reach this War Gate thing today?”

“... Yeah.”

“Then let's get there quick. We don't know if this might be our last meal here, so what do you think about a hearty breakfast? Hyung you need to eat a lot.”

I grinned hearing An-hyun speak so impudently. I shook my head at his suggestion of breakfast.

“No thanks, I am fine. Eat today's breakfast amongst yourselves.”

“What? But...”

“I have a habit of skipping meals on an important day. It can keep the mind sharp you see.”

An-hyun nodded begrudgingly and turned to face Kim Han-byeol. She still had that cold expression as she stared off into empty space. Suddenly the conversation I shared with Kim Han-byeol rose in the forefront of my mind.

“Han-byeol about breakfast...”

“I am not going to eat.”

“Huh? Don’t be like that...”

“No.”

Without hearing An-hyun till the end, Kim Han-byeol cut him off with short answers. An-sol looked surprised by this spectacle as she fidgets by playing with her fingers. An-hyun looked on awkwardly between me and Kim Han-byeol before laughing bashfully and scratching his head. Lee Yu-jung, who was watching from the back, spoke cautiously unwilling to poke the awkward atmosphere.

“Ahaha... Then the three of us will eat.”

“...”

“Uh, nothing we can do. There is just more for us. Hoho... ho. Oppa, Han-byeol, we are really going to eat all of this... ?”

Of course, me and Kim Han-byeol was silent. Lee Yu-jung was shocked by our silence, opening and closing her mouth. I felt Kim Han-byeol shifting her gaze onto me. But I had no intention to face her and dismissed it. This just made the atmosphere one step colder.

An exciting morning of this sixth day.

After breakfast, the three people began to be more cautious around the other two.