

Once Again 851

Chapter 851. Sequence 12

-Hello? This is Kim Bitna.

“What?”

He definitely called Gaeul’s number, but someone totally different picked up. He thought he called the wrong number, so he took his phone off his ear and checked the name. The name ‘Han Gaeul’ was up on the screen.

-Sorry. This is indeed senior Han Gaeul’s phone.

The person on the other side seemed flustered as well, as her voice was quite shaky. She sounded quite young as well. Was Gaeul with a friend? He didn’t think it was her manager or her stylist. Just as he was about to ask the person on the other side to switch, he stopped. She just introduced herself as Kim Bitna. The name and the voice finally matched inside his head.

“Kim Bitna? Are you perhaps Yuna’s sister?”

-Yes. Do you remember me?

“I do. But why are you picking up Gaeul’s phone?”

-She’s driving right now.

Talk to Bitna for now – he could hear Gaeul’s voice over the phone. Following that was Bitna’s high-pitched voice that said ‘senior’ in a fluster. Maru could picture her being at a loss on what to say from just her voice.

“Have you been doing well?”

At times like these, it was better to talk to her first.

-Yes. But what should I call you? Should I call you senior Maru after all?

“You called me ahjussi the first time we met, so just keep calling me that.”

-I feel like the situation has changed since then.

“I was just joking. Call me what you want. You can call me senior if that’s comfortable for you, and oppa is fine too.”

-Then I’ll call you oppa. I also call senior Gaeul unni.

“That takes care of addresses. I didn’t expect you two to be together.”

-We met at the shoot for Doctor’s Office. I appear in it briefly.

“So you have continued working all this time. Did Gaeul treat you well?”

-Yes. She looked out for me a lot. Thanks to her, I had an easy time.

“If you have any difficulties, you should ask her for help without holding back.”

-I get plenty of help from her even now.

Whether then or now, her way of speaking was really mature. Maru could still imagine her when she was little, speaking the right words with her little mouth. She was a lot more grown-up than her sister.

“We haven’t met since we met with Yuna, have we?”

-Yes. That was the last time we saw each other.

“Man, time flies. That was already 6 years ago. Are you in middle school now?”

-I will be next year.

“It must be hard to work alongside school classes.”

-I’m doing this because I want to. Also, mom’s good at scheduling work for me, so I don’t think I’ll have a problem with school work. Things might change later, but for now, it looks okay.

“I’m sure you’ll be able to do both. But don’t push yourself too hard. Once you grow up a little more, you’ll be in an environment where you can work to your heart’s content. Before that though, spend more time with your friends and go to good places with your family. You’ve heard this many times already, haven’t you?”

-No. There aren’t that many people who say that to me. Everyone doesn’t say much because I can take care of myself. Even though I’m still young.

“At times like that, you can grab an adult next to you and throw a tantrum saying that it’s too hard. It’s one of the privileges you have when you’re at that age.”

-I can throw a tantrum?

“Of course. Good kids who take care of themselves are all the more okay to throw tantrums. A proper adult will look at what is troubling you and understand you. Like I said before, if you find anything difficult, tell it to Gaeul. The Gaeul I know is not a bad adult, so she’ll listen to you and sympathize with you.”

-She’s a good person after all.

“Yes, she’s a good person.”

Bitna, who became silent over the phone, eventually said that she’d hand the phone to Gaeul. Maru felt as though she had more to say, but he had no way of asking as the person in question had turned quiet. Gaeul picked up the phone.

“Are you driving Bitna home?”

-Yes. She said she lives in Banpo-dong too. So I was just driving her home on the way back.

“From what I remember, Bitna’s mother was always next to her.”

-It looks like she had something to do today. Bitna said she was going to take the bus home, but I had her get in my car.

“Well done. It’s late, so anyone would feel anxious to have a girl go home by herself at this hour. Even if it’s the city.”

-Exactly. Also, I bought a sandwich for you. A vegetable sandwich with avocados in it.

“I was just feeling hungry, so good.”

Gaeul said that it would be fantastic to eat it with half a can of beer but then suddenly turned quiet after saying ‘wait a moment.’ She seemed to have taken her phone off her ear as he could hear her talking with Bitna in a small voice. Thinking back, she was supposed to be driving. It seemed that she had put the phone down to drive.

-Hello?

The one who spoke was Bitna.

“Yes, Bitna.”

-We’ll go to your house right now, oppa.

“Here?”

-Yes.

* * *

Bitna hung up and put the phone down.

“He said I can come.”

She was quick to work, and even quicker to think. She wasn’t that mindful when she talked about the sandwich. She thought that Bitna would consider Maru and her as just friends without thinking that they had a relationship of a boy and a girl.

“Are you two dating?”

She almost dropped her phone when she said those unexpected words. She took her phone off her ears in a hurry and asked what she meant by that. Bitna said that she just speculated; she deduced that they were in a special relationship considering what she had heard from her sister, the way they talked over the phone, as well as her going over to his house with food late at night. She also said that she was convinced after seeing her reaction after listening to that question. Bitna soon looked down at her clasped hands before asking if she could go to Maru’s house cautiously. Gaeul said that she should ask the person in question first and soon received permission to go.

“Sorry I suddenly said I want to go.”

“No, it’s fine. It doesn’t matter to me at all. I was going there anyway. But Bitna, you heard about me and Maru from Yuna?”

“No, my sister never said anything in detail. She may be a chatterbox, but she’s not someone who carelessly talks about privacy,” Bitna said as she grabbed the seatbelt with her left hand.

“Unni was crying at home. I asked what was up, and she said that she still felt a little sorry for Gaeul-
unni, but it had been resolved and that she was happy. Unni said that she liked someone she shouldn’t.
Back then, I didn’t know what she meant by that. But I understood after seeing a call for you from Maru-
oppa and your expression, Gaeul-unni. From what I remember, my sister had a very long first love.
When she cried, her first love came to an end.”

By the time she finished those words, Bitna was holding onto the seatbelt with both of her hands.

“Bitna?”

“Gaeul-unni. Please don’t hate my sister.”

“Bitna, I’ve never hated Yuna. No, I guess I was jealous of her before, but definitely not now. She’s a
precious friend and a sister of mine. I will never hate her.”

“Really?”

“Of course!”

“Even though she did something bad?”

Gaeul forgot because she was so good at logical deduction, but Bitna was still young. She seemed to
know the complexity of people loving each other and breaking up but not the fact that the happenings
that might happen throughout couldn’t simply be categorized into ‘good’ and ‘bad.’

“She didn’t do anything bad. Your sister just didn’t know anything.”

“Mom told me that the police wouldn’t be necessary if not knowing about it is an excuse for being
innocent.”

“That’s a bit of a different problem, but still, Yuna just liked a person. Yes, if someone has sinned, it lies
with Maru.”

“Maru-oppa? Why?”

How was she supposed to respond to that? The sin of being too charming? The sin of shaking a woman’s
heart by being overly kind? Every one of those reasons was hard to say out loud. Just as she was
wondering if she should just gloss things over, she saw Bitna smiling while covering her mouth. The
moment she saw her expression, she thought that she had been one-upped.

“Bitna knows how to tease her unni, huh?”

“Sorry. I thought that my sister knew everything and still did that because she had something bad in her
mind. But you said that she didn’t, so it put me at ease. But seeing you flustered also made me want to
know what would happen next.”

“Looks like I have to get myself together if I want to talk to you next time so that you don’t tease me.”

“I won’t do that from now on.”

“If you want to tease me, then do it any time. We’re close after all. Uh, we are close, right?”

“Are you going to be angry if I say no?”

“According to your answer, I’ll decide whether I’ll tickle you or not. You won’t be able to breathe once I start tickling you on the sides.”

“Then I’ll say we’re close. I’m really bad at handling people tickling me.”

“I feel like I’m getting duped here, but I’ll let you go this time.”

Bitna let go of her hands holding the seatbelt as though she felt relieved.

“Did you and Maru-oppa start dating when you were in high school?”

“How did you know that?”

“My sister liked Maru-oppa back then. It happened a long time ago, but I still remember it. She had me lie so that she could see Maru-oppa. She said that I wanted to see him.”

“She must have gotten Maru’s number through a certain senior at school.”

“And that was you?”

“Yes.”

The smart girl nodded as though she understood everything.

“But why do you want to go to Maru’s house so suddenly?”

“To throw a tantrum.”

“A tantrum?”

“I’ll tell you when we get there, about the things I couldn’t tell you during the day.”

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The door opened and Gaeul came in. Bitna hesitated a little outside, but the moment she saw Woofie running towards her at the sound of the door lock opening, she took a big step inside.

“Hello.”

“It’s been a long time.”

“It has.”

She bowed with a smile, but her eyes were glued to Woofie walking around. Maru grabbed the dog by the scruff of her neck and put her down in front of Bitna. Bitna kept watching her without reaching out, but she eventually gave in and patted the dog on the head.

“It’s the first time I got to touch one like this.”

Woofie seemed to have taken a liking to Bitna’s cautious hand and stayed docile. She had grown up after all this time, but she was still very innocent.

“It’s a shiba-inu, isn’t it?”

“You’re knowledgeable.”

"I read about them in a book. They're bright and cheerful and loyal towards their owners. They also have a great homing instinct and will return home easily. But the dog's leg looks injured. Is it a congenital handicap?"

She was as knowledgeable as always as well. Put a blind in front of her and they would mistake her for a college student from the way she spoke. Her generosity was better than most adults too. While Bitna played around with Woofie, Maru heard the details from Gaeul.

"She deduced everything from just a few words. She's really smart," Gaeul said as she looked at Bitna in the living room.

"There's no way such a smart kid wanted to see me without any reason, right?"

It was 10 p.m., quite late to knock on someone else's door without reason.

"She said she wanted to throw a tantrum in front of you."

"What do you think that means?"

"I do have an idea of what it might be about, but you better hear about it from the person herself. It's a secret for now after all."

Maru poured some grape juice into a cup and went to the living room. Bitna, who had been smiling while looking at the dog, immediately sat upright when she saw the cup. She seemed to be about to explain the reason she came here.

"Sorry, even though I didn't come here to see the dog."

"It's fine. I can listen to your story any time you want. Did you tell your mother about this? It's quite late, you know?"

"I told mom on the way here that I will eat with Gaeul-unni before going back."

"Then that should be fine. Your mother won't be worried, and it looks like you've doted on Woofie enough, so may I hear why you wanted to see me?"

Gaeul sat on the sofa as well and got ready to listen. What brought that child all the way here? And what wasn't she able to tell Gaeul?

"First up, I want to ask you something, Maru-oppa. Back when we shot Apgu, do you remember the middle-aged man who had to go back early because of broken fingers? As far as I remember, you lied down next to him while playing the role of a corpse."

"I do. His fingers swelled up, so he had to go to the hospital midway. But what about it?"

"That was the first time I felt that someone was scary. Mom used to tell me this from the time I was little: bad people never look like bad people. That was the day I found out what she meant by that too."

Bitna put her hands together. She clasped her hands as though to calm down her nervous mind. If it was about Apgu, Maru still remembered that event clearly to this day. Kang Giwoo's friend – his name was Lee Uljin – had stepped on a man's fingers even though that man got by on payment he received every

day. It was purely intentional, and he put his weight into it. The way he apologized after doing it made Maru accept that humans were innately born evil.

“That day, I was worried about the middle-aged man because he was sweating too much. I approached him and saw that his fingers were severely swollen. He said he was okay, but I thought that I shouldn’t let him be and tried to tell the others. But he said that I must absolutely not do that. I didn’t understand back then, but I know now. To him, the fact that there was an accident was more grave than the fact that he was hurt. He said I couldn’t say it, so I tried to find my own ways to help him. I first tried to give him some cold water and that was when I saw senior Kang Giwoo walking next to the bus.”

“Kang Giwoo?”

That wasn’t a name he wanted to hear. His name always brought problems.

“Back then, senior Giwoo looked like a really kind person. He always smiled at other people on sets and asked if I was okay, even though I was just a child actor. I thought that he would solve the problem in a way that the middle-aged man wouldn’t be uneasy. That’s why I followed him... and heard what he said over the phone. I know that listening to someone without permission was not good, so I tried to make my presence known, but his expression as he made the call was too scary. He was smiling, but I found his smile disgusting. I hid in surprise and ended up overhearing everything that he said over the phone. At first, I couldn’t hear it. There was some distance as well, but I was so startled. But then I heard him say this: How did you feel when you stepped on that man’s hand?”

Bitna had difficulty talking. As it was definitely something that she would not want to tell other people, Maru understood how she felt. Maru told her to drink a little. After sipping some grape juice, Bitna continued talking,

“I thought I heard wrong. I thought he was not the type of person to say that, and there was some distance between us as well. After that, I observed senior Giwoo until the end of the shoot, and indeed, he treated everyone kindly. I believed that I was mistaken. It’s not good to doubt other people after all.”

Kang Giwoo was someone who managed himself meticulously from a young age. The young Bitna would not have seen him as a youth who would commit something so evil. Maru also needed several steps in order to see through him.

“Of course, you might not believe me. You might not believe that senior Kang Giwoo is someone who would do such evil things....”

“I believe you.”

“What?”

“I don’t doubt you at all. I believe everything you say, Bitna, so keep going, slowly.”

Bitna’s eyes trembled a little. She seemed curious. This wasn’t something that was easy to accept, or so she seemed to think. Maru did not say anything and looked at Bitna. He had no intentions of reading her mind, so no speech bubble appeared. There was no need to read anything from her as he fully trusted her. After organizing her thoughts, Bitna nodded and spoke,

"I forgot about that matter. I never had to meet him again after that. But then I met him again at the shoot this time. The terrifying expression and the horrible words he said came back to me, but I ignored as much of it as possible. It was something that happened in the past, and I believed that I was mistaken. But I still couldn't help but be concerned about it. The impression of him in my memories was just that intense. I thought that avoiding him was not a solution and talked to him again. Just like before, he was a kind senior, and I was about to come to the conclusion that it was my mistake after all. It was then that I saw that scene."

Bitna shivered up as though she was feeling cold. Gaeul, who sat next to her, grabbed her hand.

"It's fine to say it. We'll both help you out as much as possible."

Bitna spat out a short breath before continuing to speak,

"The unni with the short hair and the skull t-shirt is the one who styles you, Gaeul-unni, right? I saw you two together a lot. I don't know her surname, but her given name is Mijoo."

"Mijoo is indeed my stylist. What about her?"

"It was yesterday. I saw senior Kang Giwoo talk to your stylist. The two of them seemed really close. I didn't mind it since senior Kang Giwoo normally treats everyone well, but then I saw his smile. It was the same smile he made when he asked over the phone how it felt to step on the man's fingers. It was the same smile, but it looked different to me. Maybe it's because I've seen him that way once."

"So?" Gaeul asked cautiously.

"I felt uneasy. I kept remembering what happened back then; his disgusting smile as he spoke to the phone. I thought that there was a need to check. I knew that I shouldn't overhear other people's conversations, but when I came to, I was already listening in to their conversation from inside the closet. It wasn't anything much. They talked about when the shoot was going to end, whether either of them had it hard, and when they should eat out together like they promised before. I was feeling ashamed of my wrongful delusions. Just as I decided to apologize after the stylist-unni left, the stylist-unni said that thanks to him, the stylist-unni managed to get out of trouble with Lee Miyoona. I didn't know what that was about, but it seemed quite secretive. Senior Giwoo told her that it had been resolved and to not worry."

Bitna stopped speaking and looked at Gaeul. Gaeul, who was listening calmly, also turned quite serious.

"Kang Giwoo helped her out after getting into trouble with Lee Miyoona?"

"Yes."

Gaeul seemed to know something about it as well. Maru asked what happened.

"I told you a while ago, right? That something bad happened between me and Le... senior Lee Miyoona."

Bitna was listening, so Gaeul addressed her as her senior. If they had enough time, he wanted to warn Bitna about why she had to be careful of Lee Miyoona, but listening to her was the priority.

"Right."

“That day, Mijoo tried to tell me something while twisting up her body. She usually does that when she makes a big mistake, so I asked her what happened, but she said it was nothing bad and that it had been resolved already. From what Bitna said, it seems like Mijoo made a mistake in front of senior Lee’s stylist that day.”

“And Kang Giwoo covered up for her?”

“Probably. I’m not entirely sure though.”

Kang Giwoo might have helped her in order to show his good side like he usually did. That wasn’t a big problem. In fact, it was something to be grateful for if she received help. Maru turned around to look at Bitna. Her next words were what was important.

“Did something happen after that?”

“Senior Kang Giwoo told the stylist-uni this. I’ll say what he said word for word: ‘Don’t tell Gaeul, okay? If you tell her, it might not end with a scolding if you do, so don’t say it.’ His voice sounded kind, but it was a rebuking tone. The stylist uni also promised to never say it before turning around.”

“Mijoo said something like that?”

Gaeul started fidgeting with her phone. It seemed like she was about to call Mijoo at any moment. The reason she was holding back was probably since Bitna’s words hadn’t ended yet.

“After the stylist-uni left, I was going to leave the closet to apologize. But senior Kang Giwoo’s eyes looking at the stylist-uni... were too scary.”

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Bitna seemed incredibly nervous as though she had gone back to that moment. Despite the fact that Gaeul was holding her hand from the side, she was clutching onto the carpet with the other hand. He wanted to console her and tell her that it was okay to rest a little before speaking, but Bitna clenched her eyes shut before opening them again. She seemed to be telling herself that she couldn’t stop here. She was young, but she was quite stubborn. That was probably why she could think about overhearing the viper-like Kang Giwoo’s conversation, even though it must have been really scary.

“I froze stiff. I couldn’t take a step outside the closet. It was the first time I experienced something like that. I wanted to turn around and run immediately. I want to pretend like I haven’t seen anything.”

“But you kept watching, didn’t you? With courage.”

“Actually, I was just too scared to move; it wasn’t that I was brave. One time I got almost bitten by a large dog, and it just felt like back then. I had the feeling that I would get bitten to death if I was found out. I held my breath and prayed that he would go away, but he didn’t go away and took out his phone. He spoke while looking in the direction the stylist-uni went in, and the contents of what he said were horrible. He was insulting the stylist uni that he had been treating with a smile until merely moments ago.”

“May I know what he said?”

Bitna looked hesitant, but she eventually closed her eyes and spoke. Her eyes were trembling. Maru could feel that her eyes were moving anxiously behind those eyelids. He could practically see all sorts of thoughts clashing within her head. Maru waited calmly. It was Bitna who was in the hardest position. He was planning to stop her if it looked like she was pushing herself. After around 10 seconds, Bitna spoke again,

“I’ll say what I heard back then: The stylist-unni was stupid and didn’t recognize you, it’s tiring to deal with someone like her, I told her off so she’ll do better next time. I toned that down quite a lot. He used words that I don’t dare speak with my mouth. I couldn’t believe it. The person who was talking about good things in front of the stylist-unni until mere moments ago had changed instantly and spoke like that. That was when I found out that I wasn’t wrong about him. That disgusting smile was still with him. No, it even looked cruel.”

“So that’s why you asked if I was close to Giwoo and said that you were scared.”

Bitna replied ‘yes’ in a small voice.

“I wanted to tell you about it back then, unni, but I couldn’t. All I had were the things I have seen and heard after all. Moreover, you looked really close to senior Giwoo on the set.”

“I understand you, but what I can tell you is that it’s only like that on the surface. I’m also trying my hardest to look close to Giwoo. I’ll tell you this since you told me first: I don’t see Giwoo in that good of a light either. I told you we aren’t that close during the day, right? I meant what I said.”

“Really?”

“Yes. It’s not just me, Maru here feels the same.”

Maru told Bitna clearly while looking at her big blinking eyes: Kang Giwoo has less credibility to him than a stranger he would come across on the street; that him changing for the good was just as probable as Woofie learning the law and becoming a judge. When he emphasized the fact that he was beyond salvation, Bitna looked quite flustered.

“I have seen and heard for myself, but why did you two start doubting him?”

It was very like her to not chime in and ask back calmly. Maru explained that the one who stepped on the middle-aged man’s fingers during Apgu was a friend of Giwoo as well as the circumstances leading up to him finding out and the happenings after that.

“So something like that happened even after that. So he’s a very constant person.”

“In a bad way, that is.”

“I was really hesitant until I decided to talk about it. I was worried that people might not believe me and think that I was being weird instead.”

“You did really well, not telling anyone about it. If you said you’re just scared, then people might not think much about it since you’re quite young, but if you used real-world instances like that, then there definitely would be some people who would not look at you in a good light.”

“That’s what I thought as well.”

“But peeping on him was too reckless. If you got caught, you wouldn’t have been able to make an excuse. Considering his personality, Kang Giwoo would never let that go either. Don’t do anything reckless in the future. I’m sure you’ll take great care of yourself, but I’m just worried.”

“I know that I was careless. I’m reflecting on it too. I will never do that again.”

“Yes, it’s fine as long as you do that.”

Bitna seemed mentally pressured as she was breathing heavily to the point that her shoulders were heaving. She must have been very worried. She was talking bad about Kang Giwoo, who had built a good image for himself, so just as she said, it must have been hard to talk about it. She couldn’t guarantee how the situation would turn out if she did talk about it. Maru was proud that she brought up the courage to talk about it. However, there were a few things that he still couldn’t resolve. There were things he needed to know in order to analyze the situation clearly.

“Bitna.”

“Yes.”

“I now understand what you meant when you said that you were coming over to throw a tantrum. I’m also grateful that you told me about this. But there’s one thing I want to know. Why did you tell me all this? You were the one who told me just now that you doubted that anyone would believe you.”

He then looked at Gaeul. Bitna also looked at Gaeul.

“I get why you didn’t tell Gaeul about it. But you said that you found out that Gaeul and I were dating in the car right? Then I think you should’ve thought about it a little more.”

“That’s....”

Bitna hesitated while trailing off. Did he push her too hard so suddenly? Gaeul was also giving him hints, asking why he was so harsh on a girl. If it was any other girl, he wouldn’t have thought about it deeply. After all, children usually didn’t think about things that deeply when they acted. However, Bitna was someone who definitely knew her way around. She was capable of explaining difficult things in simple terms, and she even discerned who to talk to with her own standards.

“I’m not rebuking you. I trust you wholly. I was just curious. Why me? I must have faded out of your consciousness since we haven’t been in contact for years, so why did you talk to me about something so important? You don’t have to tell me if it’s too difficult for you.”

While Maru trusted her, it was important to get a full grasp of the situation. Why did she tell him something that she didn’t tell Gaeul? She even knew that talking about it risked a very dangerous outcome.

“For Gaeul-unni, I heard about her a lot from my sister. She called her a really kind senior at school. I also felt that during the shoots I had for the past few days that she really is a good person. But I couldn’t trust her and tell her about it. It’s not that I suspect her or hate her or anything. This is not her problem, it’s mine.”

“While I’m slightly disappointed, I think that’s only natural. There’s the matter with Kang Giwoo too. But you still are sure that she’s a good and kind unni, right?”

“Right now, she’s a good, kind, and trustable unni.”

Bitna then looked at Maru.

“And likewise, I was aware that you were a good person too, Maru-oppa. I believe in my sister’s eyes for people. I also knew that you were a good person after meeting you.”

She stopped there and smiled awkwardly. She looked up as though she found it difficult to speak.

“But honestly speaking, you didn’t feel that ‘kind’ to me. I knew that you were a good person from how you listened to my sister’s worries, understood her, and even advised her, but listening to you made me realize that you helped her because she didn’t cross the line; that you would never see her again if she went too far. I said all that but it’s still quite confusing. I’m not saying that you’re a bad person, oppa. You’re a really good person, just not entirely kind.”

“Are you saying that you remember the conversation Yuna and I had when the three of us went to the café that day?”

“Yes, I remember. I also remember that my sister cried a lot. Back then, I had this thought while looking at you listening to her words: You’re a good person but not entirely kind. But you definitely can be trusted. I didn’t say this before, but you went around looking for pain relief for the middle-aged man with injured fingers, didn’t you? That was when I felt that even though the middle-aged man told me not to tell it to anyone, he still asked you for help.”

After listening to her, Gaeul hugged Bitna’s shoulders and spoke,

“You have a good eye for people, Bitna. You’re right. Maru doesn’t really belong to the kind category of people. But if you’re talking about whether he can be trusted or not, I say that he can be trusted more than me.”

Maru placed his elbow on his knees and rested his chin on the back of his hand.

“This suddenly became a lot of pressure for me. Bitna, don’t trust me too much. Like you said, I’m not that kind.”

“But you said you wholly trusted me, didn’t you? That’s why I trust you as well. And that’s why I talked about it. If it weren’t for you today, I would have spoken about it to my sister first. Not my mom though, since she’ll make a big deal out of it. But when I thought about it, I thought that it would enter your ears even if I tell my sister. It also seemed like that after considering your relationship with Gaeul-unni.”

“Looks like I can’t lie in front of Bitna.”

Gaeul looked at Bitna and said that everything was okay now.

“Nothing will change immediately, but this unni was convinced after what you just said – convinced that Kang Giwoo is a really bad guy. I told you before, right? That I don’t really see Kang Giwoo in a good light. But it was kinda vague. That was why I kept watching him and maintained the status quo. But now I’m convinced.”

“What do I do now? I have to go to the shoot about three more times in the future. I feel like I’ll get scared if I see senior Kang Giwoo’s scary eyes.”

Kang Giwoo was an evil guy who did not hesitate to ruin other people's bodies even when he was a student. How scared must she have been after seeing the bare face of the bone-deep evilness within him? Maru hinted to Gaeul that it was time for the unni to step in.

"Don't worry. I'll always be next to you during shoots. Tell me your schedule later. I'll make sure I'll go even on days I'm not in it."

"But you'll be tired if you do that."

"It's fine. Also, I'm one of the main cast. Our schedule will probably overlap all the time."

Gaeul emphasized that it was not a nuisance for her. Bitna eventually accepted after repeated explanations. After getting that down, Gaeul immediately took her phone to her ear. This was the second problem they needed to solve.

"Bitna, do you want to play with Woofie for a little? Gaeul-unni looks like she'll be on the phone."

"Yes."

Maru heard that pets were helpful when curing anxiety. There was nothing more soothing than warmth when it comes to consoling the heart after all. As she stroked Woofie on her lap, she looked much more at ease than when she was talking about Kang Giwoo.

Maru stood up with the empty cups. I'll bring you something to drink – he said before giving a glance at Gaeul, who entered the bedroom.

She was waiting with a serious expression with her phone against her ear. From how she wasn't saying anything, it seemed that her stylist wasn't picking up.

"Looks like she's out drinking with Chanwoo. I'll leave her a message for now."

"Okay, and also, please take care of Bitna. She might look okay now, but I'm sure she's very nervous. You'll be better for her for something like this than me."

"Okay. Oh, can I call Yuna over?"

"Do what you want. This place is practically a private café anyway."

Gaeul nodded and approached Bitna.

Chapter 854. Sequence 12

"Bitna is at your house, Maru-seonbae? Okay, I'll go there now."

Yuna changed her clothes and left the house. Maru-seonbae's house was not that far away, so she only had to pay the minimum taxi fare to get there. She wondered why Bitna went to his house. After pressing the bell, she waited for a little. Ta-tap ta-tap – she could hear Woofie's footsteps inside.

"Unni."

The one who opened the door was Bitna. Yuna gave her a hug the moment she saw her. She could feel her sister's unease and sadness in her clear eyes. Bitna tugged on the hem of her clothes and said that she was okay.

“Yuna, you’re here.”

“Yes.”

“Sorry for calling you over at such a late hour.”

“Don’t mention it. But what is happening? Where is Gaeul-unni?”

Maru raised his finger to point at the bedroom. She let go of Bitna’s hand and peeked inside. Gaeul was fidgeting with the phone while sitting on the bed. She was biting her thumbnail. It had been a very long time since the last time she had seen her this nervous. She knocked on the slightly open door. Gaeul raised her head and welcomed her.

“When did you come?”

“Just now. I pressed the bell.”

“I see. I’m a little out of it right now, so I can’t hear anything around me.”

Even as she said so, Gaeul was checking her phone. It seemed like she shouldn’t interfere. She said she’d be in the living room and pulled on the door. She could see Gaeul frowning through the gap of the closing door. It seemed that she wasn’t getting an important call.

“She seemed really serious.”

“Something happened, and I think you should know about it.”

Maru looked at Bitna. He seemed to be looking for her agreement. So Gaeul was being serious because of something related to Bitna after all? She sat down on the sofa and heard everything from her. Yuna hugged Bitna again. How scary must it have been for her? She was a mature girl, but there was a frail side to her as well. She heard something that even most adults could not listen to in comfort, so it must have startled her a lot. She understood the reason Gaeul called her here. If she couldn’t be by her side at a time like this, she couldn’t call herself a big sister.

“For now, Gaeul has decided to stay with Bitna whenever she’s at the set. She can’t do anything about her meeting Kang Giwoo and acting, but she should be able to prevent the two of them from being alone together,” said Maru.

Yuna grabbed her sister’s hand and asked,

“Bitna, are you okay with that? You’re going to have to be with him.”

“I can’t help it. If I don’t work because I’m scared, I will do people harm. I’ll try holding back. Gaeul-unni said she’ll be by my side too.”

“Should I go as well?”

“You should go to school, unni. School is important.”

“I can take a few days off. In college, it’s okay to do that.”

“Really?”

“You’re more important to me than any classes. Please let me act like your sister.”

Bitna nodded. Even though she said that she didn’t need to come, her eyes were trembling. This little girl was incredibly good at holding back as she had been digesting a harsh schedule before she even entered elementary school. However, enduring the stress given to her by work and enduring her fear of a malicious man were completely different areas altogether. She would usually shake her hand and say that she was okay when it came to most things, yet she sought her help. That showed how frightened she was.

“But who is unni calling right now?”

“Her stylist. There’s something she must check, but it seems like the stylist isn’t picking up.”

“She didn’t look that good.”

“When she gets a call through, she will be able to get a grasp of the situation, so there shouldn’t be a problem. But hey, it’s 11 already.”

Maru grabbed his car keys that were placed on the shoe rack.

“Your mother will be worried if you’re any later, so I’ll drive you home for now.”

“It doesn’t take long to get home from here if I grab a taxi.”

“It doesn’t take long, so let me give you a ride.”

Maru put on his shoes. It seemed like it would be rude to refuse. She spoke to Bitna, who was staring at the dog on the sofa.

“Bitna, shall we go home?”

“I’ll say goodbye to Gaeul-unni.”

Bitna knocked on the bedroom door. Gaeul was staring holes into her phone on the bed.

“Unni, we’ll get going now.”

“Already?”

“It’s already 11. We should get going.”

“Sorry. I called you all the way here, but I wasn’t able to do anything for you. Let’s go eat something good with the three of us. At that time, Bitna should decide where we should go. I’ll bring you anywhere you want.”

Yuna also said goodbye before leaving the house. She did not let go of Bitna’s hand on their way down the elevator. After going to the parking lot, she had Bitna get in the car first. She hinted to Maru who stood in front of the driver’s seat.

“We shouldn’t tell our mother about this for now, right?”

“You should decide that with Bitna. If you think it’s necessary, then don’t hesitate to tell her, but if you don’t feel the need to do so immediately, then wait. But you’ll have to tell her eventually. It’ll be better for her that way.”

“That’s true.”

“Gaeul will look out for Bitna until she finishes her shoot for Doctor’s Office, and I’ll see what I can do as well so that Bitna can finish the shoot without worries.”

“The shoot will probably last until next week. I don’t know about the details, but I’ll stay by her side when she’s at a shoot. I’ve never seen Bitna that scared before. It’s making me uneasy.”

“She experienced this after seeing that when she was young. It must have been traumatic for her.”

“I still can’t believe it. Kang Giwoo, that person looked like a really good person when I read about him through media interviews. I even heard from my seniors who work in the industry that he was a good person too.”

“But Bitna doesn’t have a reason to lie to you, right? And neither do I.”

“Yes. That’s what’s even scarier. There’s nothing more dangerous than a person who can fool others easily. I’m so worried when I think that Bitna has to act in front of someone like that.”

“He won’t do anything strange if there are a lot of eyes around him, so don’t worry too much. Rather than that, look out for Bitna when you go back home. She might look okay on the surface, but she’s still young.”

“I will.”

She looked at Bitna while getting in the car. She was staring at her phone. Yuna looked through the window to see what she was looking at on her phone and found out that she was looking at the photos she took with the dog. Bitna seemed to have felt her gaze and raised her head. When they locked eyes, she raised her phone screen and showed it to her. It was a wordless request. This was the first time she ever made an expression like that as well.

“Uhm, Maru-seonbae.”

“Yeah?”

“About Woofie.”

“Woofie?”

“Can we take her home for just one day? Bitna seems to like her a lot. She always wanted to raise a dog, but mom was really strict when it came to pets. She always asked Bitna if she could take responsibility for it. She thinks deeply, so she always gave up knowing that mom asking such a question meant no.”

She probably held and petted a dog for the first time today. She was busy since she was little, so she didn’t have any time to go to pet shops either, and even when they did come across pet shops in department stores, she would only look at the dogs from afar. Bitna was the type to restrain herself so that she wouldn’t even feel disappointed when it came to things that she couldn’t have.

“Wait a bit.”

Maru went back to the apartment. Yuna told Bitna that she would get a surprise gift if she waited for a little. The girl who only smiled a little when receiving a doll as a birthday present grinned so brightly that her teeth could be seen. A while later, Maru came back with a blue dog cage and a paper bag.

“This is the dog bowl and some food. She has a good appetite, but she strangely won’t eat out of anything else but this one. I put a week’s worth of food in it.”

“I’ll give her back to you tomorrow.”

“You don’t have to. This girl seems to have taken a liking to Bitna as well. I’m sure she must like it better staying next to Bitna who dotes on her than a gloomy guy like me. If it’s just a week, your mother won’t say much about it as well. She’s usually docile even by herself, so you don’t have to worry about your furniture. Though, I can’t guarantee for sure what she might do after a change of environment.”

Maru opened the door and put the cage right next to Bitna. Bitna lowered herself and locked eyes with the dog. Yuna couldn’t believe that she liked the dog so much.

“Looks like we’ll have to talk to mom about this seriously. I’ll ask her if we can have two more members of the household because we can handle it.”

“If she ever does give you permission, then just tell me about it. I know someone who’s more than willing to have more people join as dog owners.”

“Does that person run a pet shop or something?”

“No, I’m talking about the president of my agency.”

President? Yuna blinked for a bit before getting in the car. Bitna had already taken the dog out of the cage and was playing around with her. The dog stayed on top of Yuna’s lap without barking. It seemed as though she knew that she had to stay still right now.

“She’s a quick-witted one,” Maru said while looking at the dog.

Yuna put on her seatbelt. She felt complex. She wondered if she had to tell their mother, or if she should just watch the situation for now. It was probably going to be Bitna who would decide that.

After the car departed, Yuna took out her phone and looked up Kang Giwoo. She even found his Instagram account and looked at his photos. Every single day, he uploaded photos he took with other actors, drama crews, and friends. He always had a big smile on his face. Even the comment section was clean. He was the definition of a star liked by everyone.

The moment she saw a photo of him praying while grabbing the hand of a leukemia patient, Yuna felt enraged. All of that was just for show and was fake. She despised people who smiled when in front and disdained people behind their backs. They were the kind of people she didn’t even want to associate herself with. She remembered saying that he was good at acting and had a good personality while watching Doctor’s Office too.

Yuna logged into her Instagram account and left behind a comment.

-People should live honestly.

She wanted to leave behind a barrage of insults, but she moderated herself. Not that he would ever see it. This comment she left behind would also probably get buried under the myriad of comments being added in real-time. She felt frustrated that the layers of the 'good' image that Kang Giwoo built up would protect him. She felt her admiration towards the industry and actors cooling down.

"There are 99 good people and only one bad person. You don't have to feel so upset because of that one person," Maru said while giving her a glance.

"I know. I do know about it, but I still think he went too far. There must be many people who aspire to be actors with him as a role model. Many of my peers think of him as a young, talented actor too. I wonder how disappointed they would be if they found out the truth about him."

"You can't do anything about it."

"What if he keeps doing well like this? We don't know what he'll do behind everyone's backs if he keeps up a good facade."

"We don't have anything we can do right now other than watching ourselves and avoiding him. It's not like the media will do anything about it even if we expose him. The past is in the past, and there is no evidence either."

When they got stopped by a traffic light. Yuna wrote down some words on her phone so that Bitna wouldn't be able to see them and showed them to Maru.

-You don't think that Kang Giwoo may have noticed Bitna overhearing him, right?

He nodded without a shred of hesitation. It made her relieved to see that he felt so confident.

"He's the type of guy who would never let that be if he found out," he said while narrowing his eyes.

He seemed to understand what Kang Giwoo was thinking better than anyone else.

Chapter 855. Sequence 12

Neither Mijoo nor Chanwoo picked up their phones. They told her they were going to drink back when she was at the sandwich store, so they should be at the bar. Those two were the type who never cared about other things when they were drinking. It was her who said that they could do so too. Her manager, Chanwoo, would react to the sound of a text message even during his sleep if it was working hours, but on days like this when work ended early, he would be surprisingly ignorant of his phone. As for Mijoo, there was no way she would receive an urgent work call, so she would act on her own once work was over.

She had already texted them five times and made an innumerable number of calls. She wished for them to pick up when they went to the bathroom or something, but there had been no news for over 40 minutes. She left the bedroom and went out to the veranda. She could see Maru's car leaving the parking lot. She was going to drive them back, but it seemed that Maru noticed and acted first.

She took out some cold water to soothe herself before calling again. The idol song that she had heard to death entered her ear once again. This was supposed to be a song she had heard for the first time today,

but she could recite the lyrics already. Was she not going to pick up this time as well? She clutched her forehead and was about to press the hang-up button when another person picked up.

“Mijoo, why didn’t you pick up? Are you drunk?”

The instant while waiting for her answer felt like an incredibly long time. Was she drunk to the point that she couldn’t handle herself? She was about to speak to her in a slightly rebuking tone when,

-Gaeul, Mijoo left for a bit. It looks like she’s getting some fresh air.

“Kang Giwoo?”

-Yeah, it’s me.

“Why are you there?”

-Things happened. I was just about to go home after doing my last scene, but I got a call from Mijoo saying that she’s drinking with Mr. Chanwoo over here. I didn’t have anything to do so I came. I thought you’d be here, but you weren’t, huh.

“I went home early. Is Chanwoo next to you?”

-He is. Should I hand the phone over to him?

“Yeah, please.”

Mr. Chanwoo, take the phone – Kang Giwoo’s small voice could be heard.

-Hello?

“Chanwoo, it’s me, Gaeul.”

-So it’s our actress. I thought it was about work again.

“Are you drunk?”

-A little. Not that much. But what’s up? You don’t usually call us while we’re resting.

“I had something to ask. Is Mijoo drunk?”

-Yep, she was drinking without stopping today. Maybe it’s because Mr. Giwoo is here.

At that moment, Giwoo spoke with a laugh,

-Chanwoo, we decided to be friends.

-Right, right. Giwoo, we decided to be friends. Alright, wait a sec, I’ll finish up my call with my actress here. Oh, Gaeul, do you want to talk to Mijoo?

“She came back? I heard Giwoo say she just left.”

-She’s coming in right now. Anyway, this place is really good. Thanks to Giwoo, I got to come to a really high-class place like this. A single shrimp tempura in this Izakaya is a whopping 5,000 won. As for sushi, the minimum price is a hundred thousand. That’s crazy.

“Drink with moderation.”

-Alright, I'll hand you to Mijoo now.

Mijoo picked up the phone.

-Unniiii.

Her tongue was half-loose. Still, this was for the better. When she was really drunk, Mijoo would not be able to say anything and would just laugh. Right now, she could still talk.

“Mijoo, I have something to talk to you about.”

-Yes, unni. I love you too, unni. A lot.

“I'm being serious. Tell the other two that you need to make a call and go outside.”

-I just came back in though.

“Mijoo, I just told you that I'm serious, didn't I? I hope you don't make me say it twice.”

* * *

She felt like she dipped her feet into cold water. She sobered up instantly to the point that she felt like she had never drunk at all. Mijoo retracted her hand that was reaching out for some snacks and stood up. Hearing Chanwoo ask where she was going, she said that she was going to be on the phone. To Giwoo, she just smiled. She walked with quick steps while loosening her arm that held the phone. While she walked down the stairs leading outside the building, Mijoo licked her lips several times.

Unni's voice sounded very serious. Gaeul-unni was someone who never got angry. When she first met her at a field experience arranged by her styling school, she made so many mistakes that she clenched her eyes shut with the resolve to get rebuked, but unni patted her on the back telling her not to be too nervous. Even after they signed an official contract, her attitude did not change. She looked out for her wherever they went, and even when she made a big mistake, she only scolded her until she reflected on it. Ever since she found out how hard the life of a stylist is under an entertainer with a terrible personality, she resolved to do anything if it was her unni's words. She didn't want to get fired as she wanted to work with her for a long time.

Yet, such a person had a frighteningly heavy voice right now. This was not ordinary. Even when Chanwoo-oppa went to the wrong shooting set by mistake which made them end up being 3 hours late, unni blamed herself for her tardiness in front of her senior actors. Although she told him to be careful later, she was definitely not saying that emotionally. Right now, she was very emotional, and those emotions definitely weren't positive.

As soon as Mijoo left the building, she put her phone against her ear.

“Hello?”

-Are you outside?

“Yes, unni.”

-Did you run? You sound out of breath.

"No, I didn't run."

She ran as hard as possible. She half-flew down the stairs. That was how serious unni's voice was. A warning siren ran off inside her head.

"But unni, what is happening?"

She spoke in a formal tone subconsciously. They would usually talk like 'hey, you' when they were drunk, but she felt like she should kneel right now.

-Is Giwoo next to you?

"He's not here. I'm by myself right now, save for some passersby."

-You sure Giwoo is not next to you?

"Yes."

-That's fine then. Mijoo, let me ask you something. I hope you answer me honestly.

"Okay."

-Are you hiding something from me?

That question stifled her. Her grip on the phone tightened. She started going over the mistakes she made in the past three months, starting from today's. She quickly narrowed down the mistakes that she hadn't mentioned to her yet.

"Are you talking about how I tried on your clothes behind your back?"

-I know about that one. And I don't care about that either.

"Then are you talking about how I was late last time?"

-Have I ever scolded you harshly for being late?

"No."

-It's something recent. I want to hear it from you before I have to ask.

Her lips went dry. She was sure that unni had become angry. No, it wasn't on the level of being angry. Her intuition told her that their relationship might shatter depending on the answer she gave. Mijoo stomped her feet as she thought about what kind of mistake she made that made the kind unni enraged like this until she thought about what she said just now. Just a moment ago, unni asked to confirm if Giwoo was next to her. Among the myriad of mistakes she made, she remembered the one related to Kang Giwoo.

"Is it because I kept it a secret that I fought with Lee Miyeon's stylist?"

-Are you sure that you fought with Lee Miyeon's stylist?

She asked for confirmation yet again. Mijoo sighed for now. She now knew the problem, so she just had to explain.

“Sorry, unni. I thought you’d be worried, so I didn’t tell you about it. But you don’t have to worry that much. Giwoo-oppa handled it for me. He stopped that stylist from tattling to Lee Miyoona about it. So there’s no problem at all.”

-Mijoo. Hiding it from me will make me more worried instead. I don’t recall ever making your life hard just because you made a mistake.

“You never did. I know better than anyone how well you treat me.”

-Don’t ever hide things like that in the future, especially if it’s related to Lee Miyoona. You should’ve just gone to see me and ask for my help.

“Sorry. Giwoo-oppa helped me out before I could even tell you about it. He told me that he handled it well, so I decided to forget about it too. Unni, are you angry? I’m really sorry. I will never do that again.”

-Is that it? Nothing else happened?

“Yes, that’s it.”

She should have been honest back then without trying to gloss things over. It would’ve been much easier to get scolded a little since it had been resolved already. Because she had hidden it, she ended up upsetting her unni. No matter how hard she thought about it, it was her fault.

Mijoo waited for an answer in nervousness when she suddenly felt something off. This was a sensitive topic, so it was plausible that she had to take the call in a place without any people, but why did she ask if Giwoo wasn’t around? She even asked twice about it.

“Uhm, unni. Why did you ask if Giwoo-oppa was next to me?”

It wasn’t something that she had to hide from Giwoo-oppa. He knew about it after all.

-I can’t tell you the details, but Giwoo and I don’t get along that well. To be precise, I don’t think well of Giwoo. That’s why I told you to leave. I wanted him to not listen to what we’re talking about.

“What? Weren’t you friends with Giwoo-oppa?”

-Until a while ago, we were. But not now. Giwoo seems to think of me as a friend, though. No, he might be suspecting me right now. The way we talk has changed recently.

“Unni, I don’t get what you are saying right now. Did you two get into a fight? If it’s like that, I’ll try to mediate between you two.”

-This is not something you can do anything about. I will never treat Giwoo wholeheartedly in the future.

“Just what happened? On the day I fought with Lee Miyoona’s stylist, Giwoo-oppa told me that you three were close enough to drink together.”

-Three?

“Yes, you, Giwoo-oppa, and Maru-oppa. These three.”

-Giwoo told you that? That the three of us are close?

“Yes. He even told me you were old friends. If he knows that you two are dating, I thought you’d be really close.”

-Wait.

Gaeul-unni spoke in urgency. She was practically shouting at this point. Mijoo was startled and grabbed her phone with both her hands.

“Unni, what is it?”

-What did you say just now? Giwoo knows that Maru and I are dating?

“Yes.”

-That can’t be true.

“But he does. I definitely...”

Mijoo stopped talking. Her mind went back to the day she fought with Lee Miyoong’s stylist. After she managed to escape that evil stylist and was heaving a sigh of relief, Giwoo approached her and they started talking. She thanked him again and they eventually talked about having a drink together. Mijoo focused. She had to remember this precisely. They tried to schedule a drinking occasion, but she told him that Gaeul-unni had a prior engagement, and when asked what it was, she told him that she was drinking with Maru. She was flustered because she uttered something private, but she was relieved to know that Giwoo knew Maru. After that, she ended up talking about it – that they shouldn’t interfere with the couple. It was her who spoke first.

“Unni, what do I do? I spoke about it first that you two are a couple.”

-What did Giwoo say after that?

“He looked like he knew about it. Now that I think about it though, it seemed a little strange. He was smiling brightly as though he was overjoyed. I just thought something good happened to him... so Giwoo-oppa didn’t know that the two of you were dating?”

-We haven’t told him. Also when he said that we’re old friends, that’s just his own interpretation. Maru has known him for a long time, but he told me that he has never treated Kang Giwoo as a friend.

“Unni, then I... what do I do, unni? I ended up telling him that you were dating without knowing that.”

She said they weren’t old friends and that they weren’t close at all. There was no way that unni would have lied, so it would mean that Giwoo, who was drinking with her, had been lying. Why though? She suddenly felt the chills. Extending this conversation would change the meaning of what Giwoo said after that. Unni might get angry so you should keep it a secret – was that a scheme to hide the fact that he had gotten to know a secret? Mijoo spoke about it immediately,

“Giwoo-oppa told me not to say it. He said I would get scolded if you found out I made a mistake and that there’s no need for me to talk about it since it was all taken care of. But now that I heard everything you said, it doesn’t feel like it was advice. Maybe...”

-He must have made you stay quiet because I might find out like this.

“Giwoo-oppa, no, Kang Giwoo, why does that man act like that? He acted like he knew everything.”

-Mijoo, you know I trust you, right?

“Yes, I trust you too, unni.”

-Then go up first and wrap up for the day. Forget about the conversation we just had, and don't give him any hints. If Giwoo acts suspicious, then just pretend like you're drunk, okay?

“Yes.”

-And bring Chanwoo out with you as well. After separating from Giwoo, give me a call again.

“Okay.”

Mijoo ended the call and looked at the entrance of the building. It looked like a golden castle when she first came here, but it felt like abandoned ruins right now.

Chapter 856. Sequence 12

She couldn't let go of her phone. What Mijoo said reverberated in her mind. Kang Giwoo knew they were dating? She hadn't expected that at all. Why did he not say anything despite knowing that? From how he stopped Mijoo from telling her about it, it meant that he was scheming something. Giwoo had been just watching her without a word recently, so maybe that was related to this. Her head hurt. It was likely that just as Maru didn't have a good opinion of Giwoo, Giwoo did not have a good opinion of Maru. If he really was someone that did not hesitate to bully other people, then he must have tried to do something about Maru, and the fact that she was dating him would have been a great weapon. Had he decided to use it, he would have used it a long time ago. From how he was staying silent, did that mean he had another reason? Or was he waiting for the right time? It was likely that he was staying silent because that fact couldn't damage Maru directly, but she couldn't exactly feel relieved considering the things that Giwoo did until now.

The phone in her hands started vibrating. It was a call from Maru.

-I'm on my way back after getting them home. Have you called Mijoo?

“I just did. But there's a problem.”

-What problem?

“She's with Giwoo. It's good that I called her immediately. If she kept staying next to him without knowing anything, she would have blurted out everything. But the bigger problem is that Giwoo knows you and I are dating.”

-Sounds like Mijoo told him.

“Kang Giwoo lied to her, saying that the three of us are all friends. Mijoo thought that he naturally knew that we were dating and told him about it.”

-And Giwoo must have acted like he naturally knew about it, yes?

“From her words, he was even smiling joyfully.”

-When was that?

“The day you and I drank wine.”

-Has Giwoo given you any hints since then?

“No.”

-Journalists haven't come looking for you either, right?

“If they did, I would have told you about it.”

-So that means he's keeping that to himself for now, huh. He's probably staying quiet since revealing it will only harm you. It will also badly influence the drama if rumors spread around.

“I think so too. In fact, if he told anyone, it would be you.”

-He didn't call me either. If he knew about it, he would definitely have brought it up with me, but from how there wasn't a response at all until now, it looks like he has something else planned.

“I don't care if Giwoo reveals it to the media. I can proudly admit it.”

-You're at the prime of your career. Although it has become a lot better than before, there are many people who don't sit well with an actress's romantic relationship. If it gets exposed, there will be more demerits than benefits. I'm sure your agency won't like it either.

“Things have gotten complicated. I was going to verify what I knew and was going to hear the truth from her, but Kang Giwoo is there too.”

-What did you tell Mijoo?

“For now, I told her to leave after wrapping things up. She may have made a mistake, but she's still someone I cherish a lot. I can't let her stay tied up with Giwoo. The same goes for Chanwoo.”

-Alright. I'll call Mijoo.

“What for?”

-Insurance.

Maru told her not to worry about it and hung up. Although she wanted to rest, she couldn't exactly relax in this situation. Gaeul grabbed her phone and went to the living room, hoping for some good news.

* * *

Maru quickly searched for a name on his contact list and gave that person a call.

“Noona, I need a favor.”

-What's up? It's not like you to use a word like favor, and to me of all people.

“I'm in a hurry, so can you help me out? If you can't, then I'll look for someone else.”

-I don't know what it is, but sure.

"Where are you right now?"

-At a bar near your house. We were going to barge into your place out of habit but realized we couldn't do that, so we're sulking. By we, I mean me and the two men here.

"Then I'll go pick you up."

-Alright. I don't know what it is, but the cute little boy sounds so urgent, so I don't have a reason to refuse. I'll be waiting.

Maru hung up and turned the wheel.

* * *

Mijoo kept staring at the mirror in the bathroom. Although she was told to wrap things up and leave while pretending nothing happened, that wasn't as easy as it sounded.

"I can't believe Giwoo-oppa lied to me."

Thinking about how he lied without batting an eyelid made it difficult for her to face him. What kind of expression was she supposed to make while going back? She had to bring the drunk Chanwoo out, so this was definitely not something easy. She couldn't explain what she just heard to him either. Mijoo slapped her mouth. Her mouth was the source of trouble. The fact that Gaeul told her that they were dating meant that she trusted her, but she ended up betraying that trust. No matter how 'healthy' of a relationship they had, the very fact that an actress was in a relationship might be fatal. She easily spoke about something she should never have. Even if she knelt in front of her and begged for forgiveness, she couldn't be forgiven for it.

That was why she had to wrap this situation up properly. That was the least she could do. Whether her act was going to work in front of someone who could deceive everyone like breathing and was an actor to boot, was questionable, but she still had no choice. They had to escape this place. As long as Chanwoo did not say that they should stay for longer, it might end unexpectedly early.

She smiled naturally while looking at the mirror for one last time, though, whether it was truly 'natural', she wasn't entirely sure. It had been three years since she started watching actors on sets. She probably wouldn't get found out immediately.

She put on makeup again in order to create an excuse for leaving her seat for so long. She was planning to tell Giwoo that Gaeul had asked her about something related to the schedule if he did ask. She calculated that he wouldn't pry too deep as it was about work. She hadn't wracked her brain this much since she was in her third year of high school. After imagining a few possible situations, she left the bathroom. She took a deep breath and was about to walk to the door when she got another call. Mijoo flinched. She was already very tense, and the bell startled her. She checked the name of the caller on the phone. It was Maru.

"Yes, oppa."

-I heard the gist of it from Gaeul.

She reflexively apologized.

-Apologizing can come later. Are you inside the store right now?

"No, I was thinking outside and was just about to go in."

-Do you think you can act like nothing happened after you go in?

"I'll try. I just have to go in and say that we should go home. Chanwoo-oppa might say that we should drink more, but I'll try to make something out of it."

-Don't do that, and just drink like you were just doing.

"What?"

-You don't have to try to leave, just keep drinking. But you can't get too drunk, so drink in moderation. Also, I have a favor to ask.

"A favor?"

* * *

Kang Giwoo put down his glass and looked at his watch. Mijoo, who had left after getting a call from Gaeul, hadn't returned for over 30 minutes. He checked the notification bar on her phone before he picked up the call and saw that there were a lot of messages and missed calls. If they were all from Han Gaeul, it meant that it was pretty urgent, and from the conversation with them, he found out that Gaeul would never call them regarding work once their work period was over. He became curious about the reason she called at this late hour. If it was any other woman, he wouldn't be interested, but this was about Han Gaeul. Giwoo wanted to know about Gaeul in detail. He was personally interested, and she was also Han Maru's woman after all.

Mijoo returned around the time Chanwoo said he was going to the bathroom after drinking like a whale. Her expression didn't look too good.

"Giwoo-oppa, pour me a glass."

Giwoo poured some drink into Mijoo's glass. Mijoo then snatched the glass and put it straight against her mouth.

"What happened?"

"Something happened."

She then proceeded to sigh as though she was blaming herself for something. She became like this after taking a call. What did she hear from Han Gaeul? He was really curious now. He wanted to grill her about what she just heard, but he took some leisure. It was very arduous and tiring to deal with a girl he didn't like, and this bitch would probably stay silent if he acted ferociously right now.

"I'm a good listener too."

This bitch probably didn't know how expensive the smile she was seeing right now nor how blessed she was for drinking with Kang Giwoo. If his friends found out about this, they would all probably laugh at

him, saying that they couldn't believe that he drank with a girl like her. That was why Mijoo would have to tell him everything. He could bring out the patience to hang out with her for now, but if she kept staying silent without knowing her place, he was going to give her a punishment.

He locked eyes with Mijoo. She seemed to be hiding something. He was feeling itchy because of that mouth that didn't tell him anything. He couldn't shout at her either. Thinking that feeding her more alcohol would loosen her up a little, he poured some more for her. After drinking it, Mijoo sighed and spoke,

"It's my fault."

"What did you do?"

"It's all my fault. So the thing is."

Because of the alcohol, her words were slurry. He wanted to grab her shoulders and shake her, telling her, 'how you feel is none of my fucking business, so just tell me what you talked about over the goddamn phone.'

"Gaeul-uni is so pitiful."

"Gaeul is? Why?"

"So, the thing is, it goes like this. Han Maru, that bastard...."

After mumbling, Mijoo fell onto the table. Giwoo couldn't make out what happened at all. Han Gaeul is pitiful and Han Maru is a bastard?

Chanwoo returned and spoke as he looked at Mijoo on the table,

"Looks like she's completely drunk. Giwoo, this girl can't even speak when she's drunk. Her drunk behavior is really strange."

Giwoo narrowed his eyes and looked at Mijoo. Just as he said, she seemed totally drunk. She was mumbling something, but he couldn't make out a word she said. Thinking back to the words Mijoo said, he ate some snacks. About 20 minutes later, Mijoo raised her head again.

"Did I fall asleep?"

"You're totally drunk, alright. Mijoo, I told you to drink in moderation."

Chanwoo gave Mijoo some water. Giwoo asked after looking at her,

"Mijoo, what you said before."

"What?"

"You don't remember?"

Mijoo made a totally clueless expression. He took a closer look at the bitch's expression. Something felt off. The girl who was drunk to the point of falling asleep looked strangely sober. When he looked into her eyes, she even looked away. Oh? Was this girl playing a joke with him?

In order to make other people's acting habits his own, he needed to have good observing eyes. Giwoo could proudly say that he was better than anyone when it came to catching the minute changes within people. If he put his mind to it, it was only a matter of time until he found out what kind of things she was pulling off here.

"Er, Mijoo."

Just as he was about to probe her out, Mijoo's eyes looked over his shoulder. Giwoo looked around. A not-so-welcome face was walking across the store. It was Han Maru. Next to him was a woman with a black mask and a baseball cap. They looked pretty close.

Giwoo tried to look at Mijoo's face again, but the bitch already planted her face on the table again. Just then, he remembered her saying that Han Maru was a bastard and that Han Gaeul was pitiful. The one who was walking with Maru just now was not Han Gaeul. Their body figures were different. Although he couldn't make out her face because of the mask and the fact that it was dark in the store, he could be sure about that.

Giwoo took out his phone and called Gaeul.

-What?

He could feel anger from the voice over the phone. It also wasn't like her to pick up the call with a 'what.' This was getting interesting. He held back from smiling and asked,

"I was having a drink with Mijoo and I suddenly thought about you. If you aren't too busy, wanna come hang out?"

-Sorry, I don't feel like it today. Thanks for calling, but see you later.

"Alright, no biggie. Have a good rest."

Before he could finish the word 'rest,' Gaeul hung up. It wasn't her usual way of ending a call in a cheerful tone. Something was happening, the key to which was probably with Han Maru, who just disappeared into the back of the store. He couldn't care less about Mijoo now. She could sleep or do whatever she wanted.

Giwoo told Chanwoo that he would go to the bathroom and walked towards the direction Maru disappeared in. There were many couples drinking in places that were walled off by partitions. They didn't give a glance even if anyone passed by. This was the reason Giwoo frequented this place. He would be worry-free from annoying flies here. That was why many celebrities frequented this place as well. Here, it was courtesy to not greet each other, even if they did know each other, unless they were extremely close.

After passing by a few partitions, Giwoo managed to find the face he wanted. He saw Han Maru with a big grin on his face.

Chapter 857. Sequence 12

He thought about calling out to him but then decided to watch the situation. He leaned against the wall while fidgeting with his phone. He couldn't see the woman's face because it was blocked by the partition, but he could definitely see Maru's grinning face. This was the first time he had seen him

grinning like that. Although they had been hanging out together since 'New Semester,' he had never seen that guy smile like that without a care in the world. He even clapped and responded to the woman's words, though he didn't hear what she said. Maru was clearly way too excited.

Giwoo tried connecting the lines in his head with Maru's actions. A bad Han Maru, an angry Han Gaeul, and finally Maru smiling foolishly while looking at an unfamiliar woman. All of that combined allowed him to draw a picture. It was something so common that it wasn't even that surprising. A man and a woman breaking up after getting fed up with each other. The reason Gaeul was angry was probably since she was dumped. It wasn't that surprising that she was angry since she was an actress at the peak of popularity. The reason Mijoo said that it was her fault was probably since she did something between the two. Or maybe, she had an absurd misunderstanding like how it was her fault that the two broke up. That wasn't really important right now though.

Actors dating each other was very common. It just wasn't released to the media that often. Even if it was just an act, there was no way romantic feelings would not sprout when they whispered love and kissed each other for months. Sometimes, top stars and minor actors would date each other, but most of the time, that ended badly. It was natural as there was a gap in their league. This was why people should play with those in the same league. Getting involved with someone in a different league would frustrate both parties before it ultimately ended badly.

It was quite a pity. If the two were close, then the ecstasy of stealing her from him would have been multiple times bigger. This guy really wasn't to his liking. Even if he tried to socially bury him, this guy had nothing to him that he could bury. He then tried to make him taste the sense of powerlessness from having his lover stolen, but he dumped her first. He was a frigging Bohemian. There was nothing that bound him, so there was no way to attack him. This guy was frustrating.

It was time to check on the situation. Giwoo pretended to be on a call and walked towards the two. Luckily, Maru noticed him first. Maru scanned him up and down with a displeased expression.

"Maru, what brings you here?"

Giwoo greeted him first so that he could not ignore him. That guy hinted to him to walk away, but Giwoo replied to that with a smile. Looking at him panicking slightly was very pleasing. This was his first time seeing Han Maru so flustered. It meant that he was really serious towards the woman in front of him. He turned around to the woman and asked for a handshake. Although she had taken her mask off, she still had her baseball cap deeply pressed down, so he couldn't see her face. However, just from her jawline, he could tell that she was a considerable beauty. Han Maru, this lucky bastard, either had incredibly good talking skills or a very big thing between his legs.

"Hello."

He greeted the woman. As he was here, he had to check her face. The woman scoffed and took off her cap. It was someone Giwoo knew well.

"Suyeon-noon?"

"Oh, it's Giwoo. I thought it was one of those obsessive fans of mine. What brings you here?"

"I came here to drink with a couple people I know. How about you, noon?"

“Me? I’m here to have a drink with this guy as well. But you two look close?”

“We are. Aren’t we, Maru?”

Maru’s eyes twitched. His displeasure was apparent. It was so refreshing. He even wanted to capture that flustered expression on camera. It was a pity that he could not take his phone out.

“We’re friends.”

“Really? Giwoo, since you’re here, you should have a drink too, right?”

“Sure.”

Suyeon picked up a bottle. Giwoo accepted her pour with both of his hands on the glass. Han Maru was staring holes at him from the side. It seemed that he really didn’t like this.

“It’s been a long time since I got to drink with you, noona.”

“You had it so busy, that’s why. Also, you didn’t even call me once. We can only drink if we can talk to each other, duh.”

“That’s true. Looks like I was a little dumb.”

“Give me a call next time. I’m good at drinking.”

He rolled the fruit-scented liquor around his mouth for a while before swallowing it. He felt like he could get drunk pleasantly if he kept drinking here. There was no need for accompanying snacks. Han Maru’s displeased face was enough of a snack.

“You should have a drink too, noona.”

He picked up the bottle and tilted it. After receiving a glass, Suyeon drank it heartily in one go. Just like the rumors that said she was refreshing, she didn’t hold back while drinking. She even tapped down the glass and wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. If this was their first time meeting, he would’ve thought that this was the kind of person she was, but Giwoo knew Suyeon’s other face very well. If any other actress wanted to drink with him, he would not refuse, but if it was Kim Suyeon, he would look for excuses first. Her appearance wasn’t lacking compared to anyone, so it would be pleasant to drink while looking at her face, but still, he couldn’t afford to sit at the same table with a viper hiding its fang. Right now, it was fine since he was an uninvited guest.

“I know that you two belong to the same agency, but you two are pretty close after all, huh?”

He threw a question to probe out the atmosphere. Suyeon swirled the empty glass around as she spoke,

“I’ve known Maru for quite some time, so I guess you can call us close.”

“I want to go to JA too in the future. I hope you can say a word or two to the president for me. You too, Maru.”

“If Kang Giwoo is coming, I’m sure the president will welcome you with open arms. If your contract expires, you should think about it seriously. It’s good to become a part of the family, isn’t it?”

“I’ll really seriously consider it.”

“The president of Soul must be disappointed to hear that.”

“It’s fine, our president has a big heart.”

Maru tapped him with his elbow, hinting to him to leave. He couldn’t stand up already when he hadn’t found out anything yet. He wanted to see him act displeased for longer too.

“Maru. I called Gaeul just a while ago, and she sounded angry. She probably wouldn’t answer me even if I asked her why. Do you know anything? You two are close.”

Han Maru’s expression froze up in an instant. Rather than his stiff face, Giwoo chased his eyes. His lips were twitching in displeasure, and his eyes were giving glances at Suyeon. At this point, he was convinced.

“How would I know?”

Although he sounded like he was oblivious, it was child’s play in front of Giwoo, who knew everything.

“Also, stop talking about Han Gaeul. What are you doing, talking about someone that’s not here in front of someone else?” Maru whispered to him.

He almost burst out laughing. He even found this guy pitiful for trying to look good in front of a woman. Just what made him so worried about this guy until now? The beast-like eyes that he showed from time to time were gone without a trace. So even he wasn’t anything much if he got nervous.

Although he tried to stay seated, Maru called him out separately. Giwoo thought that this was about enough and followed him out. Maru started speaking where Suyeon’s eyes did not reach,

“What the heck do you want?”

“What’s this all of a sudden? I just said hi because I was glad to see someone I know here.”

“If that’s true, then just leave after saying hello. Don’t say anything unnecessary.”

“Anything unnecessary? Did I say something bad?”

Maru’s lips twitched, but he didn’t say anything. There was probably no way that he could say that he used to date Han Gaeul and that he was trying to look good in front of Kim Suyeon now. Giwoo decided to ask just to confirm,

“But hey, it looked good back there. Are things going well with Suyeon-noona?”

Maru shook his head, saying that it was nothing like that, but there was definitely a hint of a smile on his face. It was clear that this guy held Suyeon in his heart. He wondered how far he had progressed. Were they dating already? Or did he just dump Gaeul so that he could change ships?

“What are you two doing?”

Suyeon came over. Maru said that it was nothing and that they should go back.

“Go back first. I have something to talk about with Giwoo.”

Maru didn't leave immediately and stuck around for a moment. He looked pathetic for being servile to Suyeon. There was nothing more tragic than a man being dominated by a woman, and yet this guy was the prime example of that. When Suyeon once again told him to go, Maru put on a foolish smile and turned around.

"I thought you were supposed to feign ignorance in this place even if you do find someone you know. Have the rules changed recently?"

Suyeon's eyes were aglare unlike when she was at the table. This was her true form. She couldn't be more duplicate than this. According to the rumors, there were at least ten producers that this woman had ensnared. It might be an exaggeration considering that she had never been caught up with bad rumors, but it was also likely that she was very good at cleaning up the aftermath. What he could say for sure was that he couldn't afford to joke around with her. Giwoo did not see Suyeon as someone below him, whether it was in terms of popularity, appearance, or skill. Above all, he liked her for knowing how to use her head to manipulate other people. He had no plans on warring against someone of the same kind.

"That guy and I have some matters. But are you two dating?"

"No."

"Then what?"

"You still don't get what relationship we're in after seeing how he acted?" Suyeon asked as she licked her lower lip.

It was indeed one of the stories he had in his mind. Maru had fallen for Suyeon and was seeking her love.

"I get what it is now."

"If you do, then get going. I thought you had company. Let's mind ourselves with only the people we should care about. As far as I know, you don't like people disturbing your business either, do you?"

"I don't, a lot."

"There's a good boy. You really are a good boy, unlike the rumors."

"There are rumors about me?"

"On our side, a little."

"You're different from the rumors too, noona. I thought you only partnered with capable people."

"Women like to be innocent at times. You should try it too, I mean being in innocent love. Don't do things like drugs."

"Don't say something so dangerous. There's no one in Korea who does drugs."

"Right?"

"Of course."

Suyeon placed her hand on Giwoo's shoulder. She started stroking upward before her hand eventually reached his neck. She flicked his Adam's apple and spoke,

"Why don't we have a drink together sometime? I don't think we've ever drank just by ourselves."

"I'd love to, but I'm a man with many fears."

Suyeon chuckled and took her hand off.

"I don't like you either. Let's not get close to each other."

"Sure. Oh, right. Good luck with Han Maru, with that innocent love or whatever."

"I'm not sure yet. It might end before it even starts because of my lack of interest. You know, don't you? Innocent things are quite boring."

Suyeon turned around and waved her hand. From the way she spoke, it seemed that Han Maru was destined to get rejected. Perhaps this drinking occasion was his last. Thinking about how Han Maru would be looking forward to dating Suyeon, he burst out laughing. That guy had a terrible eye for women. He was acting cute in front of a viper who can very well swallow a man whole.

"Dumping Han Gaeul for Kim Suyeon, huh."

Giwoo fidgeted with his phone. Gaeul's face kept popping up in his mind. If he could meet her now, he would be able to score some points with her by consoling her. These days, he thought about her a lot more. He had to admit that this had gone beyond simple possessive desire. It probably started back then on the day they shot their first kiss. It was the day a fluffy emotion he had never felt before swept across his heart like a wave.

He put his phone inside his pocket. There was no need to hurry. There would be plenty more chances to see her in the future after all. Perhaps thanks to Han Gaeul, Han Maru left his interest. Seeing him act so submissive in front of Suyeon made him feel like being concerned about him was a waste of energy.

Before he went back, he had a glance at Han Maru who was looking at Suyeon, for one last time. His eyes were sparkling like a dog seeing food. Giwoo laughed in ridicule before turning around.

Chapter 858. Sequence 12

Mijoo looked at the backlights of the car before sighing. Kang Giwoo, who had returned after leaving for a bit, immediately said that they should say goodbye. As it was what she wanted, she immediately said that they should do that. She had to hold Chanwoo back from going for a 2nd round.

"Mijoo, be careful on your way back home."

"You too, oppa."

Chanwoo grabbed a taxi and left. The situation that made her heart beat in nervousness had finally come to a closure. She didn't want to experience that again, whether it was acting in front of an actor or nervously watching one while pretending to be asleep. She looked around before taking out her phone.

"He left."

Maru appeared after she waited for a little after hanging up.

“Good work.”

“Not at all. Is everything okay now?”

“If you did everything I said, then that should have dealt with the problem for now. How did Giwoo look? Did he ask you anything in particular?”

“He looked very pleased after he returned from seeing you. He didn’t ask anything in particular either. He definitely didn’t look like he was suspicious of something. But I did as you told me to, so is everything really okay now? I didn’t say that much.”

Maru called her for a request, and she found out that his request was about acting. It was a request that made her dizzy. Leaving aside the fact that she wasn’t good at lying by nature, the fact that she had to put on an act in front of an actor stifled her. Fortunately, the act wasn’t that difficult, so she didn’t have a hard time doing it, which made her wonder: Han Maru is a bastard, Gaeul-unni is pitiful; could she really sort the situation out with just those two phrases?

“That should be enough. It should have convinced him to think that one of the scenarios in his mind is true. As for the rest, Giwoo should have put the pieces of the puzzle together in the way he wanted to.”

She understood a little.

“Did you immediately pretend to be drunk after saying that?”

“Yes. I fell flat on the table. You told me not to show him my face.”

“Good. I’m not sure about anything else, but he’s good at reading expressions, so if you kept talking to him while looking at him, he might have thought about something else.”

She felt relieved to know that everything had gone well. However, there were two problems that she couldn’t resolve yet: Why did Kang Giwoo lie to her, and why is Gaeul not looking at him in a good light?

“Mijoo.”

“Yes?”

She was startled as she was in deep thought. Maru was pointing at her phone.

“Give Gaeul a call. You should apologize to her first, don’t you think?”

“Oh, right.”

“Gaeul will tell you about the details. She might not, but don’t feel too bad about it.”

“This became a problem because I went off with my mouth, so it’s natural even if she doesn’t tell me anything. I feel so sorry for her. I feel like things have gotten out of hand because of me.”

“From how Giwoo went back quietly, there shouldn’t be a big problem. He should believe that I broke up with her.”

Maru walked to his car after telling her to be careful on her way back. There was a woman wearing a cap in his car. Mijoo didn't know who she was, but she was waving at her. She awkwardly waved back at her. After seeing the car leave, Mijoo pressed the call button with her stiff fingers.

* * *

Kim Suyeon took out her earbuds from her ears. She saw Maru coming towards the car after talking with a woman in front of the building.

"Did things work out?"

"Yes. I think I put out the urgent fire for now."

"You got yourself involved with a dangerous kid. Why is it Kang Giwoo of all people? You asked me about Lee Miyoon a little while ago, didn't you? The people you ask about are all so terribly strong."

"I'm finding out about them beforehand so that I can avoid them. Like you said, they're all so terribly strong, so I'm going to lay low."

"Laying low? And yet you just did that?"

"It was an emergency situation. I couldn't help it."

Suyeon smiled in resignation and shook her head. She did come over because she was tempted by Maru asking a favor but didn't know that it involved making a fool out of someone. Moreover, it was Kang Giwoo of all people. Although she had heard about the details beforehand, it did scare her to see him up close. After all, he was the grandson of the tiger chairman who single-handedly built the colossus that was the current YM, although he had retired now. She would not see anything good if the fact that she 'tampered with' the young master of YM was exposed.

"What did you two talk about after I left?" Maru asked as he put on his seatbelt.

Her talking with Giwoo by themselves was not within the plan. It was an idea Suyeon came up with on the spot.

"Since we were fooling him, I nailed the coffin."

"What did you tell him?"

"That I'm toying with you before throwing you away."

"You didn't need to go that far."

"Why? I just made good use of my public image. Giwoo seemed to accept that. Looks like rumors about me are still widely spread in this industry. Well, I guess people do see me in a weird way if they know anything about me."

"Sorry, and thank you."

"Okay, you owe me one now."

"Call me anytime if you need me."

“Wait at all times. You don’t know when I’ll make use of you.”

“Please refrain from calling me in the middle of the night.”

“Why, because you need to spend a hot night with Gaeul?”

She winked at Maru, who chuckled. This guy would always hesitate to make a move unless he had a guarantee, yet he was like a bulldozer when it involved Han Gaeul. It was like that with Lee Miyoona, and it was like that now.

“Looks like you like her a lot.”

“Yes. I like her a lot.”

“Look at you, not holding back even a little. You’re creeping me out. Gaeul has it good, having a man who loves her so much by her side. I wonder why such a man doesn’t appear for me.”

“Are you even willing to love such a man back the same way?”

“If it’s Geunsoo-oppa, I won’t hesitate for a second and would throw my whole body and heart at him.”

“Try saying that to him. Maybe he’ll fall for it.”

“Don’t start giving me weird ideas; I can only do that so many times. It’s embarrassing to keep doing it. I was surprised myself, you know? I actually still know what shame is. These days, just seeing his face and drinking together sounds about just right. I was laughing together with him when we were drinking earlier today, and I thought that maybe this is what friendship is like between two people of the opposite sex. Oh yeah, speaking of that, I wonder what those two are up to.”

She tried texting. She asked if they were still drinking at the bar or if they went home. She got a text back immediately. Ganghwan left after drinking a couple more glasses, but Geunsoo was still there.

“Geunsoo-oppa is still drinking by himself.”

“You should go visit him.”

“Not today. If Ganghwan-oppa isn’t around, it gets awkward between us. When it’s the three of us, we’re like the three musketeers, but when it’s just me and Geunsoo-oppa, it’s like we’re both ascetics or something. These days, that got even worse, so I don’t even want to meet him without Ganghwan-oppa around.”

“That means he’s conscious of you.”

“I don’t think so.”

Suyeon said that as she looked at Maru’s face. Her unrequited love had been going on for years. At first, it began as a joke or a prank of sorts, but she eventually turned serious. She even regretted the fact that she started it off as a joke and wished that she had been serious since the beginning. The fact that she told him about her past was also because she wanted him to know how serious she was. It was selfish of her to do so, but she was a selfish woman after all.

“I’ll pay back the debt today.”

"I don't plan to use it though."

"It's a really good opportunity. Are you still not going to use it?" Maru said as he grabbed the wheel.

He had a suspicious smile on his face. It was a smile that made her explode with curiosity. Suyeon told him to say it, saying that she would fall for his jokes.

"Geunsoo hyung-nim is thinking about you quite seriously, noona."

"Don't lie to me."

"I heard it from the person himself. He didn't want me to keep it a secret, and in fact, it looked like he wanted me to tell you."

"Really?"

"I'd be real trash if I lied to you here."

"But you were always trash."

"If you put it that way, then I don't really have anything to tell you, because it does seem like I've always been trash. Anyway, I'll drive you to where Geunsoo hyung-nim is now. It's the bar where I picked you up, right?"

The car departed. Suyeon fidgeted as she thought about what he said. There was no reason for Maru to lie. Did he turn into a statue when there were just the two of them not because he disliked it, but because he was conscious? She always interpreted his attitude the same way because she thought that there was no way he would like her. She thought that he didn't even want to talk to her.

"Geunsoo-oppa really said that?"

"If he didn't want to drink with you, he would have texted back that he was going home too. But, he said he's by himself at the bar."

"That's true."

"Weren't you supposed to be max level when it comes to romance? Why didn't you notice such a straightforward clue?"

"Because I never thought it was an option. To me, Geunsoo-oppa staying distant from me is on the same level as saying you'll die if you don't breathe."

"Then why don't you check if that rule still holds or not? You need to try holding your breath to see if you actually die or not."

Suyeon thought about it for a moment before speaking,

"I'm not going after all."

"Why?"

"I don't have the confidence to see him after you said all that."

"You said all sorts of things to Kang Giwoo, so why?"

“That’s because he’s the same type as me. Geunsoo-oppa is different. I’m too nervous. I can’t go.”

“Tonight may be the last chance you can seriously talk it out with each other.”

“You really are trash. If you say that, then I...”

Suyeon stopped speaking and closed her eyes. Maru asked what he should do. Today, the car seemed to be moving really fast, without giving her any time to think.

“I’ll ask first.”

Suyeon sent Geunsoo a text first, asking if it was okay for her to go if he was going to drink more. If it was like she expected, the reply should come in about 10 minutes, telling her that he left the bar a while ago. She inwardly wanted him to reply like that. After all, if they didn’t meet, her heart would stay safe.

She got a reply. It was almost auto-reply level of speed. She clenched her teeth and checked the text.

“Should I go to the bar?”

Suyeon closed her eyes and nodded.

* * *

Geunsoo came out of the bar and brought Suyeon inside. He had a look at Suyeon’s face before she went in, and she looked like a cow being dragged to slaughter. All sorts of fears and worries were being exuded from her eyes. People really were unpredictable. If their dream came true, then they would be suspicious first instead of rejoicing. In that sense, Maru thought that she was a lot like him.

“I’m going back now.”

He hung up the call from Gaeul and got in the car. Considering how rushed he was in dealing with this situation, the outcome was pretty clean. Scouting Suyeon was the best move he could make. She was the first one that came to his mind as she possessed the right image for this job.

Suyeon was right. It was something that trash would do. He was grateful to her for taking up on the job without complaining. He did not consider telling her what Geunsoo thought was settling the debt. After all, those two would have made progress even if he didn’t do anything. If there was an opportunity to help her out later, he was going to do it regardless of what it may be with a thick face.

“I should wrap things up now.”

Maru called Kang Giwoo. The signal went on for a long time before Giwoo picked up.

-Oh, Maru. What’s up? You called me first.

“Nothing. I just wanted to say nice meeting you today.”

-Me too.

Maru yawned in a small voice so that it didn’t go over the phone and waited. He observed a man walking past his car and smiled at a cat jumping in front of the car. Giwoo said what he expected him to.

-I hope it goes well for you. I'll forget what I saw today, so don't worry about that. I'm not sure you know, but there's a rule to not say anything about what people saw there. So there's no need to call me like this. Don't worry about it and get to sleep.

"I didn't worry at all. Alright, see you later."

He hung up immediately. Maru was grateful that he reacted the way he thought he would. There was no need to worry now since Giwoo should be thinking that the scenario was going the way he wanted it to. This was why it was easy dealing with people who could use their heads. They would make predictions and judgements if they were given some minute clues. It was worth the effort to induce that young master to think like that.

Maru drove his car back to his apartment.

Chapter 859. Sequence 13

Having finished washing the dishes, Maru got in the car with the outfit he had prepared beforehand. It was 6 a.m. Usually, he only had a couple of scenes to shoot, so he was never called to the set early, but today, the assistant director told him to come early. He drove over to YBS and headed to the set which was about 2 km away from the TV station. He went inside and said hello to the members of the staff who were busy getting ready. Just then,

"You're going up first today. Oh, this is your script. We just got it at 4 a.m. Looks like that unni has a lot of stress."

The script didn't even have a cover on it. Not to mention typos, there were even wrong names littered throughout the script as though to show how hurried the writer was when writing it. Jayeon told him to read it quickly before leaving. She seemed to be busy coming up with movement lines with the camera director. He went to the corner so that he didn't disturb anyone and started reading the script.

"You're early today."

Heewon walked over with a yawn. His hair looked neat today like he had been to a hairstylist.

"I was called here."

"Wasn't your scene supposed to be this afternoon?"

"Apparently, there are extra scenes."

Maru showed him the script. Heewon had a look at it.

"So we got extra scenes that weren't there before, huh. And they're centered around you too. That must be a pain for you. It's not like you get paid more just because you shoot more."

"Popular actors like you can think like that. To me, it's a grateful opportunity."

"Looks like quite a lot. Was that character originally going to be used like this?"

"Nah, I have someone to thank for this actually. It's Kang Giwoo."

"Kang Giwoo?"

“Well, something like that. Anyway, help me out during the shoot today so that I can leave an impression on the audience.”

“I’m sure you’ll do fine without me anyway. Let’s just finish it without an NG and go home to rest. If I’m shooting with you, I’m sure I can finish it early.”

Heewon looked around for a moment before pulling a chair over and sitting down on it.

“Aren’t you leaving?”

“I don’t have anything to do, and if I catch the director’s eyes, I’ll just get an earful. Moreover, that guy will leave me alone when I’m with you.”

‘That guy’ was coming.

“Hyung, didn’t you say you didn’t have any scenes today?”

“You know all sorts of stuff. I got an additional scene, so I came.”

“I see.”

Haewon took something out of his pocket. In his hand was chocolate. It was Heewon’s snack. Haewon always said that it was a method to console a child throwing a tantrum because they were tired, but people who heard him for the first time would just laugh it off thinking it was a joke. They would probably change their minds if they witnessed the miracle of a popular actor that was rolling on the ground because they were unwilling to work, standing up because of a mere piece of chocolate.

“Please take care of my brother today.”

“That’s for me to say to him. He’s a popular actor.”

He put the chocolate in his mouth and started reading the script. He repeated the lines so that they got stuck on his tongue – until the point he could picture the situation when he closed his eyes, and he could say his lines reflexively. He recited everything from the first line to the last line without rest. He then picked out the lines that he had a harder time saying and said them again. After checking that he could say his line mechanically, he woke Heewon up, who was dozing off to the side.

“If you don’t have anything to do, then practice with me.”

Heewon said he couldn’t be bothered, looking clearly annoyed. Maru handed him his script.

“But you’ll do fine by yourself.”

“Who told you to be next to me? If you practice with me, I won’t bother you anymore, so help me out a little.”

Heewon licked his lips and said, ‘just once.’ It seemed that he came to the judgment that delaying sleep for just one round was fine. Maybe he was helping out for the price of blocking his persistent little brother’s eyes.

Maru quickly finished his practice with Heewon. He tried reflecting on the emotions he thought would work well while practicing by himself, and it didn’t look bad. The writer described the character in detail,

making it easier for him to express him. As Jayeon said, the writer was pretty skilled. The fact that she was the main writer of a mini-series drama in her mid-30s was proof that she was above the rest.

“That’s one practice done.”

“Then let’s start the second one, shall we?”

“I thought you only needed to do it once?”

“When did I say that? Since we started, practice with me until the shoot starts. Who knows? I might block Haewon for you later.”

“That’s tempting.”

Heewon became filled with vitality and picked up the script. Maru decided that it would be later that he told him that it was only lip service and that he would definitely side with Haewon if the two got into a fight. Heewon, who was just uttering the lines dryly before, now started participating in practice with emotion. Practice became a lot smoother with someone to interact emotionally.

It felt quite ecstatic to practice with a partner who could receive everything he threw at him. It felt like he was throwing random pieces of a 100-piece puzzle on the ground, but it fell into the right place every single time. Heewon even smoothly returned with a line when Maru threw at him an emotion that was completely out of place in the script. For a moment, Maru thought that Heewon would become a good professor in acting. Though, he himself would definitely deny it.

“Hey, are things working out well with Gaeul?” Heewon asked during practice.

“Why do you ask so suddenly?”

“Because I just found out a couple who had been dating for a year broke up yesterday. I was wondering if you two were doing well. Heck, the first people I thought about were you two after hearing that. It means that I was quite worried about you two.”

“Do you think we’ll break up again?”

“I heard people last a long time when they work things out after breaking up, so no.”

“Good. We’ll stay right next to each other for a long time so don’t you worry about it.”

“Please do.”

“Don’t worry about others and think about your own romance. What happened to the woman you met last time?”

“We split up after eating.”

“Why? You didn’t get along?”

“No. I thought about it seriously recently, and I don’t think I can get married. I imagined it, you know? Me getting married and having a family. But I couldn’t bring myself to imagine it. I have no confidence to be a good dad, and I feel like looking after kids is something impossible for me. Heck, before I am even a good dad, I don’t think I’ll be a good husband.”

“I know this is something that’s probably said to death, but you’re bound to do well if it comes down to it.”

“That’s not like you. You plan everything out in life, don’t you? Having a child at X years old, having your child enter Y elementary school, and what to do in your later years.”

“I’m not actually that calculative, you know?”

“So that’s why you poked Gaeul into a drama and ran to the military? Say something that makes more sense. Anyway, I’m going to live alone for life.”

“You’ll never say that if you see a woman you want to love for your whole life. People like you tend to get married early.”

“Me? I don’t think so.”

“People who say that always arrive at the goal early.”

I really don’t think so – Heewon shook his head and stood up before disappearing somewhere. The person who made Heewon flee walked over.

“We’re going to start right now, so you’re ready right? We can’t afford to have you not be ready.”

For a person who chucked the script at him early in the morning, she had a pretty bold attitude. Jayeon pointed at the set with her chin before turning around. She seemed to be saying, ‘you might as well quit if you aren’t this fast,’ with her back. Maru followed her with the script in hand. The reason he did vocal exercises every single day and practiced his emotions was precisely to catch sudden opportunities like this. To complain that he had too little time and that it was too unfair, there were too many aspiring actors in South Korea to actually do so.

“That’s more like it. That confident-looking face is looking real good right now.”

“That’s because I’m putting on an act that I’m confident.”

“That sounds good too. I know you’ll do well.”

“Your words give me the most pressure.”

“I am giving you pressure. This is a story that the writer created after calling you out separately. It’s a desperate struggle to increase the viewing rate. Ultimately, the only thing that remains is the viewing rate. You’re on the same ship, so you’ll have to work to death.”

“Do I get compensated if the ship sinks?”

“I’m fine since I’m employed at YBS.”

“So I’m the only one in danger, huh. I’ll do my best.”

“Show everyone that there’s an actor like you.”

Jayeon told him some simple movement lines and the emotions she sought in this scene. Maru compared the act he prepared beforehand and what the director wanted him to do and thought about

which one was better. Jayeon sometimes took it a little easy and would be strong at other times to set the general atmosphere of the scene.

“You know it too, right? When you’re young, you even buy suffering. Until a while ago, these words earned the sympathy of everyone, but it’s being used a little differently.”

“Yes. I heard someone say that on TV a few days ago. Why do people have to buy suffering when they’re young? It’s not like being young is a crime.”

“The hot keyword these days is passion pay^[1]. Words like that get reinterpreted accordingly. This scene is based on creating a common ground. Last-minute scripts aren’t always bad. You can keep up with trends like this. If I’m worried about something, it’s that this must not become a soap opera. No one likes forced tears, do they? Sympathy versus soap opera. Tears from sympathy make the viewers pick up their remote and increase the volume, while a soap opera would make them change the channel in annoyance instead.”

“If you put thrilling music in the background, it shouldn’t become a soap opera.”

“I don’t plan to let editing solve this. I’m going to leave this scene entirely in your hands. I’m going to not do my work and will let you do it instead, so try. This morning’s shoot was scheduled solely for this scene.”

“You’re putting me in a pickle here.”

“Would you like a cucumber instead?”

“Your pun skills have become good ever since you got married. Director Park Hoon laughs a lot when he hears you, doesn’t he?”

He probably even sheds tears from laughing so hard – Jayeon twitched her lips and went over to the monitor. Maru said hello to the camera director, who just picked up the camera and got into position.

“Okay, then. We’re starting.”

Jayeon put on her headset and moved her mouth. Please do well – he could tell what she was saying from a distance. I want to do well too – Maru scratched his eyebrows. It was just the right amount of tension and pressure. When dealing with a controversial topic of the times, delicate acting skills were necessary. The drama would become a mess if it felt like it just rode the flow of the times. The script dealt with the issue of the era in a not too exaggerated manner. It was a good choice for a side story. What was left was up to the skills of the actor and the producer. If this went well, it would be a fresh change to ‘Doctors’ that both the producer and the writer wanted, and if not, it would become their worst move that just wasted time. ‘Doctor’s Office’ had become a lot more fast-paced recently with their political struggles. Both the writer and the producer must be feeling a lot of pressure since they were trying to fill a portion of the drama with the story of a side character instead of a main character. Whether this would become a crouch that leads to a big leap, or it will end with comments saying that the writer has lost her way, he didn’t know. There might not be any mention of it at all. Maru thought that that would be the worst result. If they did something, they needed results, whether good or bad.

“Actors, get into positions. Camera.”

Maru closed his eyes and opened them after a deep breath at the cue sign.

[1] Passion pay is where you get paid with 'passion'(aka work experience) instead of actual money.

Chapter 860. Sequence 13

Instant noodles and a triangular rice ball, that was her dinner. When she just got employed, she told her mother that she had grown up and that she didn't need to worry anymore, but she didn't know that it would turn out like this. Lee Eunhye swung the convenience store plastic bag around as she opened the door. Although she would be able to reduce her waste if she ate at the convenience store, she didn't want to eat while being conscious of the gazes around her. She wanted to eat at least in leisure. It was 10 p.m. Her company held people back for no reason again today. Whether it was the company moving or expanding, it never seemed not busy since she got employed. Also, the company neither actually moved nor became bigger.

She turned the kettle on and took off her stockings. She could see a rip around the thigh. She noticed it two days ago, but it was covered up by her skirt, so she was able to wear it for a few days more. She took off the casual-style women's suit, that she bought because someone told her that female employees look good in it, and washed her hands. She should have paid rent with the money to buy something like that.

The company that told its employees that they should dream together had not paid her for two months now. The aim of the company, to become a global business, was the dream of the company, not her own. Her dream was to get a decent salary so that she could live worry-free about rent, eat out from time to time, and give her parents some money regularly.

Her company said that they needed cooperation from the employees in order to achieve the company's dream and pleaded with, no, coerced them every single day. The employees who went against them had their desks removed without a sound. A senior of hers who quit the company three months ago in search of his dream sent her a message a few days ago, asking if the company was doing okay now. At first, she thought that he was worried about her, but she found out the truth through someone else. That senior, who boldly kicked himself out the door, went traveling and rested for a month before jumping back into the workforce two months ago, did not manage to get a job. The reason he asked was that he might be able to return to the company. That was what made Eunhye stay at the company like her life depended on it.

She put some hot water into the instant noodles and microwaved the rice ball. Her mother probably thought that she was eating decent food. After all, she cooked every day before she became independent. She liked going grocery shopping as well. Now that she actually left the house to live by herself, and she had no salary, she realized that the cost of vegetables was akin to the cost of gold. It was an old saying that cooking for yourself is cheaper. These days, only people with decent salaries could cook for themselves. A single bell pepper cost 1,500 won, while a combo of a triangular rice ball, instant noodles, and a canned drink cost 1,700 won as an event. Every single penny was worth a lot to her, so she couldn't afford the luxury of cooking her own side dishes. Above all, the effort and time that she would need to invest into doing that was a waste. Even if she did cook, it was obvious that it would just get stuck in the refrigerator for days, so buying food from the convenience store was convenient in many ways.

“Yeah, hi. It’s been a long time.”

As soon as she placed the instant noodles and the rice ball on the foldable table, she got a call. It was from a college friend. This girl went around telling everyone that she was preparing to become a civil servant.

“You want to go traveling together? Sorry, I don’t think I can make it this month. I want to go too, but you know how I am doing. If I don’t get a salary this month either, I really will have to look into getting a weekend job.”

The instant noodles were getting bloated. Her reason was telling her to hang up quickly and start eating, but her emotions were telling her to console her friend. The two fought intensely.

“What? You’re quitting goshiwon? If you say so, then no one can stop you, but it is a bit of a pity. You tried hard for two years.”

Her friend told her that it was simply too embarrassing to continue that life. She would press on if she had the confidence to pass in another year, but she didn’t. She was looking for a place to work and rejoiced, saying that she might be able to get into a big company if she got lucky. Eunhye wished her luck, but she was smiling bitterly. This girl had around the same GPA as her during college. She did graduate from a 4-year course, so she should be able to apply, but whether she would actually reach the interview stage was debatable. Eunhye had written numerous resumes during the recruitment season of the big companies, but she had only ever advanced into the interview phase once, which she eventually failed. She consoled herself by thinking that she should start at a mid-sized company and climb her way up, but that company was not paying her salary, so she did not have anything to tell her friend.

Her friend told her that she would take her on a resort vacation if she got employed and told her to just look forward to it. Eunhye could remember five to six such promises off the top of her head. If they got employed, if they left goshiwon, if they got a raise; until now, none of her friends fulfilled that promise, including herself.

She scooped out some noodles with her chopsticks and put them in her mouth. Her company clearly went too far by saying that they couldn’t serve her lunch because they didn’t get any ingredients for the company restaurant. Everything frustrated her at this point. Apparently, they were going to calculate dinner as 6,000 won and add it to their salary, but that salary was nowhere to be seen for two months. She only had the grit to stick with this company and get that money no matter what.

After slurping the instant noodles, Eunhye probed around the floor looking for a remote. It was 10 past 10, the time for a drama, the eternal friend of someone who eats alone. It was a good thing that she bought a big TV with her first salary. When she watched TV on a big screen, she could forget about her worries. It was a moderate form of escapism that was good for her mental health.

Her channel was fixed on KBS. On it was ‘Doctor’s Office,’ which was hugely popular recently. Eunhye liked romantic comedies, but she also liked thrilling political dramas. Usually, she would have immersed herself in the world inside the screen while munching on her rice ball. Today, however, the breathtaking plot made her stifled instead. She wanted to take a breather, but when she focused, she felt like she was choking. If her salary problem had been resolved, she would have ordered some fried chicken and watched it intensely, but right now, it just tired her out.

Besides that, the characters that fell into the depths of ruin because of a single mistake didn't seem all that unfamiliar to her. They were side characters who were flicked outside the main ring because of one mistake after sailing smoothly. The main character would encounter crises but would do well in the end. The failures of the side characters would become a bridge that leads him to success, and their despair was a foothold for his improvement.

The triangular rice ball she was holding snapped in half and the top half fell onto the ground. It just had to be the part with the pork cutlet in it. She was about to pick it up to eat it but decided not to. She suddenly felt so tragic. The main character eventually avoided all the traps set by the hospital director and achieved victory in the political struggle within the hospital and held a celebratory party. It was such a desperate struggle, but the main character and his friends reached a happy ending without a single person dropping out midway.

Eunhye thought: ah, they are the main characters of life. They get rewarded for their hard efforts. The episode was a hopeful story where justice got served, but for some reason, it was hard to watch it today. Their lives were too distant from her own. Just as wide as the gap between the pork belly they were grilling and her snapped rice ball.

She switched the channel to YBS. 'Doctors' was also a drama that she watched. She usually watched 'Doctor's Office' when it aired and downloaded 'Doctors' separately.

"Today must be a special day."

A friend she hadn't messaged in a long time sent her a message. She was asked what she was doing and replied that she was working at a company. Her friend then immediately asked what company it was. Eunhye waited for a little before writing that it was a mid-sized company. Mentioning the name of her company probably wouldn't do any good after all.

-That's good. I need to find employment too. I keep not making it, so I'm going to aim lower.

She didn't know whether her friend needed consolation or not, but the message ended after a 'see you next time.' Eunhye sent a smiling dog emoji. The dog on the screen was smiling, but her own lips were probably not budging even a millimeter.

About half of her colleagues from college didn't have jobs. They were all decent people too. They looked like they would soon find employment and find decent men or women to get married to, but most of them hit a block in the first step – finding employment. There was someone who managed to get into a big company, and that guy would always say sorry if he was asked to come to a get-together. Apparently, the general manager of his department practically lived on a mountain, so he was dragged to various mountains every weekend. He said that 'social clubs' within big companies were a business within a business that was beyond the level of college clubs. He even said that the connections made in those 'social clubs' would be reflected in his work life, so she could understand his feelings when climbing all sorts of mountains every single weekend. That guy liked the city more than the mountains, yet his profile picture made him look like a professional hiker.

"Everyone's having hard lives."

Eunhye lay down on the floor. She was in desperate need of some beer, but she couldn't dream of something like that until she got her pay. If she didn't get her payment next month, she would have to tell her mother about it and borrow some rent. Working part-time on weekends was a given.

Inside the drama, Yoonseo busily moved between the patients while fluttering her white gown. In the beginning, there were many comments ridiculing her for using her popularity to get the role, but those comments had disappeared without a trace now. Eunhye also thought that Yoonseo's acting skill was good. Although there were times her pronunciation was off and she couldn't hear what she was saying, she definitely wasn't bad.

Lee Heewon approached Yoonseo, who was wiping her sweat. Eunhye liked that actor. She liked Kang Giwoo from 'Doctor's Office', but she thought that Heewon was above him in terms of acting skill. The operating room scene he showed last week was so good that she replayed it three times. The way he collapsed on the spot due to exhaustion after finishing operating on the heart valves seemed to prove who was the best in terms of acting skills among actors in their twenties.

A date between Yoonseo and Heewon followed. She had a lot easier time watching this than 'Doctor's Office,' but still, she couldn't help but compare her own situation to them.

Maybe today was not a good day to watch dramas? It was when she was about to change her channel to a cable channel. The screen changed and an unfamiliar man appeared. The man was calling someone on the phone. Only after watching for a long time did she realize who that was. It was 'Bigfoot' who appeared throughout the drama from time to time.

-Mom, your son is a doctor. I have a lot of money. You did everything you had to do by raising me. So don't worry about that and get some rest. Money? I should be sending that to you. Starting next month, I'll be sending some your way, so look forward to it. Don't send it all to me. If you have any money to send to me, then you should buy some good things to eat. Or you can go shopping.

Bigfoot was on the phone with a big smile. Eunhye lifted her finger that was about to change the channel. After finishing the call, Bigfoot's phone was caught on camera. His remaining balance according to his banking app was 300 thousand won. Right above that was 3.6 million won, which was his salary, but it seemed that most of the money left his account in just one day.

"Well, he gets paid a lot."

Eunhye smiled bitterly when she saw that number. She felt like 3.6 million was a decent wage no matter how hard his life was. Bigfoot's empty bank account and her own empty bank account couldn't be viewed the same way. Bigfoot was a doctor, while she was an employee of a company that didn't even pay her.

Bigfoot got a call again as he sat at his desk.

-Yes, father. I just called her. She recognized me today and even told me she'd send some pocket money. It'd be good if every day was like today. Money? Don't worry about it. I have what I need. There you go again. You two raised me. Of course, I can gather money easily. At that time, I'll build you two a house. A house with a garden so that mom can walk around. I'm going down tomorrow. I can get off work after a long time. Alright, see you tomorrow.

It seemed that his mother who he had just called had dementia. Health is definitely more important than money – Eunhye thought as she sat up. It was just two simple monologues, but she wanted to focus on the drama. Perhaps it was because of Bigfoot’s shaky voice when he ended the call.

Someone opened the door to the room that Bigfoot was in. It was a middle-aged actor.

-Doctor Kim, come to work tomorrow.

-I’m off duty tomorrow.

-I know, but the shifts changed. Doctor Choi has something to do tomorrow.

-Uhm.

-Just change with her. You know whose daughter doctor Choi is. She has an appointment with the director, so what can I do about it? You should take her shift. This is all experience. Also, when I was around your age, we didn’t even get notified like this. We were called out while sleeping.

The man left after leaving a barrage of words.