

Real Man 31

Chapter 31

He only aimed for the cut-off line in the exams and personal assignments.

Of course, he did care a little about his teammates' performance.

But he didn't do half of what he had done in the group training.

How could this happen?

It was the result of the team evaluation, the peer evaluation and the senior evaluation having much more weight than the individual score.

Yoo-hyun thought that the person who worked hard and achieved results should be the first.

But his teammates thought differently.

"Congratulations. Thanks to you, I had a really good time."

"Yoo-hyun, let's see each other again."

"You did great. If it wasn't for you, our team wouldn't have been first."

What did he do so well that they said such things?

He understood why they praised him during the group training, but he didn't get it this time.

The answer was given by Ye Jin-ho, who was the leader of Yoo-hyun's team and a year older than him.

He put his hand on Yoo-hyun's shoulder and said.

"Well, it's because Yoo-hyun's reputation is so good. You were the first in the group training, and everyone who experienced it complimented you."

"..."

"Besides, you have no greed. You answer perfectly. Don't people naturally flock to you?"

"That's embarrassing."

"Really. Should I ask them?"

"No, thanks."

Yoo-hyun quickly shook his head.

According to his summary, it was thanks to the reputation he had built during the group training.

Yoo-hyun, who had always thought that skill was the top priority, was surprised by this unexpected outcome.

Anyway, thanks to that, he had some results.

Clap clap clap clap clap clap.

He received applause on the podium and his parents could see it.

They used to not invite parents on the last day, but now it was different.

They were not on bad terms like before, and there was nothing to be ashamed of.

Rather, he was grateful for their warm smiles.

“You’re amazing, son.”

“We raised our son well, right?”

“Of course, of course. Our son.”

He felt like he was doing all the filial piety he couldn’t do before.

He handed flowers to his mother with a bright smile and felt her expression seep into his heart.

An officetel in the suburbs of Seoul.

The exterior of the building was old, but the inside of the house was very neat, probably because it had been wallpapered anew.

While Yoo-hyun was checking out the interior space, his mother asked casually.

“Is it too small?”

“It’s small. But it’s enough for me.”

“...”

His mother followed him silently as he moved around.

He glanced at her with a smile and stopped in his place.

Then he took her hands.

She swallowed her saliva and blinked her eyes.

What should he say to his mother who gave him a gift box and waited for his reaction?

He enjoyed this happy dilemma for a moment and opened his mouth.

“Mom, thank you so much.”

“I wish I could get you a place near your company.”

“Don’t say that. I like it here better than a crowded place. And it’s close to the gym.”

“But if it’s far away, commuting will be hard...”

She didn’t seem to end this easily because of her personality.

Yoo-hyun expressed his opinion firmly.

“Hey, it’s more than enough. It’s overflowing. Thank you so much. Really really and again really thank you.”

He shook his head and even showed a cute expression.

His mother finally burst into laughter.

“Pfft.”

“Thank you so much, mom. I’ll live well.”

“Yes. Thank you. I’m glad you like it so much.”

Was she grateful for giving him something?

Yoo-hyun felt touched by his mother’s heart for a moment and hugged her gently.

“Thank you so much, mom.”

Pat pat.

His mother patted his back with her small hand without saying anything.

‘You did well to accept it.’

At first, Yoo-hyun refused when his mother said she had found a house for him.

He didn’t want to bother her unnecessarily.

But his mother didn’t think so.

She said she was doing well with her side dish shop and her father’s factory had settled down a bit.

She wanted to help him somehow.

He couldn’t refuse all the time, so he compromised on this officetel.

He still remembered his mother’s bright smile when he signed the contract.

And now.

He felt like the warmth in his mother's arms would stay in his heart for a long time.

'Thank you, mom.'

During the holiday, Yoo-hyun had a lot of conversations with his mother.

They went shopping together and learned how to cook.

He was good at cooking, but not as good as his mother.

He tasted the soup and immediately gave a thumbs up.

"Mm, delicious. Who did you learn this from?"

"Who do you think? I'm a Korean cuisine chef."

"As expected. You're a national treasure chef."

"In-seok. You've been teasing mom since earlier."

"Ha ha, no way. How could I?"

She was awkward at first, but now she smiled naturally.

Yoo-hyun was the same.

As they spent a lot of time together, he felt the wall between them gradually crumble.

The warm smile and the time together were what touched people's hearts.

That's how Yoo-hyun learned a little bit about living together through his mother.

On Monday morning, his mother fixed his tie for his first day at work.

She fulfilled her dream of seeing her son off to work and looked very happy.

"Okay, that's it. You look great, Yoo-hyun."

"Thank you."

His mother smiled with her eyes and put her hand on his shoulder.

"I'll make some side dishes for you, so eat well and take care of yourself."

"Yes. Don't worry."

"Okay. Greet the people at the company politely."

"Yes. I'll be back!"

At his mother's words, Yoo-hyun smiled brightly and bowed slightly.

Kim Yeon-hee, Yoo-hyun's mother, looked down at her son's way to work with affectionate eyes.

Did he cross the street properly?

Did he fall into a broken sidewalk?

She watched him walk slowly as if she was looking at a young son who was left on the water's edge.

She knew he would do well on his own, but why was she worried?

'It's just a needless worry.'

She was very grateful for the reality that she could have such a worry.

He was the son who had been standing on his own since the family collapsed.

She wanted to get closer to him with courage, but she couldn't easily approach him.

She feared that they might drift apart forever like this.

She lived day by day with anxiety and worry.

Then one day.

Her son reached out to him warmly like a miracle.

She didn't know how grateful she was for the smile they exchanged.

She sometimes jumped with joy when she received a phone call from him.

And he even got a job at such a good company.

She felt like she had received all the filial piety she could get in her lifetime.

"Yoo-hyun, thank you."

She muttered to herself, knowing he wouldn't hear her.

That's when it happened.

Yoo-hyun, who was walking, turned around.

And he looked right at this place.

'How can he see me from outside?'

As he wondered that, his son bowed slightly to him.

He had just greeted her, but her heart swelled again.

"He's so cool. Whose son is he?"

Kim Yeon-hee smiled with her reddened eyes.

Today was the start of a new life after 20 years.

But it was different.

He wore a suit that he and his mother had chosen, a tie that his mother had tied, and a briefcase that his father had given him as a gift.

In his jacket pocket, there was a handkerchief that his sister had given him as a congratulatory gift.

It was something that never happened in the past, but it was definitely happening now.

Ching.

He got off the subway and saw a platform full of people in suits.

He was momentarily overwhelmed by his emotions.

He remembered the past when he walked forward with the determination to succeed somehow.

‘Crazy kid.’

Yoo-hyun cleared his mind and walked out of the gate.

Thump.

A woman brushed past Yoo-hyun’s arm and quickly went ahead of him.

She wore a white sleeveless blouse, a navy skirt that reached her knees, and low-heeled shoes.

She looked like a neat career woman.

She left behind a unique scent where she had passed by.

It wasn’t a bad feeling, but it was so unfamiliar that Yoo-hyun’s eyes followed her.

The woman who passed by people slowed down and stuck behind a middle-aged man.

She wasn’t just walking, but following him.

Yoo-hyun couldn’t miss the subtle difference in her footsteps.

‘What is it?’

He tilted his head in wonder as he was about to do so.

“Excuse me!”

The middle-aged man seemed to sense something strange and called out to the woman.

But she ignored him and tried to move to the side.

That's when the middle-aged man reached out and grabbed the woman's wrist as she was putting the wallet in her handbag.

He shouted.

"What are you doing!"

Then the young man who had been walking without knowing that he had been pickpocketed turned his head.

"What's going on?"

"Well, this woman..."

As the middle-aged man tried to explain, the woman started screaming first.

"Ouch! Ouch! Why are you touching me!"

"What are you talking about?"

The middle-aged man said incredulously, but people's eyes were already on them.

Buzz buzz.

The woman had pulled down one shoulder of her white blouse as if she had planned it.

She also cried with a shameful expression and shouted loudly.

"Why did you keep touching my butt? I said no!"

"What are you...?"

"No, that's not..."

The man tried to defend himself, but the woman kept fanning the flames.

"Why did you grope my chest? I really. Sob sob."

The middle-aged man let go of her wrist in astonishment, but it was already a situation where he was misunderstood by everyone.

People murmured.

"She said he's a molester."

"Really, why do these guys exist?"

"How can he do that in the morning? Is he in heat or something?"

“No, it’s not like that...”

Thwack.

The middle-aged man quickly snatched the long wallet from the woman’s hand as she tried to put it back in her handbag.

The woman jumped up and protested as if nothing had happened.

“That’s my wallet. Why are you doing this!”

“Don’t lie. I know this is his. Right?”

The middle-aged man pointed to the young man who had turned around and handed him the wallet.

The young man looked bewildered and shook his head with his palms facing up.

“That’s not mine.”

“What? No, no way.”

“Give me my wallet. Help me. That molester took my wallet.”

“...That’s ridiculous.”

Buzz buzz

Surrounded by people, the middle-aged man opened the wallet in disbelief.

Then, as if on cue, a profile picture of the woman fell out of the wallet.

His face turned pale and he stuttered.

“That, that’s a lie.”

“It must have been caught on CCTV. You bad kid. Sob sob. Everyone, please help me.”

The woman’s voice was pitiful.

Yoo-hyun, who had been watching the situation, narrowed his eyes.

The CCTV was quite far away.

Even if he looked closely, he wouldn’t see the details of the situation.

He understood the situation quickly in a short moment.

Chapter 32

Yoo-hyun smiled coldly.

“She’s not a novice at this.”

The woman was a clear-cut gold digger.

She even used a pickpocket trick and read the direction of the CCTV.

She was a cunning gold digger.

The middle-aged man had no chance in this well-designed trap.

Even though he knew that, he struggled to get out of it.

He approached the woman next to him and pleaded.

“Hey, you saw it, right? I didn’t do anything.”

“Oh my, why are you like this?”

But the people around him were not sympathetic to the middle-aged man at all.

Even if they guessed the situation like Yoo-hyun, they wouldn’t step up in this atmosphere.

At that moment, Yoo-hyun saw the woman nod her head.

The young man who pretended to have his wallet stolen blinked his eyes as if he understood.

The gold digger said a line that only appeared in dramas with tearful eyes.

“I’m going to sue you.”

“...”

“Apologize now. Right now!”

“...”

The response of the people around him grew louder.

The middle-aged man who lost his spirit was speechless.

At that moment, he heard the voices of the people around him piercing his chest.

“Apologize quickly.”

“That’s really too much.”

“People your age shouldn’t act like that!”

The expression of the middle-aged man was full of despair.

What was the appropriate way for the middle-aged man to deal with this situation?

There was none.

The best thing to do was to go to the police station, but it was not an easy choice.

He could be branded as a sexual harasser if he made a mistake.

That's what the gold digger was aiming for.

Yoo-hyun had experienced the same thing in the past, so he knew it well.

Self-harm gangsters.

He didn't trust people much because of the trauma that remained from that memory.

It wasn't something that ended with a moment of shock. It followed him for his whole life.

Because of these bastards.

Ugh.

He felt annoyed just thinking about it.

If it were like before, he would have dismissed it as none of his business and passed by long ago, but this time he wanted to meddle a bit.

He didn't want to help the middle-aged man.

He wanted to rip off the fake mask of the gold digger properly.

"Shut up and give me your wallet. These guys need to eat some beans..."

The young man who was part of the gang pushed the middle-aged man roughly while he was speaking.

Yoo-hyun stepped forward at the right timing.

"Hey, stop, stop. Adults shouldn't lie."

At that, the young man frowned and glared at Yoo-hyun.

"Who are you?"

"More importantly, I'm curious. What does that woman call you? Uncle? Manager? Brother? Oppa?"

"You bastard."

The young man snapped angrily.

Yoo-hyun smiled and observed the subtle movements of his pupils and facial muscles.

These kids' expressions were information themselves.

"Oh, oppa. You shouldn't pretend to be strangers when you're siblings."

“...”

Yoo-hyun grinned leisurely and made eye contact with the young man.

The middle-aged man blinked his eyes, wondering what was going on.

Among the murmurs of the crowd, Yoo-hyun opened his mouth without missing the timing.

“Han Minji.”

“...!”

“Stop playing around. Okay?”

“Oh my.”

When Yoo-hyun called her name, the woman opened her mouth in surprise.

How did Yoo-hyun know?

It wasn't that hard actually.

He inferred it from the 'HMJ' engraved on the surface of her wallet and the word 'Mingji' written in cursive on a photo inside her wallet.

He thought it was a pretty high probability and said it.

And he was right.

Even if he wasn't, he had other ways, but calling her name made things easier.

Especially when the two hesitated, the situation quickly turned around.

“What?”

“What's going on?”

A different kind of murmur came from around them.

In a perfectly reversed situation, there were always limited actions that stupid people could take.

As expected, the young man clenched his fist.

“You bastard!”

“Why, are you going to hit me?”

“What did you say!”

“Don't mess with me. You'll really regret it.”

Yoo-hyun moved closer to him just before he swung his fist.

Thud.

The young man who was already overwhelmed didn't even reach out his hand but backed away and bit his lower lip bitterly.

There was definitely an effect of going to the gym regularly.

“Tsk.”

The woman who sensed the situation hid herself among the crowd and quickly disappeared.

She was a quick-witted woman.

The young man who was late to run away tried to escape when Yoo-hyun reached out his hand and shouted.

“Hey!”

“Get out of the way.”

Then he pushed the people and ran down the stairs.

“Ouch!”

Thud thud thud.

He even rolled down the stairs with his face.

But he still managed to get up and ran through the crowded crowd.

It was almost time for work, so Yoo-hyun didn't bother to chase him.

“...”

The onlookers who were pointing fingers at the two who ran away were silent when Yoo-hyun turned his gaze.

They felt guilty for siding with the gold digger gang, so they looked around and soon scattered.

From their perspective, it was just a fun spectacle.

It was none of their business anyway.

Yoo-hyun didn't help with a great sense of duty either.

As he was about to turn his feet, the middle-aged man stopped Yoo-hyun.

“Excuse me.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you. And this...”

He took out a thick wallet.

It was obvious that there was a lot of cash in it.

He grabbed a bunch of bills with two fingers and pulled them out.

He seemed to know what to say next.

He was about to hand over some money with a clichéd expression of gratitude.

Yoo-hyun stopped his hand that was halfway out of his wallet and said.

“It’s okay. I didn’t do it for the money.”

“But still...”

The middle-aged man who paused looked at Yoo-hyun with a frown.

“Put it away. And you shouldn’t offer money first in this situation.”

“...”

“Then I’ll be going.”

He turned his steps again.

He had barely enough time to get to work.

On the other side, there was someone who watched Yoo-hyun enter the building.

It was the gold digger gang who had been fooled by him.

“Son of a bitch. Let’s see how long you can last.”

The man who bent his waist and the man who clenched his teeth.

The two men stood out among the busy people with their unusual appearance.

...

Yoo-hyun entered the building and moved to the auditorium on the first floor.

Inside the auditorium, there were his colleagues who had arrived earlier.

They looked young and naive with their excitement and anxiety.

On the other hand, their eyes were full of pride for working at Hansung Tower.

It was understandable.

They were a special case among the new recruits.

In fact, there were only 12 new employees assigned to the LCD business unit who would work at Hansung Tower.

They were only 1% of the 1,200 new employees hired in the second half of the year.

In other words, they were the elite few.

And working at Seoul Hansung Tower added to their specialness.

Yoo-hyun smiled lightly as he saw them.

He remembered his past self.

There was a brief training by a senior from the HR team in the auditorium.

“Welcome to your employment...”

After hearing about the working hours, security zones, mentoring schedule, and so on, the 12 colleagues took the elevator up.

They each went to get their laptops that they would use in their work.

After receiving their laptops from the general affairs team, they had an indefinite waiting time.

They had to wait until their senior mentors came to pick them up.

In a conference room on the tenth floor.

The new employees from IT/TV group and staff departments such as PR, accounting, and strategy had already left.

Only two people from mobile sales marketing remained.

They were Min Jeong-hyuk, who was assigned to the sales team, and Kwon Se-jung, who was assigned to the marketing team.

Kwon Se-jung seemed nervous about being deployed to the field soon and kept shaking his legs.

“I want to go back. The new employee training. Ugh.”

Min Jeong-hyuk, who was one year older than him, snorted at him.

“What? You said you were so tired of doing assignments. You said you wanted to go to work soon.”

“Hey, hyung. That was then.”

“And now?”

When Min Jeong-hyuk asked with a subtle look, Kwon Se-jung’s expression changed.

“When I got my salary, I forgot all about how hard it was.”

“Wow. Impressive.”

“And back then I didn’t have an ID card yet. But now I have it around my neck.”

Min Jeong-hyuk stuck out his tongue and Kwon Se-jung smiled smugly and showed him his ID card.

Yoo-hyun chuckled as he listened quietly.

He felt good seeing Kwon Se-jung’s brightened face.

He no longer looked dark and wary like before.

Then Kwon Se-jung seemed to remember something and whispered to Yoo-hyun.

“Yoo-hyun-ah, I got a text from that Chief.”

“What did he say?”

“He said to work hard. Haha, it’s all thanks to you. Thank you.”

“That’s good.”

What would it have been like in the past?

When he thought back on it, solving Chief Choi Kang-won’s case was really a stroke of genius.

He smiled as he watched him and Min Jeong-hyuk grumbled.

“What? Let me in too.”

“He asked me how to be a popular new employee. Yoo-hyun is smart, you know.”

Kwon Se-jung twisted his words and Min Jeong-hyuk’s eyes sparkled.

“Oh really? Ask me too.”

“How should I do it?”

When Yoo-hyun asked with innocent eyes, Min Jeong-hyuk straightened his posture and adjusted his glasses frame.

There was a flash of light under his thin frameless glasses.

“First of all, you don’t need to be nervous in front of your seniors.”

“And then?”

“Especially don’t be stiff. You might be ignored. What you need to do is…”

“Haha.”

He looked like a master of corporate life and Yoo-hyun snickered.

He saw that and Min Jeong-hyuk raised his voice.

“Yoo-hyun-ah, I’m serious.”

“Just imagining the situation makes me laugh.”

“Wait until it happens. You won’t be able to laugh.”

He sounded confident, but Min Jeong-hyuk was just a new employee who had just entered.

He was just repeating what he had heard from somewhere else, not what he had experienced himself.

If it were the old Yoo-hyun?

He would have either tackled him or ignored him completely.

That sharp edge was the main factor that made him distant from his colleagues.

What’s the point of that?

In fact, he wasn’t wrong.

Yoo-hyun smiled and played along with him.

“Yes. You’re right. Please continue, hyung.”

“Really? Is it helpful?”

“Yes. It helps.”

“And next...”

Min Jeong-hyuk seemed to be in high spirits and went on with his speech.

Chapter 33

Min Jeong-hyuk’s lecture on company life continued for a long time.

A man who looked like a senior came down.

He recognized Min Jeong-hyuk at a glance.

“Are you Min Jeong-hyuk? Sorry, I had some work to do.”

“No, it’s okay, sir.”

Min Jeong-hyuk got up from his seat, and Yoo-hyun and Kwon Se-jung followed suit.

Yoo-hyun vaguely remembered the face of the man with small eyes and round pupils.

He had met him a few times before in another team.

He didn't remember the details, but he had a positive image of him.

The man showed his ID card with his name and face and said,

“I'm Kim Jin-yeol, an assistant manager in the sales team. Let's go up now.”

“Yes, sir. Please speak comfortably.”

It was Min Jeong-hyuk's first mistake.

He wanted to be friendly with his team senior, so he said that.

But the timing was not good.

He asked him to speak comfortably in front of the new employees from other teams whom he met for the first time?

It was almost impossible to do so in reality.

As expected, Kim Jin-yeol's sharp rebuke flew at him.

“That doesn't seem like something to say here.”

“I'm s-sorry.”

Min Jeong-hyuk froze at the sight of his stern senior.

Kim Jin-yeol turned his head and took the lead.

On the other hand, Min Jeong-hyuk followed him with a blank face.

But Yoo-hyun was not very worried.

It was obvious that he was trying to act tough as a team junior.

That was when it happened.

“Is this a big deal?”

Kwon Se-jung also froze along with him.

He didn't have to care much about the senior from another team.

Why is he like this?

Yoo-hyun shook his head at his colleagues who were walking nervously behind him.

They both seemed to have just realized that theory and reality are very different.

The mobile product planning team on the 12th floor.

Park Seung-woo, an assistant manager who finished the meeting, blinked his eyes as he checked the time on the analog clock on the wall.

He had a large body but a gentle impression.

The new employee he was waiting for had not arrived yet.

“It’s time...”

“Why? Are you anxious because the newbie hasn’t arrived?”

As he muttered, Kim Young-gil, an assistant manager sitting next to him, asked.

They were both assistant managers, but he was also a senior in terms of joining the company.

He was a man with a solid physique and sharp eyes.

“I’m not anxious. What’s there to be anxious about? He won’t last long anyway. It’s obvious.”

“But he’s your first official junior. I heard he got first place in all the training results. I have high expectations for him.”

“Sir, I’ve never seen anyone who does well and has good training results. Look at me.”

Park Seung-woo said cheerfully as Shin Chan-yong, a section chief who attended the same meeting, approached him from behind.

“That’s not something you should say after getting scolded so much.”

“Hahaha, failure is the mother of success.”

“You’re so cheeky. Well, that’s your strength anyway.”

“Thank you.”

“Thank you for what? You’re just full of passion. You’re like a new employee who just joined the company. He’ll suit you well. Give it a try.”

Thump thump.

Shin Chan-yong tapped Park Seung-woo’s shoulder with a sarcastic remark and left.

He also gave him a sneering look as a bonus.

Kim Young-gil comforted Park Seung-woo after confirming that he was out of sight.

“He’s really good at making people uncomfortable. Don’t mind him.”

“Haha, what can I do? It’s all my fault for being lacking.”

He tried to laugh it off, but Park Seung-woo’s expression was not very bright.

“Hey, are you feeling down? The great Park Seung-woo?”

“Feeling down? Of course not.”

“Really?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t believe you.”

Park Seung-woo nodded his head vigorously.

He was his first junior whom he personally received.

He was determined to do well with him no matter what.

He looked at Kim Young-gil with a fierce gaze and said confidently,

“Sir, I’ll make sure to raise this newbie well.”

“That’s more like it.”

Kim Young-gil just smiled.

Ding.

Yoo-hyun, who came up to the 12th floor by elevator, felt a slight nostalgia.

He came back.

Of course, that was it.

From now on, he told himself that it was a new company life.

Swoosh.

He entered through the glass door with Kim Jin-yeol’s guidance.

The first thing he saw was the partition and the desk, and the people working in front of them.

He heard the sound of ringing phones, typing, and going in and out of the meeting room.

They were the noises that he had become distant from as his rank went up.

Half of the 12th floor belonged to the mobile sales marketing department.

There were sales, marketing, and product planning teams in the department, and there were different parts in each team.

They were people who were related to each other by work, but he didn’t remember many of them clearly.

It was like looking at an old photo from a long time ago.

Isn't there something like that?

Memories that make you wonder if you really were like that.

He joined the company as a LCD business unit, but he stayed here for less than four years.

He would have met them later if they were in the same building, but a few years later, the LCD business unit was spun off and left, so most of them never saw his face again.

Except for his team members, it was hard to remember them as they were over time.

It was natural that he barely remembered the faces of people who were just acquaintances.

Trudge trudge.

He passed by the marketing team where Kwon Se-jung belonged and walked a little more.

When he reached the corner, he saw the area of the product planning team.

The sign that said 'Mobile Product Planning Team' on the high partition felt new to him.

As he entered inside, he saw the team members working busily.

No one paid attention to Yoo-hyun.

It was the most awkward time when he joined the company.

But for Yoo-hyun, it was a time full of excitement.

Then he saw a man who glanced at him secretly.

The man with a large body and gentle eyes was Park Seung-woo, an assistant manager.

He was very happy to see him.

He was Yoo-hyun's mentor and boss in the past.

He had a lot of jokes and made a lot of mistakes in his work, but his passion was certain.

And pain swept over his heart.

He was also someone who quit soon after.

-What did you do wrong? You have nothing to apologize for. Hold your head high. Son, live well.

He left him with those warm words, despite his disappointment in himself for choosing a different path than his direct senior to pursue greater achievements.

He realized it only later.

That there was no one else in the company who had such pure passion.

Yoo-hyun was standing blankly, when Park Seungwoo's eyebrows twitched.

It was a sign of nervousness.

He was clumsy at training new recruits.

Acting was such a pain.

A faint smile appeared on Yoo-hyun's lips as he recalled the vague memory.

He thought he should play along with this prank, and approached Park Seungwoo to greet him.

"Hello."

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

He pretended to be calm and stern, but Yoo-hyun could tell.

His twitching eyebrows, his drooping eyes, his raised shoulders.

They were all very unnatural.

He looked awkward, but Yoo-hyun answered politely.

"I'm Han Yoo-hyun, assigned to the product planning team."

"That can't be. Our team didn't plan to receive any new recruits this time. Right, Kim?"

"Hmm, yeah. Maybe you're in the wrong team?"

How dare they.

The other guy, Kim Younggil, was also playing along.

He was nothing like the gloomy old man who came to announce Kwon Sejung's death.

Seeing his smooth skin and fine features, Yoo-hyun felt the reality of coming back again.

While Yoo-hyun was lost in his old memories, it happened.

Grrr.

Park Seungwoo, who got up from his seat, frowned.

“It seems like you came to the wrong place. Why don't you go somewhere else?”

He looked intimidating because of his large build, even though he just made a slight expression.

Yoo-hyun didn't know what to do, and his lips curled up slightly.

“Where should I go?”

“How would I know? Why don't you ask the HR team?”

He snorted through his nostrils.

He wanted to continue the joke, but it was time to wrap it up.

What was Park Seungwoo afraid of?

Yoo-hyun sneaked a glance at him.

“That's strange. The person in charge told me it was this team...”

“Who? The person in charge?”

Seeing his shaken eyes, Yoo-hyun quickly turned his head.

Then he pointed at the hallway and exclaimed in surprise.

“Oh? There's the person in charge!”

“Where, where?”

Park Seungwoo looked around in confusion, and Yoo-hyun pretended to scratch his head.

“Ah, maybe I saw it wrong.”

“Phew... You scared me. Ahem, I mean...”

Park Seungwoo sighed in relief and felt embarrassed.

He had prepared several jokes, but the mood was ruined from the start.

Ring ring ring ring ring.

The phone on the desk rang.

Park Seungwoo glanced at Yoo-hyun and answered the phone with a serious expression.

“Yes. This is Park Seungwoo.”

-What are you doing, Park? I told you that spec is impossible. Why are you pushing something that doesn't work?

‘Damn...’

Park Seungwoo pressed the receiver against his face so that no sound would leak out.

“Yes yes. I understand. Hey, I know. Yes. Oh, the thickness part? Increase it by 0.2T...”

He looked for a pen to record the numbers that kept coming in.

But there were his favorite black pen and a sky-blue post-it note for recording numbers on his desk.

He turned his head and saw that it was the new guy's doing.

It was amazing that he had exactly what he wanted.

What's going on?

He felt a sense of incongruity as he continued to talk on the phone.

This time, the desk calendar that he had moved to the side was placed right in front of him.

He was already reaching out for the calendar to check his schedule.

“...”

Park Seungwoo turned his head and thanked the new guy with a hand gesture before quickly checking his schedule.

“Yes, this is...”

Yoo-hyun just watched him with a gentle smile.

“Phew...”

After hanging up the phone and getting up, Kim Younggil next to him glanced at him.

Then he nodded at the new guy and said,

“Park, it seems like the new guy has some sense.”

“Yes? That's... right?”

It was more than just some sense.

He was quick-witted and handed him exactly what he needed at the right time.

And he picked out only what he needed from the items scattered all over the place.

That was something that even Park Seungwoo himself would take some time to do.

Park Seungwoo was dumbfounded, and Kim Younggil poked his ribs.

“What are you doing? It looks like the game is over. Just hurry up and introduce yourself.”

“Ah, yes. I’m Park Seungwoo. I’ll be Han Yoo-hyun’s mentor for six months.”

“Nice to meet you. I’m Han Yoo-hyun.”

Clack.

He grabbed his hand naturally, and Park Seungwoo tilted his head.

It felt like he was shaking hands with a high-ranking executive of a client company, not a new recruit.

He was very polite, but why did he feel this way?

Park Seungwoo’s eyes turned to him naturally.

“Kim, is it normal for him to be so calm?”

“Why would he be nervous? It’s funny that a senior is nervous because a junior came.”

“Haha, is that so? You said your name was Yoo-hyun, right? Let’s go and greet the team leader before he comes.”

Park Seungwoo smiled kindly and pulled Yoo-hyun along.

Chapter 34

The team was divided into three parts, and Yoo-hyun was in the third part.

“This is the new employee...”

“Nice to meet you.”

Yoo-hyun greeted them with a confident voice.

He started with Kim Young-gil, the assistant manager of the third part, and introduced himself to the rest of the members.

Then he went around to the other parts and said hello.

They were mostly people he remembered, since they were in the same team.

But there was one person who stood out in his memory.

It was Shin Chan-yong, the section chief of the next part.

His desk was always neat and tidy.

He wore an expensive brand suit, had a well-built body, and wore angular glasses that accentuated his sharp eyes.

He looked like someone who could handle any work efficiently.

He knew how to present himself well.

But that was all he knew how to do.

Behind his mask, he only had a parasitic nature that fed on the achievements of his juniors.

Because of him, Park Seung-woo, the assistant manager, had to quit, and Kim Young-gil, the other assistant manager, was demoted.

Don't make me laugh.

Yoo-hyun's eyes flashed for a moment.

He was not the naive rookie he was twenty years ago.

He would never let anyone take what he had in front of him.

He would stop them and pay them back double.

No matter who they were.

Yoo-hyun smiled lightly at Shin Chan-yong's eyes.

Then his snake-like eyes narrowed and his lips curled up.

He was different from the other new employees who bowed their heads and acted humble.

"You're bold. Let's see how you do under Park."

"Oh, don't worry. I'll take good care of him."

Before Yoo-hyun could answer, Park Seung-woo cut in.

"You've grown a lot, Park?"

"Ah, yes."

Shin Chan-yong chuckled with one corner of his mouth raised, and Park Seung-woo flinched.

They didn't seem to have a good relationship.

'Of course not.'

They were incompatible styles from the start.

And with their different ranks, Park Seung-woo always got pushed around by Shin Chan-yong.

Yoo-hyun calmly observed their expressions.

Park Seung-woo took him to the indoor resting room on the tenth floor during his free time.

He seemed to like Yoo-hyun a lot, as he kept talking while they moved.

He even became comfortable enough to talk casually.

“So, you see...”

“I see.”

He talked non-stop, which could have been tiring, but Yoo-hyun enjoyed spending time with him.

His pointless jokes, his pretentious airs, they all felt sincere to him.

Maybe it was because he didn't try to please him like he did in the past.

He felt relaxed and at ease.

Maybe that's why?

He could see his surroundings while talking.

The cleaning lady who cleaned up his seat earlier was also in charge of the tenth floor.

She was trying to replace the empty water bottle on the water dispenser.

It looked heavy just by looking at it.

‘Huh?’

That's when it happened.

She slipped her hand for a moment, and her balance was breaking down.

Crash.

Yoo-hyun reacted in an instant.

He got up from his seat and quickly moved to catch her falling body with one hand, and grabbed the dropping water bottle with the other hand.

“Are you okay?”

“Thank you so much.”

“Don’t mention it. I’ll change the water bottle for you.”

Yoo-hyun casually took out a new water bottle from the storage cabinet next to him and put it on the water dispenser.

Everyone’s eyes were on him because of what happened in a blink of an eye.

The cleaning lady looked flustered and said,

“You didn’t have to do that...”

“Ha ha, don’t worry about it.”

Yoo-hyun smiled brightly.

He didn’t do it to be nice.

He just acted because he saw it happen.

It was just a result of paying more attention to his surroundings than before.

When he came back and sat down, Park Seung-woo looked stunned.

“You’re very quick. But how did you know there was a water bottle in there?”

“I just guessed it would be there.”

“Really? Why didn’t I know that?”

Park Seung-woo muttered to himself with self-mockery.

Was it because the cleaning lady took out an empty water bottle for show?

It was obvious that she was going to get a new one, and there was a storage cabinet next to the water dispenser that could fit exactly six water bottles.

This was not something that was hard to notice, even without being observant.

Yoo-hyun simply concluded.

Park Seung-woo just lacked common sense.

He talked a lot until his vending machine coffee got cold.

“There’s a lot of work, but don’t worry. Oh, don’t get me wrong. It’s not that bad.”

“Really?”

“Of course. Everyone is nice here. There’s no team like this one.”

“Ah, yes.”

He looked cautious when he talked about the team or the work.

He seemed to be worried that the new employee he got would leave.

‘If I was going to do that, I wouldn’t have come here in the first place.’

Yoo-hyun smiled quietly, and Park Seung-woo raised his voice.

“And! You don’t need to work overtime as a newbie.”

“Really?”

“You can leave on time. Don’t worry. I’ll cover for you.”

He was bluffing, as he couldn’t do that even if he wanted to.

But Yoo-hyun knew that he meant it.

“Thank you.”

“What, there’s nothing to thank me for. But you have to do your work well. Don’t worry. I’ll teach you everything.”

“Yes, of course.”

“Ah, where did we stop? Right. First, you need to know exactly what the product planning team’s position is. Our company is B2B, right? You know that?”

“Yes.”

Yoo-hyun nodded, and Park Seung-woo spat out his words with saliva flying.

He didn’t need to listen to know what he was going to say next.

‘He’ll start from what kind of company this is.’

“We are a company that sells LCD panels to mobile phone companies and such. That’s how we make a living. But you know...”

Before he could finish his sentence, Yoo-hyun’s inner voice interrupted him.

‘Introduce me to your team.’

“Of course, the sales team has to meet with the clients and negotiate the supply volume and price, but they need to know what kind of product we are making first. You get it?”

“Yes.”

“It’s the same for marketing. They need to have a clear concept of what product we are launching before they can do their marketing. And that’s what our product planning team does.”

“Oh, I see.”

From Yoo-hyun's perspective, this was a boring story that he had heard many times before.

He was barely holding back a yawn.

But he couldn't ignore his senior who was talking passionately.

He had to.

"That's why we are the ones who predict the future and plan products that match the trends."

"Wow, that's really important."

Yoo-hyun even clapped his hands lightly to show his reaction.

Deputy Park Seung Woo was pleased and continued his speech.

"Right. Of course, we have to be realistic, so we also control the development department. That means we are at the center of marketing and R&D. Did you learn this too?"

"No."

Of course, he had learned all this during his job training, but he didn't bother to reveal it.

He wanted to hear how he thought of his team.

"Our team is..."

As expected, Deputy Park Seung Woo was enthusiastic.

He also showed glimpses of his love for his team.

But unfortunately, the current product planning team was not as central and proactive as Deputy Park Seung Woo said.

Rather, they were pushed around by sales and marketing, and they got all the blame from R&D.

They were in a miserable situation.

They were nice people and they worked hard, but things didn't go well.

Especially the third part that Yoo-hyun belonged to.

It was something that Yoo-hyun really wanted to fix.

Deputy Park Seung Woo was still talking loudly.

"Hehe, don't worry. I'll take good care of you."

“I trust you.”

“Yeah, trust me.”

Yoo-hyun looked at Deputy Park Seung Woo who was smiling and pounding his chest, and smiled along.

Then he took a sip of his coffee.

The vending machine coffee tasted pretty good after a long time.

Just as Deputy Park Seung Woo was about to say something again, Yoo-hyun cut him off.

“Deputy Park, it’s been 50 minutes.”

If he interrupted him while he was talking, he might feel offended, but if he cut in before he opened his mouth, it would seem like a natural part of the conversation.

Deputy Park Seung Woo scratched his head and got up.

“Oh, already? Let’s go back. Get up.”

“Yes.”

“Kid. You got a good mentor.”

He said something that was hard to say with his own mouth.

You got a good mentee.

Yoo-hyun didn’t say it out loud.

When they came back to the office, there were people sitting at the conference table next to the team leader’s seat.

It was Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan and the part leaders.

Deputy Park Seung Woo who saw them from behind the partition whispered to Yoo-hyun.

“Another meeting. I wonder when it will end.”

“Does it take long?”

“Yeah. Our team leader is famous for having long meetings. You see him. That guy.”

Deputy Park Seung Woo pointed at a curly-haired man.

It was Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan.

His bent back and hunched shoulders, his eyes moving left and right nervously showed his indecisive personality.

Yoo-hyun didn't need to hear him talk to know why he was having another meeting.

It was the result of him not being able to make a proper decision.

As expected, the meeting content was as Yoo-hyun had guessed.

Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan looked at the TV screen with several options and shook his head.

“Is there no other way?”

“Team Leader, we barely have enough time to prepare these. Why don't you just go with one of them?”

And the part leaders unanimously voiced their opinions.

“If we keep this up, we'll get scolded by our supervisor again...”

“Then why don't you ask him?”

“No way. We have to prepare first.”

This process repeated several times.

They couldn't make a decision, so the meeting content just went round and round like a hamster wheel.

Would this ever end?

Deputy Park Seung Woo also thought this was ridiculous and whispered to Yoo-hyun again.

“Should we just greet him later?”

“Yes. Let's do that.”

Yoo-hyun agreed neatly.

That's when it happened.

Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan turned his head and met Deputy Park Seung Woo's eyes, who said with a flustered face.

“Uh, Team Leader. The new hire...”

“The new hire?”

“To introduce...”

Before he could finish his sentence, Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan's eyes widened like lanterns.

He quickly got up from his seat and adjusted his clothes.

There was only one person who could make him so startled.

Sure enough.

He followed his gaze and saw a man walking confidently.

A short man with a protruding belly, walking with a swagger, he looked angry.

He was Jo Chan Young, the supervisor in charge of mobile sales and marketing.

As soon as he entered the office, the atmosphere sank.

"Te, Supervisor."

Before Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan could bow his head, Supervisor Jo Chan Young shouted.

"Team Leader Oh! The more I think about it, the angrier I get."

"Yes?"

"So? You can't do the PDA? Should I fire you? Just say you can't do it and quit?"

"No, no, Supervisor."

Supervisor Jo Chan Young continued to pour out his anger at Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan.

"Then why did you make such a crappy report? Is that okay? No?"

"Ok, okay."

"There's no one useful here. No one useful!"

Supervisor Jo Chan Young snorted and looked around with his bulging eyes.

The people who were staring blankly quickly went back to their work.

Chapter 35

Deputy Park Seung Woo pushed Yoo-hyun's shoulder and hid behind the partition.

He whispered.

"It's a weekly event. It's better to hide at times like this."

"..."

Yoo-hyun remembered that Supervisor Jo Chan Young had a hot temper even after 20 years.

He was notorious for interfering too much for his position and wandering around frequently.

Especially, he didn't trust the product planning team very much, so he often visited them with the purpose of monitoring.

And if he found something he didn't like, he would make a scene.

He would call the team leader and tear up the team like he did now.

"Who made this report? Deputy Park? How did you train your team members, Team Leader Oh!"

"I'm sorry."

While Supervisor Jo Chan Young yelled for a long time, Deputy Park Seung Woo's face became darker and darker.

He didn't know how many times his name was mentioned in that conversation.

After the supervisor vented his anger and left, the team leader shouted this time.

"Where is Deputy Park!"

"He's a bit sensitive today."

"Is he?"

Yoo-hyun opened his mouth with a serious expression.

He must have tried to relax, but his trembling legs betrayed Deputy Park Seung Woo's nervousness.

"He doesn't usually act like this."

"It must be a special situation."

"Right. It will pass soon."

He tried to reassure Yoo-hyun with a bold tone.

Did he get scared by seeing this?

Yoo-hyun felt rather friendly.

It was the same for Supervisor Jo Chan Young who scolded the team leader in front of his subordinates or Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan who vented his anger on his team members after being late.

They were just some of the people he had seen countless times before.

Yoo-hyun remembered something for a moment.

The faces of the people who swore loyalty to him excessively and bowed to him in the past.

Among them, Supervisor Jung Man Ho who had the team leader in his grip and Director Lee Jae Chul who trembled in front of his boss came to mind.

These two were exactly the same cases as now.

‘It’s funny.’

He had dominated them from above and now he was far below them.

But his eye level was drastically different from that of the new hire Yoo-hyun in the past.

He didn’t feel intimidated by their actions, but rather saw the cause and effect of why they acted like that.

Not only that, but he also saw the whole situation in three dimensions.

He understood the flow of the entire organization with just a few words of conversation in a short moment.

Experience was scary indeed.

Yoo-hyun smiled leisurely without knowing it.

Deputy Park Seung Woo looked at him with curiosity.

Then Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan’s rough voice came again, and Deputy Park Seung Woo finally straightened his shoulders and got up from his seat.

“Deputy Park.”

“Yes, Team Leader. Did you look for me? Haha.”

“...”

There was a silence like before a storm behind Deputy Park Seung Woo’s cheerful laugh.

For a moment, Yoo-hyun closed his eyes tightly.

‘You should have stayed still.’

Deputy Park Seung Woo must have done it to ease his tension, but it backfired.

From Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan’s perspective, he felt ignored by his subordinate in front of his boss.

As Yoo-hyun feared, Deputy Park Seung Woo's appearance added fuel to the fire.

Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan, who was trying to save face, yelled at him with a whip-like voice.

"Hey! Deputy Park. Are you here to make money?"

"What? No... No."

Deputy Park Seung Woo answered hesitantly while rolling his eyes around.

That's when Part Leader Kim Hyun Min intervened.

He was a man who always had a relaxed smile on his round face and didn't care much about promotion.

"We are here to make money."

"Hehe."

Eventually, the shoulders of the team members who were listening with their ears open shook.

Some even let out an oblivious laugh.

Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan's face turned red enough to burst.

"Part Leader Kim! What have you done so well that you're mumbling!"

In the end, the sparks flew to Part Leader Kim Hyun Min as well.

Yoo-hyun returned to his seat and put together the pieces of an old memory puzzle.

The PDA project.

It was the fundamental reason why Supervisor Jo Chan Young came and got angry, and Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan exploded.

Compared to the TV and IT groups that had the world's first and second performance, the mobile group was lagging behind as the fourth in the world.

Especially in the mobile field where the customers had a strong influence, product planning was not necessary.

They just had to make what they were told.

At least that was the thought until now.

But when the competitor hit the jackpot with the panel for the Nintendo game console, Supervisor Jo Chan Young became anxious.

He tried to make up for it by focusing on the new business area, and that was the PDA that Deputy Park Seung Woo was in charge of.

And the PDA project failed miserably.

It was the decisive factor that made Deputy Park Seung Woo quit.

He remembered Deputy Park Seung Woo's last lonely look for a moment.

How should he help?

He couldn't let the same regrettable result happen again.

He wanted to help Deputy Park Seung Woo somehow.

He wanted to step forward and change the direction right away, but there was a restriction of being a new hire.

The moment he stepped forward, the others would become screens.

That was not the company life Yoo-hyun wanted.

He decided to live a life with others, not alone.

He needed time to do that.

Yoo-hyun leaned his head forward and looked at Deputy Park Seung Woo who was still being scolded.

“What were you thinking...”

“I'm sorry. I'll do better next time...”

He glanced at this side, showing that he cared about Yoo-hyun.

He was a very kind person.

Yoo-hyun smiled softly without knowing it.

30 minutes passed.

“Team Leader is really...”

Deputy Park Seung Woo returned to his seat with his shoulders drooping.

He had been nagged so much that he felt like he was going crazy.

He understood why he was angry, but if he had to report to the supervisor again, he should have given him time to prepare.

“Sigh...”

He let out a deep sigh and was about to sit down.

There was an energy drink on his desk.

He tilted his head and picked up the drink, and there was a note under it.

-Cheer up.

Just four words.

Written with a name pen, Deputy Park Seung Woo chuckled and looked at Yoo-hyun.

“Han Yoo-hyun.”

“Yes, Deputy Park.”

“Are you my senior?”

He spat out as if he was annoyed, and wrinkles appeared around his eyes.

Yoo-hyun pretended to be nervous and agreed with him.

“I’m sorry.”

“Kid. This is something a senior does to a junior. Got it? Huh? Are you hurt?”

He should have let him put him in a playful headlock at times like this, but Yoo-hyun instinctively avoided it.

He wondered how much he should go along with him when Deputy Park Seung Woo frowned and said.

“This won’t do. I have to teach you some life lessons over drinks tonight.”

“Sounds good.”

“Oh, really? You’re smiling when your senior is scolding you?”

“I’m naturally a smiling person.”

“Pfft. This kid is really funny... Hmhm. Well, I’ll drink well.”

Deputy Park Seung Woo shook the drink awkwardly and smiled.

Yoo-hyun remembered his past while looking at his affectionate eyes.

-Cheer up.

20 years ago, he had received the same message from Deputy Park Seung Woo.

He had taken care of Yoo-hyun until the end, even though he had chosen Director Shin Chan Yong over him.

He was grateful and sorry for that.

Deputy Park Seung Woo was such a warm-hearted person.

He reaffirmed his determination while looking at him smiling brightly now.

Deputy Park Seung Woo wanted to take care of Yoo-hyun more, but he was too busy preparing for the report next week.

The PDA problem that was not developing well was especially headache-inducing.

Even if he reported to Supervisor Jo Chan Young who was in charge of sales and marketing, nothing would change, but it was necessary for the sake of organization.

Yoo-hyun understood his situation well enough.

He felt sorry for him more than anything else because he was handling something that was beyond his ability alone.

And there was no one to help him.

There were only six people in the third part, including the part leader.

Director Choi Min Hee was on vacation, Deputy Kim Young Gil was busy preparing for a meeting with a client.

The only one left was Lee Chan Ho who had joined the company two years earlier than Yoo-hyun, but he was busy preparing for an exhibition.

There were so many things to do, but they had to take on things that didn't have to be done by the third part.

It was because they were pushed by their power.

The product planning team was pushed by the sales and marketing team.

And among them, the third part took on the work while being pushed by the first and second parts.

That was the current address of the part that Yoo-hyun belonged to now.

They didn't have a main product like a cell phone, but a side product that didn't produce results.

And they received unreasonable demands and attention like the PDA.

On top of that, they had to deal with trivial tasks as well.

Two people had quit before because of these reasons.

In a word, there were many problems.

He didn't notice it in the past when he was busy looking ahead and working, but now he saw it clearly.

They had all the characteristics of a failing organization.

They couldn't get recognition because they couldn't produce results, and they lost motivation because they couldn't get recognition.

It should be fun to work, but it wasn't.

They were working hard on projects that were not their own ideas but suited their superiors, so they had no interest either.

They had to handle more than one project by themselves because there were many product lines.

That's how a vicious cycle occurred.

How could he break it?

Yoo-hyun was looking at the ceiling and thinking when someone spoke from behind.

"What are you doing? Want some tea?"

"Thank you."

It was Lee Chan Ho's face, who was Yoo-hyun's senior by two years.

He opened his mouth with a vending machine coffee in his hand.

"Ha, I'm so frustrated I could go crazy."

"It must be hard."

Yoo-hyun matched his tone appropriately.

Lee Chan Ho kept talking without even taking a sip of his cooling coffee.

"I wish I could do some proper work."

"Is it difficult?"

When Yoo-hyun chimed in, Lee Chan Ho said irritably.

"I'm sick of making useless reports all day. What's the point? I get scolded every time."

"I see."

"No. That's not something I should say to a new hire. Just ignore it."

Lee Chan Ho waved his hand dismissively.

He had been spewing negative stories for over 20 minutes without stopping and then acted like that.

-What's the point of working so hard? You should do enough and find your own way. Don't waste your time in the wrong place.

That's what he said when he couldn't adapt and quit after wandering around.

He dismissed it as a loser's words.

He had sent away another person he worked with, but Yoo-hyun was still looking ahead.

It was not funny at all when he thought about it now.

Yoo-hyun looked up at Lee Chan Ho.

His sturdy body and tall height.

He had a lot of energy in his body even when he was sitting still, maybe because he was from the military police.

But his ability to handle multiple tasks at the same time was definitely lacking.

However, he was the type to quietly do his assigned work.

He would have done better if they had worked together.

He thought it was possible when he looked back on his experience during the new hire training.

Lee Chan Ho was not behind his peers at all.

Rather, he could have soared if he had been given the right opportunity.

His strengths that were not visible at that time were clearly visible to Yoo-hyun now, who had more than 20 years of company experience.

Not only Lee Chan Ho, but everyone in the third part had their own strengths.

They might not shine when they were alone, but they could shine more than any other organization when they were together.

Yoo-hyun believed that.

And he wondered what kind of result they would create when their combined power moved in one direction.

That was the future of the third part that Yoo-hyun envisioned.

Chapter 36

While Yoo-hyun was lost in thought, Lee Chan Ho, a staff member, asked him with a serious expression.

“Hey, did you meet Go Jae Yoon, the assistant manager?”

“No.”

“You’ll probably see him soon. Be careful. He’s a total psycho.”

Go Jae Yoon, the assistant manager.

How could he not know him?

He was the decisive reason why Lee Chan Ho quit his job.

He had been hit by a bottle thrown by him at a drinking party.

It had been 20 years, but it was such a shocking incident that it remained vividly in Yoo-hyun’s memory.

He was that much of a psycho.

And he was also someone who deserved to be taught a lesson.

Yoo-hyun was willing to help his allies without asking for anything in return, but he was determined to cut off those who were completely rotten.

That was something he was good at.

“Thank you for your advice.”

“What are you talking about? Anyway, let’s do our best.”

“Yes.”

Yoo-hyun smiled lightly.

The first day of work was bound to be hectic.

It was stressful enough to go back to school after a vacation, let alone to go to work.

But Yoo-hyun was different.

He was not like other new employees who had no time to spare because they had to watch their seniors’ reactions, nor was he nervous.

He just felt frustrated for a different reason.

“Why do they have so many useless programs?”

As he followed the guide and installed the programs on his laptop, Yoo-hyun bit his lower lip slightly.

It took more than an hour to uninstall the unnecessary programs.

If there was an error during the installation, he had to repeat this process again.

They claimed that they were security programs or something, but they only changed them after they were hacked.

From Yoo-hyun's perspective, who had experienced the system 20 years later, these outdated programs were just creating more work.

But he couldn't change them all either.

"What can I do? I have to adapt to this era."

Yoo-hyun finally got access to the company's internet after getting a new internet IP and applying for site permissions.

There wasn't much he could do even after connecting to the company's internet network.

He could only send and receive emails?

Of course, he could search for Hanseong Group's employees through the intranet.

He had already searched for the people he wanted to find during the new employee training period.

But Yoo-hyun entered a name in the search box again, just in case.

-Jung Da Hye

It was a name that didn't exist now.

Yoo-hyun snorted.

As Yoo-hyun was browsing the internet, he received an email from Park Seung Woo, the deputy manager.

He felt sorry for not being able to take care of him properly and sent him a file.

"These are the projects that our team is working on. Just look at them for now."

"Yes. I understand."

Park Seung Woo was not in a position to worry about anyone else, but he was still kind-hearted.

"It's not always this busy. It's just that this is an important matter."

"Thank you."

“Thank you for what? You probably won’t understand even if you look at it. Just think of it as something that exists.”

When he opened the file, he saw the projects that the team was working on.

He could see at a glance what kind of projects each part was working on.

You won’t understand even if you look at it?

It’s so well organized?

The technical terms and abbreviations used only by Hanseong Electronics LCD division were not a problem at all.

He could unravel the cause and effect of the tangled contents just by looking at the keywords.

His 20 years of experience shone for a moment.

He could easily grasp this level of report just by skimming it.

Part 1 was in charge of supplying panels to global top mobile phone manufacturers in North America and Europe such as Nokia and Motorola.

There were dozens of models coming out every year, so there were also a lot of types of panels to handle.

A large part of the actual sales came from here, but the panels supplied by Hanseong were behind other competitors and ranked fourth.

The biggest problem was that there was no breakthrough to win the competition.

Part 2 handled mobile phone companies in East Asia.

The main company was obviously Hansung Electronics Mobile Division.

But as Hansung Mobile declined, related sales also plummeted.

They were trying various things, but they were not working well.

The last part 3.

Part 3 dealt with products other than mobile phones, such as MP3, PMP, navigation, PDA, etc.

Choi Min Hee, the section chief, was in charge of PMP and navigation, Kim Young Gil, the deputy manager, was in charge of MP3, and Park Seung Woo, the deputy manager, was in charge of PDA.

There were many types and many things to do, but the performance was low compared to the declining mobile phones.

But did people know?

That it was only a few years before all these things were combined into a smartphone.

Well, even the consulting that cost billions of won said that feature phones (regular mobile phones) would beat smartphones.

How could people who were not even in the mobile phone division and who were selling parts predict that?

It was impossible.

The only thing that was certain was that the market changed rapidly, and the projects that were thought to be worthless turned into gold.

And when that time came, the importance of LCD panels increased even more.

Of course, the role of the product planning team also became much more important than now.

The problem was that before that happened, the previous managers all failed and the wrong people took the credit.

That was when Yoo-hyun was looking at the data.

“Hey! Greet me properly!”

Along with the loud voice from the hallway, a tense atmosphere filled the office.

He could tell who it was just by hearing the voice.

There were not many people who could shout like that without any regard for others.

Especially over something as trivial as a greeting.

“I’m s-sorry.”

“Lee Chan Ho, I’m watching you. Do it right.”

“Yes, yes.”

As expected.

He turned his head and saw the psycho that Lee Chan Ho had warned him about, Go Jae Yoon, the assistant manager.

His skinny body and protruding cheekbones, his raised eyebrows showed his fiery temper.

He was a person who proved that one’s face had to bear responsibility as one aged.

He was making a fuss over the angle of the greeting?

This was just one of his very minor stories.

He also yelled at people for making too much keyboard noise or for not doing something he never asked them to do.

The problem was that he was so strong and had a high position that even the team leader couldn't control him.

"He does that sometimes."

"..."

Park Seung Woo winked at Yoo-hyun as if telling him to ignore it.

Yoo-hyun was silent but he already guessed it.

Come if you dare.

He bit his lip slightly.

A moment later.

"Who are you?"

"Me?"

It was obvious that the voice behind Yoo-hyun's back belonged to Go Jae Yoon, the troublemaker.

Suddenly, Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon shoved his head towards Yoo-hyun's monitor, as if he had discovered something.

He frowned with displeasure.

"Who is looking at my data without permission?"

"Hello, I'm Han Yoo-hyun, a new employee."

Yoo-hyun stood up and greeted him first.

He ignored Yoo-hyun lightly and growled at Deputy Park Seung Woo.

"Hey, Park Seung Woo. Did you give it to him?"

"Huh? No..."

Why did he hesitate?

He should have just said yes.

What Yoo-hyun had opened was a document that simply summarized the team's work.

Yoo-hyun knew better than anyone that this was not a problem.

This was just a pretext to pick a fight.

What should he do?

Yoo-hyun glanced around in an instant.

He felt like he could see the thoughts of the people who were sneaking a peek and turning their heads away.

‘Oh man, he’s going to get smashed.’

‘Just ignore it. I don’t want to get involved.’

Something like that, probably.

He didn’t have any resentment towards the indifferent people.

Even the superiors were just watching and doing nothing, let alone the others.

At that moment, Yoo-hyun didn’t miss someone walking from afar.

“I’m sorry...”

“Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon.”

Around the time when Deputy Park Seung Woo’s face turned pale, Yoo-hyun opened his mouth.

“What?”

“...”

Then he looked at Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon in silence.

His furrowed brows, clenched jaw, fast breathing, and motionless pupils showed that he was on the verge of exploding.

Not only Yoo-hyun, but also Deputy Park Seung Woo was his target.

If they stayed still, they would surely get cursed and yelled at.

There were very limited actions that a new employee could do in this situation.

But there was still a way to deal with a psycho here.

If he surrendered poorly, he would only get swept away by the coming storm more severely.

The more he had to do this, the more boldly he had to enter the center of the storm.

‘Three, two, one.’

The timing of Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon’s explosion and the timing of the man who turned his head as he walked by matched perfectly.

This was his chance!

Yoo-hyun’s eyes flashed and he acted right away.

He bent his waist at 90 degrees without hesitation.

“I’m sorry!”

His loud voice echoed throughout the space.

It was natural that people’s attention was drawn by his sudden action.

“Huh?”

Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon’s face turned blank for a moment.

Yoo-hyun peeked at the hallway and bent his waist again.

“I’m really sorry!”

He didn’t need to explain anything beforehand.

It was enough to gather attention by apologizing as if he had committed a grave sin.

What could Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon say?

He kept apologizing for his mistake?

Only, Yoo-hyun’s apology was a bit too much.

This alone would be enough to avoid Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon’s anger.

But Yoo-hyun didn’t intend to end it there.

Then, Director Jo Chan Young, who was passing by the hallway, came closer as if he was curious about what was going on.

“What’s going on here?”

“Oh, nothing, sir.”

The deputy manager who was so aggressive before had no choice but to back down in front of his superior.

He was weak in front of the strong but strong in front of the weak.

But Yoo-hyun didn’t hesitate here either.

He answered Director Jo's question with an innocent expression of a new employee who knew nothing.

"I looked at senior's data. I made a big mistake. I'm sorry."

Director Jo's gaze followed Yoo-hyun and went to the monitor.

There was a summary of the team project on it.

He called Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan in a stiff voice.

"Oh Team Leader."

"Yes, sir."

"Don't you share even this basic data in your team?"

"Well..."

It was too late for Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon to step forward and fix things up.

If he made excuses here, he would get scolded even more.

Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan stopped Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon and answered him.

"I'm sorry, sir."

"Tsk tsk, no wonder your team is like this."

Director Jo's sarcasm made Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan's face turn red and blue.

He got scolded for the report in the morning, and now he got scolded for something trivial in the afternoon.

He must have been dying inside.

Director Jo left and the place was like the calm before the storm.

Yoo-hyun, who had bowed his head with his hands clasped in front of him, smiled secretly.

He didn't need to see it to imagine the next situation.

As expected.

Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan's angry voice was cold.

"Deputy Manager Go, follow me. I can't let this go this time."

"Team Leader, it's not like that..."

“Don’t make excuses and follow me!”

Even Team Leader Oh Jae Hwan, who was usually generous to Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon, had completely turned his back on him.

He was a team leader who never yelled at anyone for non-work-related reasons, so the team members were also tense.

Deputy Manager Go Jae Yoon looked at Yoo-hyun with a furious face as if he was going crazy.

Yoo-hyun kept his head down in silence.

He couldn’t say anything to him anyway, so he just snickered.

He must have been burning inside.

But what could he do?

Have a nice trip.

He wanted to say that, but he couldn’t. It was a pity.

Deputy Park Seung Woo blinked his surprised eyes as he watched Yoo-hyun.

He didn’t think that Yoo-hyun had intended it, of course.

So what?

It was good that things worked out well.

Chapter 37

After receiving a proper warning, Manager Go Jae-yoon did not say anything to Yoo-hyun.

He seemed to be banned from approaching him, so he vented his anger on the people around him.

“You know what...”

“Hey, Go Jae-yoon!”

Team Leader Oh Jae-hwan reacted sharply.

“Ah, no. I just...”

“Just be quiet, okay?”

The performance evaluation was not far away.

He would have to keep his mouth shut for a while.

If he picked a fight again?

He would make sure he couldn't touch him.

-Finally, it's time to go home. ♪ ♫

The song announcing the end of work rang out.

At the same time, Deputy Park Seung-woo's voice was heard.

"Let's go."

"Where?"

"You'll see when we get there."

Deputy Park Seung-woo took Yoo-hyun out with a cheerful face.

The place they went to was a rice soup restaurant in the alley behind the company.

Deputy Park Seung-woo grumbled all the way.

"You said you'd buy me something, but rice soup? Rice soup?"

"They say it's really good here."

"Kid. How did you hear that rumor?"

Yoo-hyun smiled and shrugged his shoulders instead of answering.

He didn't come to the rice soup restaurant just because of Deputy Park Seung-woo's wallet situation.

This place also had a special meaning for Yoo-hyun.

The rice soup he ate when he was hungry after working all night was so delicious.

It was not only the taste, but also the warmth that spread throughout the restaurant.

Especially, the rice soup lady who greeted him with a bright smile every time he came was still a warm memory in Yoo-hyun's heart.

Thud.

The rice soup lady put down the bottle of alcohol and smiled brightly at Yoo-hyun.

"Oh my, you have such a handsome young man here?"

"Hello."

He could see the deep wrinkles and dimples around her eyes.

She had a round and friendly face that made her look younger than her 50s. Her smile suited her very well.

She looked exactly like Yoo-hyun remembered.

He bowed his head with a feeling of gratitude, but Deputy Park Seung-woo sitting across from him looked unhappy.

“Auntie, shouldn’t you take care of me first? I’m your regular customer.”

“Ay, Park Manager, forget it.”

“I’m still a deputy, you know.”

“It would be nice if you got promoted outside too, right? Hoho. Anyway, what’s your name, handsome young man?”

The auntie sat down next to Deputy Park Seung-woo and looked at Yoo-hyun with her chin resting on her hand.

She looked at him with a friendly gaze as if she recognized him.

“Han Yoo-hyun.”

“Yoo-hyun. Nice name. I’ll remember it for sure, so you have to come often. Got it?”

“Yes. If you give me some service.”

“Hohoho, okay okay. I’ll give you some service pork as well.”

Deputy Park Seung-woo looked bewildered by the auntie’s generous gesture.

He had been coming here for years, but this was the first time she offered him service pork.

He couldn’t help but complain.

“Auntie, why do you only like this guy?”

Yoo-hyun was curious about that too.

She had always been nice to Yoo-hyun since he first came here.

Yoo-hyun wasn’t a charming person back then, nor was he good at expressing his gratitude.

But why did she treat him so well?

From the first moment she saw him.

The answer was simple.

“He’s handsome.”

Deputy Park Seung-woo asked with a wronged expression.

“Then what about me?”

“You’re a bandit.”

“Pfft.”

Yoo-hyun spat out the water he was drinking.

Deputy Park Seung-woo glared at him, but what could he do? It was funny.

The auntie saw his reaction and said one thing.

“Did I hurt your feelings? Have a drink.”

“Auntie!”

“I can hear you fine.”

The auntie comforted Deputy Park Seung-woo with her long life experience.

She poured him a drink so naturally that he soon accepted it with resignation.

It would have been an unusual situation in a normal restaurant, but there was an unique friendliness from the auntie.

“Do you want a drink too, Yoo-hyun?”

“Yes. Thank you.”

Yoo-hyun received the drink and smiled lightly.

Whenever Yoo-hyun came here in the past, the auntie gave him all kinds of things.

She comforted him when he was having a hard time, and she was happy for him when he got promoted or received an award.

Maybe that’s why?

This place felt like home to Yoo-hyun, not just a restaurant.

Yes, home was the right word.

Yoo-hyun, who had almost cut off contact with his parents in the past, found this place to be the only warm refuge.

He didn’t appreciate it back then.

But after a long time, he realized that he had received a lot.

But by the time he realized that, it was too late.

This restaurant disappeared after the area was redeveloped seven years later. The auntie was scammed by the landlord, and she was kicked out of her home. It had nothing to do with Yoo-hyun, right?

No, it didn't.

It was the result of Yoo-hyun, who was in the group strategy room, strategically approving the redevelopment of the surrounding area.

He tried to numb the guilt that rose in his chest by running forward like crazy.

The more he did that, the more vicious cycle repeated.

Many people were harmed.

It was all because of Yoo-hyun's wrong decisions.

A little later.

"Then I'll get up first, uninvited guest."

Yoo-hyun looked at the auntie's face as she tried to get up from her seat.

He could see the worry that he wouldn't have noticed in the past between her wrinkles.

Was there a problem with the store from this time?

Yoo-hyun asked carefully.

"Auntie, do you have any worries?"

"No. No worries."

"..."

She said no, but there was definitely something.

It was a personal matter, so he wondered if he should ask more.

The auntie sighed and said as she looked at Yoo-hyun.

"I just thought of my youngest son when I saw you."

Fortunately, it didn't seem to be a problem with the store yet.

By the way, her youngest child...

It was a daughter, right?

He remembered seeing her picture once.

If he recalled correctly, she was much younger than Yoo-hyun.

Would she be in high school by now?

If she had a problem, there weren't many options.

"Is it hard because of the college entrance exam preparation?"

"Oh my? How did you know?"

"You look so young, auntie. I thought your child would be a student. The biggest worry for students is the college entrance exam."

Chuckle chuckle.

"Hohoho, no, no. She's my youngest child who I gave birth to after 30. How do you speak so nicely? Manager Park, you should learn from your junior."

"I'm a deputy, you know. And why are you hitting me?"

The auntie laughed as she hit Deputy Park Seung-woo's shoulder.

She looked excited.

No one hated being told they looked young.

And he even pointed out the part she was worried about, so it was natural that she opened up more.

"She's so anxious because the college entrance exam is not far away."

"I see."

"I'm trying to find a tutor for her, but there's no one suitable."

"That must be a problem."

Yoo-hyun's words made the auntie shake her hand.

"Ah, I'm sorry for bothering you with this. Don't mind me."

"No, it's okay. Wait a minute."

Yoo-hyun racked his brain.

He wanted to help her with her problem if possible.

He thought that was a way to repay her gratitude for all these years.

Then the auntie said with a worried face.

"She's a bit shy around male teachers because she's a girl."

"Really? Don't girls like males more?"

"That's Manager Park daughter."

“I’m a deputy, you know. And I’m single.”

The auntie ignored him and continued.

“I’ve tried to find some female teachers around here, but they have to be trustworthy. One time, a really weird person came and she had a hard time. Do you know anyone good?”

“I have a female junior.”

The auntie brightened up at Yoo-hyun’s answer.

“Really? I can pay well if the person is good. Much more than other places.”

“Auntie, don’t you ask me?”

Deputy Park Seung-woo’s words made the auntie frown.

“Manager Park is an old man. I need a young female teacher.”

“I have a female junior who goes to college too!”

“There’s a saying that birds of a feather flock together.”

“Ah, come on. Auntie, I’m a good guy.”

While they were bickering, Yoo-hyun thought of his junior’s face.

It was Jo Eun-ah, who worked as a library assistant with him.

-I quit my job as a library assistant too. I’m going to study at an academy in Seoul and prepare for employment.

That’s what she said when she called him last time.

She said she wanted a short-term part-time job because the academy fee was expensive.

He thought she might be okay with this condition.

The academy was right across the street.

And Jo Eun-ah’s friendly personality seemed to suit the auntie well.

He made up his mind and said.

“I’ll check with her first.”

“Really?”

“Yes. She’s a good junior. But I have to ask her situation too, so I’ll let you know later.”

“Hohoho, thank you even for saying that. I’ll give you some more drinks as service.”

“No, it’s okay. I’ll take it when it’s confirmed.”

Yoo-hyun refused, but the auntie insisted.

“No. I just want to give it to you because I’m happy. Manager Park, just eat quickly.”

“I’m a deputy, you know...”

Deputy Park Seung-woo gave up and looked at Yoo-hyun in the eyes.

He had fair skin and was tall.

He was handsome indeed.

But more than that, he liked his smart and upright attitude.

‘He really got a good junior.’

It wasn’t an easy thing to get in his social life.

He had an eye for people too.

He felt closer to Yoo-hyun and the conversation became more enjoyable.

They emptied the bottle of soju quickly with the hot soup and pork as snacks.

As the alcohol went down, they talked more.

Deputy Park Seung-woo shared his experience of the company with Yoo-hyun.

“You see, the company is like...”

“I see. Thank you.”

He didn’t get much help from what he already knew, but Yoo-hyun listened with pleasure.

He didn’t intend to match him on purpose.

He liked his passion and honesty that showed in his words.

He wasn’t a useless and lazy person like Yoo-hyun had misunderstood when he was a new employee.

He realized it late, but he was a warm and cool senior.

Much more than Shin Chan-yong, who wore a disgusting mask.

He was grateful that he was his mentor.

Deputy Park Seung-woo, whose face was red, asked Yoo-hyun.

“What kind of company life do you want?”

It was a sentimental question that suited Deputy Park Seung-woo.

He felt like he went back to the time when he was a clueless new employee 20 years ago.

What did he say back then?

He said he wanted to succeed, to become a president.

Deputy Park Seung-woo laughed heartily.

“No way, man. You have to say you want to succeed. You can’t succeed without ambition.”

It felt like he omitted the words ‘like me...’ after that.

Deputy Park Seung-woo wasn’t without ambition.

He had a lot of hidden efforts behind his nice personality.

He definitely had skills.

But he couldn’t shine because he didn’t get a proper opportunity.

And that was related to his mind of trying to do whatever he was given without refusing.

In the end, the company used and discarded Deputy Park Seung-woo, who was kind and couldn’t say no.

He looked pathetic when he was young, but not now.

Chapter 38

Yoo-hyun met Park Seung Woo’s eyes.

He wanted to see what kind of person he would become when he was given a proper opportunity and a chance to improve his skills.

That was why he came back.

“I’ll put my greed aside for now. I’m still struggling to follow your footsteps, mentor.”

“Hahaha, well, you’re under my wing, so you don’t have to worry about anything. Just live without thinking too much.”

“Thank you very much.”

“Kid, come on, let’s have a drink.”

Park Seung Woo smiled and offered him a glass.

Clang.

The glasses collided and the clear liquid swayed.

They had a pleasant conversation for a while, with the background noise of the bustling crowd.

He kept recalling the nostalgia of the past from Park Seung Woo's words, even though they were nothing special.

He thought he didn't care, but he must have wanted to meet this moment again.

He shrugged his shoulders to suppress the sudden surge of emotion.

Park Seung Woo asked with a worried expression.

"What? Did you drink too much?"

"No. I'm just happy."

"Hahaha, you met a good senior. Good for you. Let's go to the second round. I'll treat you today."

Yoo-hyun smirked and gave him a thumbs up.

A good senior?

That was an understatement.

He was an amazing person who was hard to find again in life.

He had missed him in the past, but now it was different.

Yoo-hyun made a firm resolution in his heart.

...

Several days passed by in a blur after that.

There was nothing special for a new employee to do at the company.

He helped Park Seung Woo, who was busy preparing reports, and answered the calls from various places.

It felt very new to look at the ground instead of looking down from above.

When he had power, he didn't need to care about others.

But now he had to pay attention to every subtle change.

It was natural to follow the seniors who asked him to have a coffee or join them.

He had to do things that he thought were unnecessary.

Of course, it wasn't bad either.

It was a great opportunity to get along with his co-workers.

He could think about what he had missed by listening to their complaints and stories.

-This is crazy. Why is the team leader like that?

-Why are there so many meetings? Does this make things work?

-What's the point of reporting? They already know everything. Sigh. They just want us to work overtime again.

-There's nothing interesting here. You should go to the main branch. Don't stay in this place.

Especially, his view on the people who grumbled changed.

If it was the old Yoo-hyun, he would have looked down on them with contempt.

He thought only people who lacked ability complained.

He thought they should quit if they didn't like their job that they were paid for.

He always sided with the company as if he was the president himself.

But when he looked inside, there were things that couldn't be helped.

Like the PDA project that Park Seung Woo received.

It was the fault of his boss who pushed him into an impossible task and an unrealistic deadline.

Of course, it was also a problem of the system that made it inevitable.

-Director Kim, this is not a matter of possible or impossible. This is something that has to be done. Think about your subordinates' position again. What's better? To suffer a little bit now? Or to get a sweet reward after finishing it? Their lives depend on your judgment.

Yoo-hyun remembered the words he had coldly spat out at Kim Sang Bum, the director who had requested a schedule change due to an unreasonable deadline when he was on secondment.

He used his strong sense of responsibility to push him to the edge of the cliff.

He didn't need to see how Kim Sang Bum, who had left with a scared face, treated his subordinates.

He must have demanded them to do it no matter what with an impossible deadline.

In the end, only the lower-level employees suffered from this structure.

Yoo-hyun knew that even though he made unreasonable demands himself.

He thought it would make things faster.

He believed that they had to work hard and sacrifice themselves to catch up with others.

That was how Hansung grew based on such efforts and sacrifices.

If they thought it was unreasonable, why didn't they just quit?

Yoo-hyun knew better than anyone why they couldn't do that.

The problem was not the quantitative evaluation but the qualitative evaluation.

They gave more points to the people who worked all night than the ones who finished their work quickly.

They naturally took care of the people who worked hard and paid with their bodies.

They claimed to aim for the global number one, but the way they worked and evaluated was old-fashioned.

That was the same when Yoo-hyun became the president.

He had to admit it.

He had to change it.

To do that, he had to change himself first.

That was why he tried to leave work on time and make a personal life for himself, even if it was forced.

On a weekend evening.

Yoo-hyun received a phone call.

It was from his junior Jung Hyun Woo, who was sent to the Ulsan factory.

-I'm dying. It's so hard.

"Why?"

What could be so hard in a week?

He wouldn't have listened to him if it was before.

But he had heard so many complaints at the company that he became used to it.

Yoo-hyun silently listened to him.

-The team leader threw his phone yesterday. Ugh, this place is worse than a construction site.

“Really?”

-It's no joke. They have a dinner every day, and they drink and come back at night and work.

“You're having a hard time.”

-Really...

Yoo-hyun agreed with him and Jung Hyun Woo poured out his story for a long time.

He must have had other friends, but he contacted Yoo-hyun because he thought of him specially.

Maybe he trusted Yoo-hyun more and opened up his bottled-up story.

Yoo-hyun suddenly thought of the people he worked with when he was on secondment.

When he searched them on the company intranet, they were still there.

They were the people he would meet again in a year.

The only difference was that Jung Hyun Woo was also there with them.

When his long rant was over, Yoo-hyun said.

“You did well.”

-No, I have to do well. I just wanted to whine to you for a bit. I thought you would listen to me.

“You can do that anytime.”

-Ah, come on. I'm already grateful that you got me accepted here.

“Stop saying that.”

Who got him accepted?

He just gave him some advice during the interview.

He was too thankful for that.

Jung Hyun Woo's voice came again.

-Oh, Eun Ah got a tutoring job and she's very happy. She said the pay is good too.

“Really? She sounded very annoyed when she talked to me.”

-Hehe, she must be trying to get a free meal from you. She's a bit cunning.

His voice sounded slightly excited.

Was this a good sign?

Ring.

His phone rang then.

"Hyunwoo, just a moment."

-Thank you for introducing me to such a nice person. I'll treat you well when you come to the restaurant^^

It was a text from the lady who owned the rice soup shop.

She also used a smiley face when she sent the text.

She looked like his mother in that way.

It was a good thing anyway.

He had said it was no big deal to connect her with a tutor, but it was not an easy task.

He had to satisfy both parties and inevitably keep in touch with them.

He realized once again that helping someone was not simple.

As long as everyone was happy with the outcome, he could put an end to this matter.

"Phew."

-Yes?

"No, nothing."

-Brother, let's meet when you come to Seoul. I have so much to talk to you about.

Has it been a year since he last saw him?

He realized that this guy talked the most.

"Okay, call me when you come."

He was a charming guy who made him smile nonetheless.

The next day at 5:30 a.m.

Even though he opened his eyes, he still saw the memories of his past when he only looked ahead.

He sighed with relief after seeing his mother's gentle text on his phone.
He felt confident that he could change everything like his new morning routine.
His posture in front of the mirror made him look like a model.
As always, his straight back and slightly lifted chin were impressive.
It couldn't be helped.
He had taken care of himself thoroughly for 20 years.
He had never gained weight and maintained the same weight.
He went to a speech academy to improve his voice and a modeling academy to correct his posture.
It was his hidden effort as he ran forward without looking back.
He looked more muscular lately as he went to the gym after work.
His condition was perfect thanks to his morning runs.
Han Yoo-hyun, the president, looked at Han Yoo-hyun, the new employee in 2007, in the mirror.
He didn't look much different from the past Yoo-hyun who only looked ahead.
Yoo-hyun lowered his head and widened his gaze.
Then he saw the scenery in his room next to his reflection in the mirror.
On the ivory-colored wallpaper, he saw the faces of many people he had stepped on along the way.
They were invisible to Yoo-hyun who only ran forward.
Yoo-hyun knew what he had to do.
And he was confident that he could do it.
"Are you ready?"
He asked the young Yoo-hyun in the mirror.
"Of course. That's why I'm starting over."
The Yoo-hyun in the mirror smiled and turned around quickly.
On the wall, he saw the people he had connected with and those he had only taken from.
He put aside his guilt and regret for now.

He would pay them back for sure.

And he would make things better for them for sure.

Yoo-hyun faced them without avoiding them.

His eyes shone brightly with experience and youthfulness.

That's how a new week began.

"I'll be back from a meeting."

"Okay."

Park Seungwoo, an assistant manager, was busy from Monday morning.

He had to prepare for a report and a development department meeting at the same time.

Yoo-hyun decided to watch him for now as he felt frustrated.

If he wasn't careful, Park Seungwoo's end could come sooner than expected.

He couldn't remember exactly when things went wrong, so he had to be more careful.

He couldn't see the big picture yet, so he wondered if he should cut off what he saw first.

If he made a mistake, he might have to step forward himself unwillingly.

That wasn't it.

He had to make them work together instead of alone.

The people he wanted to help should be the center rather than the immediate results.

He had to make them rise up by themselves instead of falling down because of his mistakes or lack of consideration.

He was sitting at his desk, organizing his thoughts and spinning his pen, when someone came looking for him.

It was Shin Chanyong, a section chief.

"Do you want to have a cup of tea?"

"Yes, sure."

He had no reason to avoid him, so Yoo-hyun got up from his seat.

He remembered that Shin Chanyong was not the type to approach new employees first to help them.

He must have wanted something from him.

Shin Chanyong, who was walking ahead of him, stopped in front of the conference room next to him.

“Look here.”

“Here?”

He turned his head following his gaze and saw the inside of the conference room through the gap of the opaque glass window.

There was Park Seungwoo, the assistant manager, in there.

He looked like he was breaking down surrounded by people with higher positions.

Yoo-hyun chuckled.

Shin Chanyong’s intention was too childish.

Was he that low?

He thought that maybe he had overestimated him too much.

As if to confirm and kill Yoo-hyun’s thoughts, Shin Chanyong said.

“Tsk tsk, Assistant Manager Park, that guy is breaking down again, breaking down again.”

“...”

He pretended not to know even though he knew.

“Newbie, don’t go and break down like that. It’s embarrassing.”

You’re the one who’s more embarrassing.

Yoo-hyun swallowed the words that came up to his throat and looked at Shin Chanyong.

It wasn’t because of the difference in rank that he endured it.

He wanted to see how far he would go.

Chapter 39

He settled in a shelter and started a conversation with the third part’s gossip.

“I don’t know if you know this, but...”

“That’s how it is.”

He didn’t say it outright, but he was insulting them.

According to him, the people in the third part were all idiots who couldn't do their jobs properly.

Kim Hyun-min, the manager who didn't do any work.

Choi Min-hee, the section chief who lost her touch after taking parental leave.

Kim Young-gil, the deputy who couldn't speak English well.

Park Seung-woo, the deputy who never finished a project successfully.

He didn't even mention Lee Chan-ho.

He also sprinkled some tiny boasts about himself, who received rewards from the company and got promoted early.

Yoo-hyun just listened to his story.

He remembered having a similar conversation in the past.

Of course, it was not now, but after a long time had passed.

At that time, Yoo-hyun was swayed by Shin Chan-yong's words.

There was one fact that made him do so.

The one who was praised by Jo Chan-young, the director, and recognized by Oh Jae-hwan, the team leader, was not the people in the third part, but Shin Chan-yong, the section chief.

The image of the third part that Yoo-hyun saw as a new employee who couldn't speak English well was not much different from Shin Chan-yong's words.

That judgment was the reason why Yoo-hyun accepted the dirty hand that Shin Chan-yong offered him.

But?

It was absolutely not now.

Yoo-hyun took a sip of coffee and asked calmly.

"Why are you telling me this?"

Was it because of his unexpected reaction?

Shin Chan-yong's eyes narrowed slightly.

"What do you think?"

"I don't know."

"You're clueless. You looked like you had some sense."

“Thank you for your compliment.”

Shin Chan-yong nodded his head and continued his words.

“I’m giving you an opportunity.”

“An opportunity?”

“A chance to cross over from a rotten rope to a rope of success.”

“What do you mean?”

Yoo-hyun pretended not to know and asked. Shin Chan-yong chuckled.

“You know very well that you won’t get anywhere under Park deputy. “

“Is that so?”

“Of course. You’ll work yourself to death and get no results, and eventually end up in the factory. I wonder if you can even get promoted.”

“Is that really so?”

Yoo-hyun feigned ignorance and flattered him.

The factory?

Did he think he would be scared by something like that?

He had a knack for making cheap remarks without much effort.

“Just wait and see.”

“...”

Shin Chan-yong drank his coffee and answered calmly.

Then he tried to set the mood and continued his words.

“Honestly, I don’t usually say this to a newbie like you. I’m just saying this because I feel sorry for you.”

“Can I ask you why?”

“You’re like me.”

“...”

“I can see your ambition to succeed in your eyes. There’s nothing wrong with having ambition. You have to know how to seize the opportunity if you have ambition.”

Ambition to succeed?

That was a ridiculous thing to say.

That was the first goal that Yoo-hyun discarded when he came back.

Yoo-hyun was so dumbfounded that he looked at Shin Chan-yong.

He was looking down at Yoo-hyun with his chin up.

‘Come on, take the rope I gave you. If you follow me, I’ll make you grow.’

His eyes seemed to say that.

If it was in the past?

He would have grabbed the bait that he offered before hearing a proper proposal.

Of course, there was no way he would do that now.

“I don’t know. I don’t think I have much ambition.”

“Really? I don’t think so. Isn’t helping others first and foremost for recognition? You’re doing your work on purpose right now.”

“...”

Work?

Yoo-hyun hadn’t done any proper work yet.

He just answered some phone calls and helped with some errands.

What kind of ambition would he have from that?

He must have noticed his skillful response and paid attention to him.

This guy was funny too.

Yoo-hyun shrugged his shoulders and Shin Chan-yong spoke with patience.

“You’re skillful and relaxed for a newbie.”

“Thank you.”

“But I know. A duck may look calm on the surface, but it’s paddling hard under the water. How about it? Am I wrong?”

Yoo-hyun sneered inwardly.

What a bullshit.

When he didn’t get the answer he wanted, Shin Chan-yong checked the time on his wristwatch.

He pretended not to, but his patience was running out.

Well, it wasn't easy for him to talk so much to persuade a subordinate.

And he was wasting his precious time with meaningless questions.

This was the situation that Shin Chan-yong hated the most.

It was time for Yoo-hyun to end it.

"Thank you for your kind words, but I think you're overestimating me."

Shin Chan-yong's brow twitched at Yoo-hyun's answer.

"...I've said this much, and you still can't give me a proper answer? Do you not know anything because you're a newbie? Or are you just clueless?"

You're too quick to catch on.

He was trying to stress him out on purpose.

"I'm lacking a lot as a newbie."

He finally revealed his intention.

"That's why I'm offering to help you."

"Thank you. But I don't understand."

"What don't you understand? Is it that hard to answer? If you don't like it, just say no."

His tone of voice rose before he knew it.

Unlike his usual calm expression, his face was flushed with anger.

It was impressive to see him lose his composure.

Yoo-hyun decided to wrap it up here.

"I appreciate your offer, but I like my mentor right now."

"Are you sure you won't regret it?"

"Yes. I'll do my best not to."

Yoo-hyun uttered a cliché and Shin Chan-yong laughed in disbelief.

"I can see your level by seeing that you give me such an answer even after I've said this much."

"..."

He must have overestimated him.

"..."

Yoo-hyun didn't flinch at the fierce gaze.

‘Go to hell.’

He felt sorry for him.

He was honestly one step ahead in terms of career advancement.

But he maintained a poker face.

Yoo-hyun blinked his eyes as if he didn’t know anything.

Then, he heard a deep sigh from Shin Chanyong, the section chief.

“Let’s stop here.”

“Thank you for your time, sir.”

But he had different thoughts inside.

Suck it up.

That was his true feeling.

Yoo-hyun’s inner thoughts were unknown to Shin Chanyong, who shook his head and got up from his seat.

“That’s enough.”

“Yes, sir.”

Yoo-hyun’s eyes sparkled.

Shin Chanyong returned to his office with a look of anger on his face.

He had taken the time to treat him to coffee, but the only answer he got was vague and ambiguous.

He couldn’t tolerate it, given his personality that demanded success and superiority.

But there was nothing he could do about it.

Yoo-hyun was still a new employee.

From Shin Chanyong’s perspective, there was no proper way to deal with him.

It was the same now.

Their eyes met, but Yoo-hyun acted nonchalant and calm.

It was obvious what he was thinking inside.

Yoo-hyun smiled brightly.

Park Seungwoo, the assistant manager, tilted his head at him.

“Why? Did something good happen?”

“No. Just curious. How did the meeting go?”

“Ha, don’t even ask. It was hell.”

Park Seungwoo looked exhausted as he placed his laptop on his desk.

But he didn’t have a moment to rest.

He had to prepare for the preliminary report to the team leader before the main report to the director.

As expected, Oh Jaehwan, the team leader, called him as soon as he saw him.

“Park!”

“Yes, sir.”

“When are you going to do it?”

“I just finished the meeting. I’ll get ready right away.”

It was understandable that he was annoyed, but Park Seungwoo smiled at Yoo-hyun.

He showed his concern for his junior colleague.

Yoo-hyun felt a pang in his chest.

He was such a person.

He was so kind and yet he...

It hurt him.

Yoo-hyun bit his lip secretly.

He seemed to worry about Yoo-hyun being alone, so he handed him the report materials as well.

“Here, take a look at this while you’re bored.”

“Thank you.”

Park Seungwoo patted Yoo-hyun’s shoulder and left his seat.

Meanwhile, Yoo-hyun hovered his mouse button over the file that came in by email.

He had a rough idea of what it was about, but it was his first time seeing the details.

His face hardened as he checked the report contents.

“...”

Click. Click.

It was a report with about 100 pages of attachments.

It showed how much he had worked hard between the clients, the development team, and the sales marketing for half a year.

The core of this report was about the production issue of PDA panels and how to deal with it.

Yoo-hyun shook his head at Park Seungwoo's conclusion on the summary page.

“This won't work.”

Of course, it was impossible to postpone the agreed schedule with the clients.

Cho Chanyoung, the director, would surely think so too.

It was a tight schedule from the start, but once they accepted it, they had to make it happen.

To do that, they had no choice but to pass on the unreasonable schedule to the development team and the vendors.

But Park Seungwoo had prepared a plan to ease their responsibility out of moral guilt.

It was realistic and righteous, but risky for him as a manager.

Cho Chanyoung would never accept it.

And he was right.

“Park! Are you really going to keep doing this!”

At that moment, a loud voice came from the team table.

Oh Jaehwan had started yelling at him just five minutes into the report.

Oh Jaehwan's position was understandable too.

He would be the one who suffered the most if things went wrong in the main report.

“Ha, this is not easy.”

Yoo-hyun sighed at the expected scene.

It was a doomed project from the start.

They would somehow produce a result, but the hardship would be indescribable.

He had experienced that in his past.

The most serious problem was that the product they had made with such difficulty eventually failed miserably.

The train was already speeding towards the wall.

Yoo-hyun wanted to get Park Seungwoo out of there somehow.

Not by force, but by finding a natural way to do so.

That was what he was thinking about.

Park Seungwoo came back to his seat with a blank expression.

He had been scolded all morning in the meeting and the report.

He was not in his right mind.

On top of that, Oh Jaehwan had ordered him to prepare the report again from scratch.

The main report was imminent, but what was Park Seungwoo thinking?

His eyes were unfocused.

Yoo-hyun knew the answer, but he asked him directly.

“Do you need any help?”

“Do I look that weak to you? Don’t worry. I’m Park Seungwoo.”

“I know. You’re my mentor.”

Yeah, he admitted that he had the mental strength to joke in this situation.

Yoo-hyun gave him a thumbs up and Park Seungwoo looked embarrassed and changed the subject.

“Let’s go eat.”

“Sure. Let’s go.”

They got up from their seats at the same time.

Hansung Tower basement floor.

There were not only company cafeterias, but also various franchise restaurants and famous restaurants.

They could eat at any restaurant they wanted and pay for their lunch on a monthly basis.

Park Seungwoo and Yoo-hyun preferred the company cafeteria.

It was cheap and fast.

The taste of food was not that important to them.

Park Seungwoo didn't have a refined palate anyway.

In fact, Yoo-hyun had eaten a lot of high-end food in his past, so he didn't see much difference between the company cafeteria and the outside restaurants.

Chapter 40

Park Seung-woo, the deputy, casually asked.

“How about Ilpumsik today? Is it good?”

“Yes. It's good.”

Yoo-hyun answered cheerfully.

Park Seung-woo quickly grabbed a small plate with two pieces of chicken on it and placed it on his own plate.

Then he asked the cook lady behind the counter with a cautious expression.

“Can I take one more?”

“No, you can't.”

He was taken aback by her firm answer and had no choice but to turn his head.

The cook lady, who had a blank expression, put two pieces of chicken on a small plate and placed it on the counter.

“Huh?”

At that moment, her eyes widened when she saw Yoo-hyun, who was standing behind him.

He was the employee who greeted her warmly when he was walking with Mi-ok unni a while ago.

He had a memorable face because he smiled brightly unlike the arrogant employees of the big company.

-He helped me when I fell down. If he hadn't, I would have been in trouble. He's such a kind person. If you ever see him, take good care of him. Give him some more side dishes or something.

Mi-ok unni, who was her close friend and worked as a cleaner in the same building, said that to her.

She had made up her mind to repay him someday after hearing Mi-ok unni's words.

And now, she had something to offer to him, who was standing in front of the main menu.

Thud.

She calmly placed another plate of chicken on Yoo-hyun's plate.

He was too smart not to notice that she deliberately gave him one more.

But he was puzzled because he didn't know her well.

"..."

Park Seung-woo, who had gone ahead, lost his words when he saw that scene.

The cook lady's eyes were still fixed on Yoo-hyun.

She even smiled brightly as if she was happy about something.

"What is this?"

He felt like he had been slapped by the cook lady of the rice soup restaurant.

There seemed to be something about him that made the ladies like him.

Whether he liked it or not, Yoo-hyun expressed his gratitude.

"Thank you."

"Oh, don't mention it. Enjoy your meal. And thank you."

"..."

He wanted to ask more, but there were people waiting behind him, so he couldn't talk for long.

The only thing he was sure of was that the cook lady showed her favor to him.

He didn't remember anything like this in the past.

He sat down and Park Seung-woo grumbled.

"Isn't this discrimination? We pay the same money, but some get one and some get two."

"Do you want it?"

"No, thanks. You're making me look like a beggar."

"Take it."

Yoo-hyun handed him the plate directly.

He seemed to be embarrassed and waved his hand.

"No, no. I said no. I don't like chicken."

“...”

As if that was true.

He knew very well that he loved chicken like a religion.

Park Seung-woo sighed and said with a flushed face.

“Let’s eat.”

It was an episode that happened because of a mere side dish in the cafeteria.

Yoo-hyun bit his lower lip and held back his laughter at Park Seung-woo’s mood swings.

He couldn’t stand it when Park Seung-woo delivered the final blow.

“Hey, are you laughing?”

“Pffft.”

“Huh? You’re laughing? If you don’t believe me, you can eat my chicken too.”

“Pahaha.”

Yoo-hyun couldn’t hold back anymore and burst into laughter.

In the cafeteria full of people, in front of his direct boss.

It was a mistake he would never have made in the past.

Did he ever laugh like this before?

No, he had everything: power, fame, money. But he never laughed so freely like this.

Park Seung-woo growled at him.

“Stop it. It’s chicken after work today. Got it?”

“Yes. Haha.”

“Let’s eat.”

He didn’t know why everything was funny to him for no reason.

Yoo-hyun laughed for a while and finally calmed down his emotions.

It was amazing.

He didn’t know he could laugh like this.

He felt like he had become someone else.

Yoo-hyun smiled inwardly once again.

It felt like he had found something he had lost.

After finishing his meal, Yoo-hyun thought of the cook lady at the counter as he went up.

‘What was that?’

She didn’t just give him a favor.

She definitely recognized him.

But he couldn’t remember any direct connection with her.

Yoo-hyun had no idea that it was a butterfly effect that happened by chance when he helped the cleaner lady.

And the butterfly effect didn’t end there.

The cleaner lady greeted him when he came out of the bathroom.

“Oh, you must be on your way back from lunch. You look better.”

“Thank you. Did you have lunch?”

“Of course, I did. Hohoho. Thank you.”

She always thanked him whenever she saw him because he helped her last time.

It was embarrassing to receive greetings for such a trivial thing.

So Yoo-hyun treated her more kindly.

And before he knew it, they became acquaintances who exchanged light greetings.

To the past Yoo-hyun, the cleaner lady was like a ghost.

He didn’t care whether she cleaned the bathroom, changed the water in the water purifier, or vacuumed the office.

He didn’t even remember her face even though they had been in the same space for years.

But now it was different.

She was so friendly that she even spoke to him affectionately.

“Have a good day.”

“Thank you.”

They looked at each other warmly and said goodbye.

He felt like he had been hit on the head.

He didn't know yet, but he felt like he had gained something.

It wasn't his intention, but it was one of the things that had changed from the past.

Someone was watching him.

It was Lee Ae-rin, the secretary of Jo Chan-young, the director.

Lee Ae-rin saw the new employee in front of her at the rest area on the 10th floor a while ago.

When the cleaner lady fell down, Lee Ae-rin was so shocked that her heart sank.

It would have been a disaster if no one had caught her.

But he saved her.

He didn't hesitate even though he might have been hurt himself.

And he even showed a gentle smile.

She was impressed by him.

And now, she saw someone else in the bright face of the cleaner lady.

She remembered the face of her nanny who had taken care of her like a mother when she was young.

Feeling emotional, Lee Ae-rin couldn't just let him pass by.

She wanted to say something to him.

"Mr. Han Yoo-hyun."

Yoo-hyun turned his head at the voice calling him.

A woman with long hair that reached her waist, a pale face and long eyes was smiling at him.

"Who are you?"

He pretended not to know, but Yoo-hyun knew exactly who she was.

Lee Ae-rin, an employee.

She was the one who got the most advanced information first because she often dealt with Jo Chan-young, the director, and other executives.

In other words, she was the information hub of the mobile sales marketing department.

She was also someone Yoo-hyun had tried hard to befriend in the past to get information from the executives.

But she was so prickly and rigid that it was hard to get close to her.

Even the team leaders treated Lee Ae-rin with difficulty.

That's how it was.

But something unexpected happened.

She smiled and treated him well.

She seemed to like him and wanted to help him, but he wasn't convinced why she was so different from the past.

What had changed?

His mouth moved involuntarily despite his thoughts.

“Thank you for your concern.”

“And you know...”

Lee Ae-rin's kindness continued.

Regardless of his doubts, Yoo-hyun politely agreed with her words.

She was someone who could definitely help his company life.

He didn't want to use her, but he wanted to be closer to her than in the past.

Lee Ae-rin became more interested in Yoo-hyun as they talked.

His posture was straight and his voice was soft but powerful. His eye contact was also neat.

He exuded a natural confidence that didn't look like a new employee at all.

She had a sense of people because she had dealt with many people.

If he had to compare Yoo-hyun with someone else?

He was similar to Yang Se-ho, the CEO.

He was a young CEO who pioneered the social commerce market in Korea, and he was one of the most impressive people she had ever seen.

It didn't make sense to compare a new employee with him, but Yoo-hyun had an aura that he felt from people who had their own positions.

And his white skin, attractive eye smile, and long fingers kept catching her eye.

‘Oh my, what am I thinking!’

She snapped out of it and racked her brain for what to say next.

She wanted to talk more and help him somehow.

“The meeting room schedule for this month is out. Do you know?”

“No.”

“It comes out once a month and it’s better to write it down quickly. Doesn’t your product planning team have regular meetings?”

“Yes. The biweekly report is on...”

“The second and fourth Thursday. I’ll just write it down for you.”

Lee Ae-rin ended up taking care of the meeting room that he had every week by herself.

She never did that for anyone else, even if the team leader of another team came personally.

But this time it was different.

Yoo-hyun was really grateful for that.

“Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it. It’s nothing.”

As he listened to Lee Ae-rin’s answer, Yoo-hyun recalled a vague memory.

The meeting room was still reserved by hand.

He felt again that the system was not yet established.

...

That day after work, Yoo-hyun went to the gym as usual.

He liked the rough breathing, the sweat smell, and the tension that squeezed his heart.

He felt familiar with all of that now.

Bang!

“Stop. That’s it!”

At the master’s words, Yoo-hyun lowered his fist that he had stretched out.

He felt a tingling sensation in his fingertips that felt good.

‘I got it.’

He felt more agile as he started to use his feet properly.

He could feel himself improving little by little.

He became more interested as his skills improved.

On the other hand, Park Young-hoon, who had been busy blocking Yoo-hyun’s punches, stuck out his tongue.

“Huff huff, I’m dying. Han Yu-hyun, why are you so tough?”

“It’s thanks to you, hyung.”

“You brat.”

He shook his head and bumped his fist against Yoo-hyun’s fist that he held out.