

Real Man 81

Chapter 81

At that moment.

Lee Chan-ho was frantically connecting his laptop to the projector in the conference room.

The email only said to attend the meeting, so he didn't even know he had to bring his laptop.

-If the youngest doesn't take care of it, who will? I have to make the materials and bring the laptop too?

That's what Byun Jin-woo, a senior manager of the sales team, said on the phone in the morning.

At first, he thought he only had to bring his laptop.

But what was this?

Somehow, he ended up presenting the materials that the sales team had asked him to compile.

And it seemed like they were pushing him to be the person in charge.

Byun Jin-woo, who had a friendly smile on his face, sat next to him and said.

"This is a good opportunity to impress the people from other groups. I'll help you if you need it."

"What? Yes."

"You can't be left out in this kind of situation. You have to show confidence in what you can do. You know what I mean?"

"Yes. I understand."

Soon, people from the TV, IT business unit marketing, and sales teams came in one by one.

There were also staff from the general affairs team who supported the exhibition and staff from the future product research center who were in charge of development.

If it was just a matter of displaying products, the product planning team could handle it with the development team.

But this case was different.

It was an official home appliance exhibition held in Berlin.

It was a place where they met with countless customers, so sales and marketing had to be done together.

And not only LCD panels, but also OLED panels that were being developed by the future product research center were demonstrated to show off their future technology.

There were many panels that Lee Chan-ho didn't even know about being displayed at the same time.

Could he really handle this meeting properly?

A question popped up in his head.

It was Yoo-hyun's turn to step up.

Before the meeting started, Yoo-hyun hurried over to Lee Chan-ho and whispered in his ear.

"The team leader told you to come back right away."

"What?"

"He was very angry. He asked why you were doing other department's work."

Lee Chan-ho was startled.

"Really?"

"He said you have to come with me within five minutes."

Yoo-hyun looked serious, making Lee Chan-ho more nervous.

Meanwhile, Byun Jin-woo, who was chatting with other people, revealed his intentions blatantly.

"This time, our youngest will be in charge. Please help him a lot. Haha."

"Of course. We're in the same business unit."

"Are you sure? It's a lot of work."

The opinions of other team members came in one after another.

They didn't seem to care much since it wasn't their work.

But there were some people who were worried.

However, Byun Jin-woo looked unfazed.

-Well done. It was our group's turn to be in charge, right? Don't bother yourself with annoying chores like being a person in charge. Just pass it on to another team.

The part leader even praised him for his good idea.

It was natural.

Preparing for an exhibition was no joke.

It was hard enough to take care of their own group, let alone the whole business unit.

He was indeed the person in charge of the European exhibition, but he had no reason to buy such trouble.

There were plenty of people who could work.

He just had to make them work and enjoy the sweet fruits himself.

Yoo-hyun helped Lee Chan-ho by adding a weight on his side by bringing in the team leader.

He responded to the opponent who pushed him with his rank with the same rank.

Now the choice was up to Lee Chan-ho.

Then, Byun Jin-woo poked Lee Chan-ho's side sharply.

“What are you doing? Start presenting already.”

“...”

“Don't you see people waiting? This is how you get recognized by the people in your business unit. This kind of opportunity is rare.”

Lee Chan-ho hesitated and said to Byun Jin-woo.

“I'm sorry. The team leader told me to come right away.”

“What are you talking about? Why now?”

“I have to go. I'm sorry.”

“Just put your name on it as a person in charge. I'll cover everything else for you.”

Yoo-hyun snickered inwardly as he listened quietly.

‘He's lying.’

Once your name is on as a person in charge, it's hard to change it later.

Changing it later would be a burden for even the team leaders.

Then it would not be a matter of person to person, but a matter of team to team.

Lee Chan-ho hesitated and wasted time, and eventually someone spoke up.

“Just let Senior Byun do it. He looks like he wants to do it anyway. Why are you pushing him so hard?”

“No, that’s not it. We agreed to do it this way...”

“Let’s hurry up. We’re all busy people.”

“Yes, sir. I’ll just talk to him for a moment.”

Byun Jin-woo smiled awkwardly and growled at Lee Chan-ho in a low voice.

“Are you really not going to listen to me?”

“I’m sorry. The team leader...”

“The team leader what? This is a group matter. And do you think the team leader will last longer than me?”

“I’m sorry.”

Lee Chan-ho bowed his head as if he was a sinner.

No, he didn’t do anything wrong, so why was he bowing his head?

And to someone who wasn’t even on the same team.

Yoo-hyun couldn’t stand it anymore and stepped in.

He put his phone to his ear and said.

There was no one on the other end of the conversation, of course.

“Yes, sir. I was just about to take Senior Chan-ho back. Yes. I understand.”

“...”

Byun Jin-woo had nothing to say because he heard the voice clearly.

He couldn’t hold him back when the team leader called him.

He eventually gave up and waved his hand.

“Fine, fine. Why would I bother with a kid like you? Sigh...”

“I’m sorry. I’ll go then.”

Lee Chan-ho apologized and left his seat.

Lee Chan-ho, who returned to his seat, still had a doubtful feeling.

‘What the hell happened?’

He asked Yoo-hyun again if the team leader really said that, but the answer was the same.

Was it true?

He tried to ask the team leader, but he wasn't at his seat.

It was absurd.

Lee Chan-ho was lost in thought for a while.

A little later.

Kim Hyun-min, the manager, called Lee Chan-ho and scolded him.

“Hey, you should have told me in advance.”

“I'm sorry.”

“I'm not asking you to apologize, I'm telling you not to write nonsense. You should have reported it if you were unsure.”

“Well...”

Lee Chan-ho had a lot to say.

It was partly Kim Hyun-min's fault that he couldn't report it.

He always told him to do it on his own, but how could he make a judgment?

Kim Hyun-min seemed to feel guilty as well and snapped at him.

“Hey, I'm asking for a report now. Just do it.”

“Yes. I understand.”

It was happening right behind him, so Yoo-hyun heard it.

Yoo-hyun asked Park Seung-woo, the assistant manager.

“Is Chan-ho senior free now?”

“Maybe he is?”

“I heard the mockup was really hard. It would be nice if he could help us.”

“Right? I think so too.”

Park Seung-woo nodded with a responsible face and got up from his seat.

Then he walked briskly toward Kim Hyun-min and poked his side.

“What? Why? Do you want me to assign Chan-ho to you?”

“Yes. There's no one with more mockup experience than him.”

Good job.

He should praise him like that when he gave him work.

That way, the worker would feel motivated.

“Are you just saying that?”

“Hey, if the contest goes well, we’ll share the prize.”

“Oh, really?”

If there was a proper reward added to that, there was nothing to complain about.

Who would refuse a reward even if the chance was low?

It was like feeling good when a friend who bought a lottery ticket said ‘I’ll give you half if I win’.

Especially if he could get recognition in the process, it would be perfect.

He hadn’t even started yet, but Lee Chan-ho’s eyes sparkled.

Kim Hyun-min asked him.

“Chan-ho, do you have more preparations for the exhibition?”

“If we only do ours, we’re done.”

“What do you want to do? Do you want to try the contest?”

“I don’t know.”

He was hesitant to take on the work suddenly.

Well, whatever. He should step up at times like this.

Yoo-hyun, who had approached from behind, pushed Park Seung-woo slightly.

It was to push him forward.

At the same time, as if they had planned it, his mouth opened.

“I thought about giving it to Yoo-hyun, but it’s not an easy task. Chan-ho, please help me out. It will be rewarding as much as it is difficult.”

“...”

“I think you can do well too. I saw your data and you prepared well. What do you think?”

“...I’ll try.”

When Kim Hyun-min asked again, Lee Chan-ho finally nodded.

From his perspective, who wanted to do challenging and leading work, this was more meaningful than preparing for the exhibition.

As soon as the words fell, Park Seung-woo smiled brightly and grabbed Lee Chan-ho's hand tightly.

"As expected! I trust you, Chan-ho."

Kim Hyun-min asked with a tongue click.

"Then what about Yoo-hyun?"

"He has something else to do in his own way."

"What is it?"

"There's something like that. I'll show you later."

Park Seung-woo smiled at Yoo-hyun with his eyes.

Yoo-hyun returned to his seat and recalled Park Seung-woo's words.

-You look into the internal design a bit. No one here knows anything about it, so even if you do a little bit, there won't be anyone who knows better than you.

What he asked Yoo-hyun to do was the phone screen design.

The color phone concept had to match the icons and wallpapers with the phone color to create harmony.

That was his conclusion after seeing Yoo-hyun's Channel Phone 2 demo.

It was true that Yoo-hyun inspired him, but Park Seung-woo accepted it.

Yoo-hyun gladly agreed to his request.

But before that, he was worried about the mockup that Lee Chan-ho was doing.

After all, the mockup and the internal design were inseparable.

It wasn't enough to just show an image, it had to be a mockup that could implement a realistic UX (user experience).

No matter how experienced Lee Chan-ho was in making mockups for LCD panels, he couldn't think of running a phone as well.

He needed a way to broaden his perspective.

Yoo-hyun had an idea in mind.

'Semi Electronics.'

It was a place he had considered since he met his senior from school, Lim Han-seop.

It was also where his hometown friend, Kang Jun-ki, joined as a new employee.

It was a company that had the technology to make phones as well as MP3 and PMP.

If they made a mockup there, it would be different.

They could produce a result that was more than just a simple screen operation made by the existing LCD division.

At that moment.

There were two men talking in a corner of the rest area.

The face of one man, who had been flushed with anger, gradually calmed down, as if a storm had already passed.

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay. It’s not your fault, Byun. It’s because the sales team’s tail is so weak.”

“No, no. I have to...”

“Oh, the team leader got involved too. It’s not easy to let go. You take responsibility for this exhibition. Don’t let the other part members interfere.”

“Yes. I understand.”

He spoke softly, but Byun Jin-woo, team leader, felt creepy.

Chapter 82

He knew the style of Song Ho-chan, the leader of the mobile group, better than anyone else.

He could be kicked out mercilessly if he made even a slight mistake here.

“Who interfered with it?”

“It’s... a new employee from the product planning team. His name is Han Yoo-hyun.”

“Isn’t he the one who transferred the Hyunil Automobile project to the product planning team? How did he do that?”

“I heard he answered the phone by mistake...”

“He answered the phone by mistake? Damn it, this is the third time I hear about that damn new employee. Do you think this is a coincidence?”

The Hyunil Automobile project, the PDA meeting, and now this exhibition.

Every time, something unexpected happened.

He didn't think that the product planning team, which was nothing special, had changed because of a new employee.

But Song Ho-chan couldn't shake off his uncomfortable feeling.

"Keep an eye on him. I have a feeling he'll cause more trouble in the future."

"Yes. I understand."

At the same time, in the same place.

Two women sitting at a table across from an empty table were listening to their conversation with their ears perked up.

They were Jo Mi-ran, an employee from the marketing team, and Lee Ae-rin, her assistant.

"Unni, are they talking about Yoo-hyun? What are they saying?"

"Well..."

She couldn't tell exactly what they were saying, but it was clear that Yoo-hyun was being mentioned in a negative way.

And the speaker was none other than Song Ho-chan, one of the three devils of the mobile group.

Lee Ae-rin relaxed her tense expression and called Jo Mi-ran.

"Mi-ran."

"Yes. What is it?"

"Do you want to have dinner with Hyemi from the sales team tonight? I know a nice place."

"Hoho, anywhere is fine if you recommend it."

Jo Mi-ran smiled brightly, and Lee Ae-rin followed suit.

Her fist under the table was clenched tightly.

'How can I tell him?'

...

Yoo-hyun was wondering how to introduce Semi Electronics to Lee Chan-ho.

He could have narrowed down Lee Chan-ho's choices by introducing someone he knew.

But what Yoo-hyun wanted was not for Semi Electronics to succeed.

He wanted Lee Chan-ho to make the right choice and ultimately prepare well for the competition.

As he was thinking about it, a phone call came in.

It was from his hometown friend and Semi Electronics new employee Kang Jun-ki.

Yoo-hyun smiled and answered the phone.

“Hey, Jun-ki.”

-Kid. You answered right away. You must not be busy.

“Of course I have to answer when you call.”

-Thanks. You said you’d see me once, but you don’t have time.

A light conversation went back and forth pleasantly.

But Kang Jun-ki’s voice wasn’t very cheerful.

“What’s wrong?”

-It’s nothing... Actually...

Kang Jun-ki calmly told him what was on his mind.

It wasn’t about the difficulties of being a new employee or living in a strange city like Seoul.

It was about his best friend Kim Hyun-soo.

-Hyun-soo asked me about investing. He seems to have a lot of money to invest.

“Really? Did you ask him why?”

-Well. He said he was curious because everyone around him was investing in stocks or something. But what do I know? You’d know better than me.

“Tell him to call me.”

Yoo-hyun heard Kang Jun-ki’s awkward voice.

-I don’t think he’d be comfortable with that.

“Why?”

-Just... From his perspective, it might be like that. You’re obviously very busy and he might feel like he’s bothering you. I’m easygoing as you know. Haha.

“Okay. I’ll try to talk to him.”

Yoo-hyun’s expression was filled with anxiety as he hung up the phone.

He couldn't get rid of the thought that something might be wrong.

Kim Hyun-soo had been mature and reliable since he was young.

He always acted like a leader among his friends.

He was investing?

Yoo-hyun immediately searched for Kim Hyun-soo in his phone contacts.

Then he moved to the corridor next to his office and pressed the call button.

After several rings, Kim Hyun-soo's voice came through.

His voice was hoarse, as if he was very tired.

-Hey, Yoo-hyun. What's up?

"I just heard you were looking into investing."

-Ah... You heard it from Jun-ki.

"Yeah. You should have asked me too."

He tried not to show it, but he felt hurt.

He knew Kim Hyun-soo wouldn't ask for help first.

That's why he always told him to let him know if he needed anything.

-Sorry. I was... too busy.

"Sorry for what."

-...Sorry.

Now was not the time to argue over something like that.

The important thing was why Kim Hyun-soo needed money.

If he asked directly, he might hide it more, so Yoo-hyun was careful.

He talked about investing while paying attention to the background noise on the other side of the phone.

He hoped to get some clues that could help him figure out what was going on.

"Tell me more."

-...I heard that you can make money if you invest in stocks or something. I don't know much about that stuff.

"I see. I don't know much either, but I know someone who's an expert."

-Really? Then can you connect me to that person? I can trust them if you know them.

Yoo-hyun felt uneasy when he heard Kim Hyun-soo's voice speed up.

What the hell happened to make him so impatient?

Yoo-hyun had also been in a tough situation when he had debts at home.

He didn't tell his friends because he was ashamed and didn't want to be pitied.

He didn't know what it was, but he understood how he felt.

Then Yoo-hyun heard a noise in his ear.

-Rrrrrrrr.

The sound of something being dragged along the hallway.

-Beep beep beep beep beep.

A repetitive high-pitched sound.

-Hurry up and call the doctor. The patient's condition is bad.

A decisive female voice was heard.

'A hospital?'

It wasn't hard to guess where he was.

But Yoo-hyun pretended not to know.

"Let's talk while we see each other. I'm going to my hometown today anyway."

-Huh?

"Don't tell me you're busy. If you're busy, I'll go to your car center."

-That's... I'm somewhere else right now.

"Where are you?"

Yoo-hyun asked impatiently.

Which hospital was it?

Why did he suddenly need money because of a hospital?

Did he close his car center?

-Seoul.

As expected.

Yoo-hyun answered cheerfully.

“Oh, that’s close. Shall we meet right now?”

-Huh? Aren’t you at work?

“No, I’m on vacation. Just tell me when you’re free. I’ll be there right away.”

He couldn’t give him time to think at a time like this.

Yoo-hyun managed to set a meeting time by taking advantage of Kim Hyun-soo’s hesitation.

He couldn’t take his eyes off the phone screen with his name on it after hanging up.

He wasn’t sure, but there was a high chance that Kim Hyun-soo’s mother was sick.

In the past, Yoo-hyun didn’t even go to his best friend’s mother’s funeral because he was busy.

On the other hand, Kim Hyun-soo stayed at the funeral hall for three days for his selfish friend’s mother who he hadn’t seen in a long time.

He owed him a lot.

And now it was his turn to pay him back.

Park Seung-woo, his mentor, asked him what was wrong when he returned to his seat.

“What’s wrong?”

“Assistant Manager Park, what would you do if your friend asked you for help?”

“Huh? Of course I’d help him.”

“What if he needed money?”

“Money? If he’s a close friend, I’d lend him as much as I can.”

Yoo-hyun asked again.

“They say you can lose a friend over money. You might worry that he won’t pay you back.”

“That’s why you have to think of it as a gift, not a loan. As much as you can afford. Isn’t that worth it for a close friend? Anyway, that’s what I think.”

“Yes. You’re right.”

In the past, Yoo-hyun cared more about success and money than his friends.

He also kept his distance from them for the same reason.

But Park Seung-woo was different.

After thinking for a moment, Yoo-hyun made up his mind.

“Assistant Manager Park, I’ll take a vacation today.”

“Now? Did you tell the team leader?”

“No. Not yet.”

“He’s a bit picky. Do you want me to tell him?”

Yoo-hyun politely declined.

“No. It’s my business.”

Yoo-hyun reported to Kim Hyun-min, the leader of the mobile group.

He agreed without asking any questions.

He was very flexible in this regard.

That’s when Oh Jae-hwan, the team leader, came back to his seat.

Screech.

He pulled his chair roughly and sighed deeply.

“Puhoo...”

He looked dark, as if he had been scolded by Jo Chan-young, the director.

The team members knew better than to bother him at this time.

It wasn’t the right timing.

But he couldn’t postpone it either.

Yoo-hyun approached the team leader’s seat and said,

“Team leader.”

“Oh, can you wait a bit if it’s not urgent? Let me smoke one cigarette.”

“I’m sorry. It’s urgent.”

Yoo-hyun’s words made the team leader frown.

He snapped back with a sharp voice.

“What is it?”

“I’d like to take a vacation today.”

“Now?”

“Yes.”

“Haha, is this a joke? You know you have to tell me a week in advance if you want to take a vacation, right? Let me ask you why. What’s going on?”

If he said he had to meet a friend, he would have to explain more.

He could lie, but he didn’t want to do that.

“I’m sorry. It’s personal. I got confirmation from Assistant Manager Park Seung-woo, my mentor, and I also told the leader of the mobile group.”

“That doesn’t matter. You don’t seem to know this since you’re new here, but there’s a procedure in this company. A procedure.”

Bullshit.

There was no such procedure.

He expected it, but Oh Jae-hwan was too stubborn.

There was no choice but to use the method he didn’t want to use.

As Yoo-hyun was about to open his mouth,

“Hey, team leader. There’s no procedure for taking a vacation. You just take it when you need it.”

“Hey, LeaderKim! You keep doing this and the team members will lose their sense of discipline.”

“What are you talking about? Discipline over something like this? Hahaha.”

“This is not funny.”

Kim Hyun-min gestured to Yoo-hyun with his hand.

‘Go, go quickly.’

He also winked at him.

Even though he thought he wouldn’t look good to the team leader, he couldn’t help feeling pressured.

But he couldn’t refuse when he had set up the situation for him.

‘Thank you.’

Yoo-hyun bowed his head.

“Then I’ll be back.”

The people looked at Yoo-hyun with wide eyes as he left.

He felt the stares of misunderstanding from everywhere.

They must think he had no manners.

They might even curse him for bringing up the past incident.

He didn't care.

He wouldn't have done this in the past.

But now it was different.

He wasn't afraid of the team leader's low evaluation, nor did he fear the others' eyes.

He was just looking for his rightful right in a rightful matter.

Yoo-hyun walked out more confidently than anyone else.

"Damn..."

Meanwhile, Kim Hyun-soo bit his lower lip after hanging up the phone.

He ended up agreeing to meet Yoo-hyun.

"Mom, I'll go wash up."

"Okay. Wash up and eat well. I'm fine."

His mother, who was lying on the bed, waved her hand for him to go.

Kim Hyun-soo asked his younger brother to take care of their mother and went outside.

He washed and shaved in the makeshift shower room, but he was still exhausted.

Chapter 83

He had been suffering a lot these days.

It was about two weeks ago when he found out that there was something wrong with his mother's health.

He rushed to a hospital in Seoul and got a diagnosis that his mother had a heart problem.

The problem was that the tests and surgery cost a lot of money.

He didn't have enough money to afford such a big surgery with his poor situation.

He tried to borrow some from his relatives, but they cut off even the occasional contact they had.

That's when he realized.

How scary money was.

Even his closest relatives were like that, so there was hardly anyone he could borrow money from as a young man.

He barely scraped together 20 million won.

It was the money he got by putting up his father's debt-ridden car center as collateral.

But he knew that this was not enough to survive.

Even if the surgery went well, he needed at least 30 million more for the expenses afterwards.

He looked into investing as a last resort.

He knew that the chances were slim.

It wasn't really that he wanted to make money with it, but rather that he just wanted to have one more option.

But then his friend came.

What if Yoo-hyun knew about this?

He knew his friend's personality well enough to know that he would try to help him right away.

Kim Hyunsoo was not a fool.

He knew what his friend's family situation was like, and that a new employee who just started working had no money.

He didn't want to pass on his debt to his friend.

"What should I say..."

He checked the time for their meeting and quickened his pace while muttering to himself.

Yoo-hyun sent a message to Lim Hanseop while on the move.

He told him to send a proposal to Lee Chanho about the smartphone mockup.

He didn't know how Lee Chanho would react, but he was sure that his vision would broaden if he saw the proposal from Semi Electronics.

The choice was a matter for later.

Ding-dong.

The subway door opened and Yoo-hyun quickly climbed up the stairs.

30 minutes before the meeting time.

Yoo-hyun went to a nearby hospital instead of the cafe where they were supposed to meet.

Seongil General Hospital.

It was where Kim Hyunsoo was most likely to be.

He could have asked him beforehand, but he didn't want to pry without seeing his face first.

5 minutes before the meeting time, a man ran frantically through the lobby on the first floor corridor.

His face was pale and his hair was messy, but there was no problem recognizing who he was.

“Hyunsoo! Kim Hyunsoo!”

Was it because of Yoo-hyun's call?

He stopped running and looked around.

And then he met Yoo-hyun's eyes.

His pupils grew bigger.

“Yu, Yoo-hyun. How, how did you...”

“They said the coffee here is better.”

“...”

“What are you doing? Not going.”

“...”

Yoo-hyun tried to smile and dragged him to a coffee shop in the basement.

Sitting in the coffee shop, Kim Hyunsoo looked restless. Yoo-hyun opened his mouth first.

“Green tea is good, right?”

“Yeah, sure.”

They exchanged some simple greetings while walking, but Kim Hyunsoo's eyes still looked complicated.

He must have a lot of questions, but he was holding back.

Sitting down, he asked Yoo-hyun.

“How did you know?”

“What?”

“That I’m here.”

“Just. I stopped by.”

Kim Hyunsoo sighed deeply and didn’t ask any more questions.

He just stared blankly at the wall.

Yoo-hyun brought coffee and green tea and waited for him to open his mouth.

But he didn’t say anything until then.

However, his fingers rubbing the edge of the tablecloth or his hand stroking his neck showed how anxious he was.

Yoo-hyun handed him the green tea and then his mouth opened.

“Thanks.”

He tried to lift the corners of his mouth with a smile, but his eyes remained the same.

His voice tone and fast blinking revealed how much stress he was under right now.

‘Just tell me. Why are you keeping it inside?’

What a dull guy.

In the end, Yoo-hyun asked first.

“Is your mother okay?”

“...”

Yoo-hyun didn’t miss Kim Hyunsoo’s shaking eyes.

He was right.

Then he had to make sure and move on.

It was a matter of life and death for his beloved friend’s mother.

Yoo-hyun straightened his posture and said.

“Hyunsoo, just tell me. I told you I want to help you if you have any trouble.”

“...It’s not like that.”

“I don’t know what’s going on, but how would you feel if I were in your position?”

“...”

“Hyunsoo.”

He must have thought he couldn't avoid it anymore.

He sighed and closed his eyes tightly. He finally opened his mouth.

“Just. She's a little sick.”

“Where?”

“Her heart. I'm such a bad son. Sigh...”

Yoo-hyun listened to his story quietly.

He went to the hospital because of Yoo-hyun's suggestion to get a health checkup for his parents at the last drinking party.

That's when he found out that there was an abnormal sound in his mother's heart.

He moved to another hospital because it was something that a small hospital couldn't handle.

It was Seongil General Hospital.

He had more tests here and heard the results a few days ago.

Kim Hyunsoo blamed himself for ignoring his mother's complaints of chest tightness.

Who could have known that?

Yoo-hyun comforted him.

“Don't think like that. It's good that you found out now.”

“Yeah. Thanks to you, I got tested and found out... I couldn't even thank you.”

“Don't say that and get up if you're done with your tea.”

“Are you leaving already?”

“Yeah. I came all the way here, so I have to say hello to your mother.”

He was a dull guy, so he couldn't wait for him.

“Ah...”

“What are you doing? Not getting up.”

Yoo-hyun nudged him and Kim Hyunsoo followed him reluctantly.

He seemed to be thinking hard, but he had no reason to refuse.

It was not a bad thing to visit a friend's parent.

Yoo-hyun smiled and said.

“Let's go.”

Yoo-hyun went up to the first floor and looked for the items he had left at the lobby.

It was a fruit basket that he had bought in case he visited someone.

“I need to pick up something I left here earlier.”

“Did you plan this from the start?”

“Of course. Did you think I would come empty-handed for a visit?”

“I didn't say anything...”

“I heard it in your heart. Aren't we friends?”

“Enough. Stop talking.”

Kim Hyunsoo stuck out his tongue as Yoo-hyun answered cheerfully.

In fact, he felt good inside that his friend cared for his mother so warmly.

A faint smile appeared on Kim Hyunsoo's lips, which had been stiffened by the stress.

Yoo-hyun entered the fifth floor ward and greeted Kim Hyunsoo's mother.

She smiled brightly as she lay in her hospital gown.

“Oh my, Yoo-hyun, it's been a long time. It feels like yesterday when you were a little kid with curly hair.”

“Yes, mother. It's nice to see you again.”

Yoo-hyun tried to be as friendly as possible and chatted with Kim Hyunsoo's mother.

He also talked to Kim Hyunsoo's younger brother, who was standing idly by.

“You must be studying hard. I see calluses on your index finger.”

“Huh? Oh, yeah.”

“You have calluses and you don't even know? You're funny.”

Yoo-hyun led the conversation with his unique insight, and Kim Hyunsoo joined in comfortably.

Kim Hyunsoo's mother seemed happy to hear that her son was studying hard, and she covered her mouth with her hand and laughed.

'It's time to go...'

That's when it happened.

"Patient Shin Hyunmi."

They heard the nurse's voice and turned their heads. They saw an old doctor followed by residents and nurses.

They came to check on Kim Hyunsoo's mother.

"Should we get up?"

"Huh? Wait, there's something I couldn't tell you earlier."

"It's okay, Yoo-hyun. We can go later."

Kim Hyunsoo's mother intervened, so Kim Hyunsoo couldn't drag Yoo-hyun away.

Yoo-hyun stepped aside and pretended to talk to Kim Hyunsoo while listening carefully.

He added the doctor's words to the information he had heard from the nurse earlier, and he could figure out the rough situation.

The doctor mentioned surgery as well.

It seemed like an unexpected development for Kim Hyunsoo, who looked resigned.

After the doctor left, Yoo-hyun exchanged a few more words with Kim Hyunsoo's mother and left.

He sat on a bench in the hospital corridor.

Kim Hyunsoo had no choice but to sit next to him.

There was a moment of silence.

The first one to open his mouth was Yoo-hyun.

"You can tell me. I heard everything."

"...Yeah. You did, but it's not an easy surgery."

"But you have to do it."

"Mother keeps refusing it."

He said it calmly, but Yoo-hyun could tell how much he was struggling.

The financial aspect was probably part of his worries.

Yoo-hyun looked into his eyes and said.

“I’ll make sure she gets the surgery. Don’t regret it.”

“...Yeah, I guess so.”

Kim Hyunsoo loved his mother more than anyone else.

He wouldn’t want her not to have surgery.

It was money that was the problem.

Yoo-hyun wanted to lend him money right away.

But it wasn’t easy to bring up money to a friend who had been delaying telling him the news out of guilt.

“I’ll connect you with the investment expert you mentioned.”

“Thanks, Yoo-hyun.”

Instead, he promised to connect him with the investment expert he had mentioned before.

It was much better than getting involved with some other scammer.

Yoo-hyun finished the conversation and patted Kim Hyunsoo’s back silently.

He didn’t say anything like cheer up.

Instead,

‘I’ll definitely help you this time.’

He vowed in his heart.

Surgery cost 20 million won.

It was the price he got from searching online with the information he heard from the doctor.

Of course, it could vary depending on the hospital, but there wouldn’t be a big difference.

Plus, hospitalization fees, test fees, post-surgery rehabilitation fees, and living expenses while closing the car center.

He needed at least 30 million more at best.

It was exactly the amount he aimed for as profit: 30 million won.

“What a stubborn kid.”

Yoo-hyun chuckled and organized his thoughts.

How should he invest to turn 20 million won into 50 million won?

Kim Hyunsoo asked about investing because he had heard stories of people who easily made two or three times their money with things like Chinese funds.

Not only China, but the domestic stock market was also booming.

The KOSPI index broke 2,000 for the first time in history, and there were stocks that rose more than five times in a month.

But the party would soon end.

Yoo-hyun knew that better than anyone else.

Of course, there could be short-term soaring stocks, but Yoo-hyun didn't bother to remember them.

He could pick stocks that would rise in the future, but they were likely to be negative in the short term.

Then what?

Yoo-hyun immediately contacted Park Young-hoon, his senior in the army and a financial company employee.

-Hey, what's up with the call? You're not skipping exercise again, are you?

“No, actually...”

Yoo-hyun quickly got to the point.

-I see. Do you want me to put it in gold or dollars like you?

“Yeah. Just don't put it in stocks. Just do it like that.”

-But isn't 150% return too absurd? It seems hard to get even 5% a year like that. It would be lucky if it doesn't go negative.

He didn't know what he was talking about.

Soon, the subprime crisis would erupt and gold and dollars would rise sharply.

But that didn't mean he could get a 150% return.

It would only go up by 20-30% in the short term.

He could have taken a risky gamble, but if he messed up, it would be a big shock for Kim Hyunsoo.

Yoo-hyun didn't intend to make 150% with Kim Hyunsoo's investment money in the first place.

It was difficult and risky at this time.

Yoo-hyun just hoped that Kim Hyunsoo would make a steady profit for a long time.

That way, he could have some hope.

“Just take it. Don't worry about the return.”

-Alright. I'll call you later.

“Okay. I'll let you win once when we spar next time.”

-You crazy. You're no match for me!

Yoo-hyun laughed softly and hung up the phone.

Chapter 84

The next day, Yoo-hyun went to the company and immediately printed out his employment certificate.

Then he went straight to Oh Jae Hwan, the team leader.

“Team leader, I'm taking a vacation today.”

“What? Do you have something urgent again?”

“Yes.”

As Yoo-hyun said that, Oh Jae Hwan snorted as if he was incredulous.

He soon looked at Yoo-hyun with a venomous glare.

He was about to unleash his sarcasm when Park Seung Woo, the assistant manager, intervened and bowed his waist.

“Team leader, I gave him permission.”

“What are you doing?”

“This guy has a really important thing to do today. Hehe.”

He rubbed his hands and caught Oh Jae Hwan's gaze, then winked at Yoo-hyun.

‘Go quickly.’

After Kim Hyun Min, the deputy manager, it was Park Seung Woo, the assistant manager.

Yoo-hyun was very grateful.

“It will be over today. I’ll let you know in advance next time.”

So he bowed more politely to Oh Jae Hwan.

The place where Yoo-hyun headed right away was the bank.

It was to prepare the money that Kim Hyun Soo needed.

In the past, he had enough money to save, but now he had no choice but to borrow from the bank.

It was a hard thing for Kim Hyun Soo, but it was not difficult for Yoo-hyun.

Yoo-hyun had a solid credit from Hansung Electronics.

Ding dong.

“Customer number 128.”

Yoo-hyun sat down in the seat where his number was called.

He looked up at the bank clerk in front of him.

It was a skinny man with round horn-rimmed glasses.

-Bank of Seoul Clerk Eun Jong Ho

As soon as he saw the name tag on his chest, a man’s face popped up in Yoo-hyun’s head.

The face of a chubby middle-aged man without glasses overlapped with the face of the young man in front of him.

Eun Jong Ho, the branch manager who had been in charge of Vice President Han Yoo-hyun in the past, opened his mouth.

“Nice to meet you, customer.”

“Yes, nice to meet you.”

Yoo-hyun smiled slightly.

It was because of the conversations he had exchanged with him in the past.

What would young Eun Jong Ho look like?

“A loan? Oh, you’re from Hansung Electronics. Please wait a moment.”

Eun Jong Ho took Yoo-hyun’s ID card and employment certificate and raised his eyebrows quickly, then smiled brightly.

He didn’t have his usual arrogance, but his friendly tone was unchanged from then or now.

“How much do you want?”

“Here.”

“Oh, you’ve already filled it out. You’re fast.”

He still had his cunning side.

If it were his personality, he would have made a fuss at this point.

“Are you buying a house or a car? Can I ask where you’re using it?”

“...”

As expected.

He used to be careful with his words when he dealt with Yoo-hyun, who was the vice president back then, but he showed his true colors to the new employee in front of him.

If you just look at the characteristics listed, he was close to being disqualified as a trading partner.

Of course, he had his merits too.

The most appealing thing was that he put the customer’s interests first.

Thanks to the advanced information he gave him, Yoo-hyun also had some fun.

Yoo-hyun shook his head as he recalled his past self who was intoxicated by money and success.

“Ah, I’m just curious because you don’t seem to have been working for long. You don’t have to answer me.”

“I’m lending some money to a friend.”

“Ah... A friend. Your friend must need money urgently.”

It sounded like he was just asking, but he looked very sorry.

Then he pulled his chair closer and pressed his chest against the edge of the table.

He leaned forward and looked at Yoo-hyun as if he was going to scold him.

“Yes. Very urgently.”

“Hmm... I shouldn’t say this, but I don’t know if I can ask you. Can I say it?”

“Please do.”

“Yes. If I may be nosy, it’s better not to do money transactions between friends. You might lose your friend and your money that way.”

“I’m thinking of lending it as if I’m losing it.”

Yoo-hyun said without hesitation.

That's what he really thought.

He asked back.

“Isn't that too much? Is your friend worth that much?”

“Yes. Of course.”

As Yoo-hyun smiled brightly, Eun Jong Ho tried to say something more, but just scratched his head.

“Ah, I just said that in case you regret it later.”

“I think I'll regret it if I don't lend it.”

“I see. That's possible too.”

He said that, but he looked like he didn't understand at all.

Yoo-hyun didn't want to force his thoughts on him.

Everyone has their own life.

When the loan work was almost done, Yoo-hyun handed him a paper with an account number on it.

“Please put the money I borrowed here right away.”

It was Kim Hyun Soo's account number that he found out through Park Young Hoon.

He said he was sending a lot of money at once, and Yoo-hyun's words came to his mind again.

He looked at Yoo-hyun once and asked.

“Here? Really?”

“Yes. Please do that.”

“Yes.”

“The rest of the money goes here.”

What Yoo-hyun told him next was the investment account that he had asked Park Young Hoon to trade.

Of course, it was under Yoo-hyun's name.

“Yes, it's been processed well.”

But he still seemed to not understand, and he kept licking his lips.

Yoo-hyun chuckled and got up from his seat.

“Thank you.”

“Yes. Go ahead.”

Yoo-hyun bowed politely and turned around.

His steps were unusually light.

In fact, he invested himself while lending money to Kim Hyun Soo.

He didn't want to make a lot of money.

He just wanted to get back at least the money he gave to Kim Hyun Soo.

He didn't want to live in debt at least.

It was just the minimum.

Money was a later problem.

He lost everything because of that damn money.

It wasn't time yet, he judged.

Seoul was crowded even on weekdays during the day.

The place where Yoo-hyun went as soon as he stepped foot was Myeongdong.

Yoo-hyun entered a cafe in a corner of the alley.

Ding.

The bell that rang every time he opened the wooden door was not much different from 10 years ago.

-I really liked this bell sound. It feels old-fashioned but also sophisticated.

Someone in the past loved the coffee that the owner gave him.

Yoo-hyun, who received coffee from the younger owner than before, sat in the corner seat where he and she often sat.

The interior had changed, but the layout was the same.

“It's a shame.”

It would be enough if you were here.

Yoo-hyun took a sip of coffee and looked at the empty chair across from him.

He had his first date here, but he also had his first fight here.

Thinking about it, it was a bitter memory like coffee.

Still, he wanted to go back to those days.

If he went back?

Just as he made a different choice for Kim Hyun Soo, he wanted to show her a different side of him.

So he wanted to restore their relationship that had gone wrong.

As he had promised at first.

He didn't see her anywhere until his coffee cup was almost empty.

It was natural.

There are so many coffee shops in Seoul, why would she come here?

Yoo-hyun just came here because of his memories with her.

He didn't have any other places to go to find her, except here.

He was about to put the cold coffee cup to his mouth again.

Jiing.

The phone on the wooden table rang.

It was Kim Hyun Soo's number.

"Hey, Hyun Soo."

-This is not right, Yoo-hyun.

He knew what he was talking about, but Yoo-hyun pretended not to know.

"What?"

-What do you mean what? This money.

"Oh, you said you would invest and pay it back. So I sent it in advance."

-Hey! Does that make sense?

Yoo-hyun briefly took his ear off the phone and then held it again.

"What doesn't make sense? Did you think I was going to rip you off?"

-No, that's not it...

"Then just take it."

-Why? Why should I take it? Tell me your account number.

You ignorant kid.

He knew this would happen.

He said this while knowing that it wasn't the time to be proud.

“Just keep it or throw it away.”

-What?

“Hyun Soo, I know how you feel, but just swallow your pride and take it. You need money. I don't need this money, what's wrong with using it for a while?”

-But... this is too much.

The money Yoo-hyun sent was 30 million won.

It was a large amount, but it was not a pity for Yoo-hyun at all.

“Just put it away. If you really want to, you can pay me back. Just finish your surgery well, let Hyun Sik study comfortably, and that's all you need.”

-...

“Hyun Soo, I'm going to take that money. I'll definitely get it back. You know what I mean?”

-Yeah... Thank you. I'll pay you back no matter what happens to me.

Yoo-hyun scratched his ear with a sheepish feeling.

“Kid. Why are you yelling and hurting my ears?”

-Hey, that, that's...

“That's enough. You must have closed your car center to take care of your mother, so give a heads up to your regulars.”

-Huh?

“Tell them honestly what's going on.”

Kim Hyun Soo hesitated at Yoo-hyun's words.

-I just didn't want to burden them...

“I know. You have to work again when your mother recovers.”

-Thank you so much. Really...

“I'm going to hang up if you keep saying that.”

-No, I'm just so grateful...

Yoo-hyun just hung up on him.

He remembered him staying at his mother's funeral hall all day long in the past.

He felt like he had paid off some of the debt in his heart that he had always had.

I hope his mother's surgery goes well.

Jiing. Jiing.

The phone rang again right away.

Yoo-hyun thought about not answering it, but pressed the call button.

That's when Yoo-hyun's eyes caught the wooden wall on the left.

It was a wall full of graffiti.

-The fate of the other person is connected by a red thread.

It was not the handwriting that caught his mind, but the phrase itself.

It was a phrase he had heard many times before.

Yoo-hyun moved his eyes down a little more.

That was the moment.

"...I'll call you later."

-Yoo-hyun!

Thud.

Yoo-hyun hung up the phone right away.

Nothing else came into his eyes right now.

Only the signature that was scribbled in front of him filled his pupils.

"Sure."

A signature that made the Chinese character da (多) into a half-heart shape.

It was exactly the same as the cupid arrow that was stuck diagonally.

-It's a signature I made when I was young. I wanted to change it, but I got attached to it.

On the first date with her.

She left a signature on this wall and said that.

A thick smile appeared on Yoo-hyun's lips.

...

A few days later.

Yoo-hyun was standing in the lobby on the first floor of Hansung Tower.

Since some time ago, Yoo-hyun went down to the lobby every time the morning part meeting was over.

He didn't go there just because he was bored.

There was definitely a reason, and today was no exception.

The reception desk clerk, who was now familiar enough, greeted Yoo-hyun first.

"You came again? Do you have a meeting to wait for today?"

"Hello. I have to look for it."

"I hope you have one."

"Me too."

Yoo-hyun greeted him and stood next to him, looking at the TV screen.

Chapter 85

The list of reserved conference rooms in Hansung Tower scrolled by every 10 seconds.

He waited for a few rounds, but the meeting he was looking for did not appear.

And finally.

The first agenda that started at 9 a.m. showed the item he was waiting for.

-Progress report on the next-generation phone, Conference Room E, Reserved by: Kang Chang-seok

Yoo-hyun smiled when he saw the familiar name.

"Here we meet again."

His face was full of joy.

Sometimes he had lucky days.

Today was one of those days for Yoo-hyun.

Finding the meeting he had been waiting for was a pleasant thing, but even more so, the organizer of the meeting was his colleague from the same entrance year.

They were also in the same team during the new employee training.

They were not very close, but they were much better than strangers.

Yoo-hyun hurriedly moved his feet and wandered around the conference room.

He chose a spot where everyone passing by could see him.

As expected, it didn't take long for a familiar voice to be heard.

"Yoo-hyun!"

"Chang-seok hyung."

"Uh..."

Kang Chang-seok, who raised his hand, was about to greet him warmly, but hesitated.

He remembered the things that had happened with Yoo-hyun during the new employee training.

As if he knew Kang Chang-seok's complicated feelings, Yoo-hyun approached him first and greeted him warmly.

"Long time no see. Are you here on a business trip?"

"Uh, yeah. Yeah. How have you been?"

"I'm doing okay. It's not easy. How about you?"

"Ah... Yeah. Me too."

"You must have something very important to do since you came to Hansung Tower for your business trip."

Yoo-hyun teased him and Kang Chang-seok quickly asked him.

"Huh? What about you?"

"I'm here for a product meeting."

"Oh, already? You're amazing."

Kang Chang-seok's mood melted slightly at Yoo-hyun's compliment.

"Haha, amazing? I'm just here to do a simple presentation."

"Is it about the phone you're making? Wow."

"Huh? Oh, yeah. Haha, it's nothing."

Kang Chang-seok scratched his head awkwardly and laughed.

In fact, the presentation was nothing much.

He just delivered the data requested by the phone business division's product planning team and answered their questions.

He already knew enough, but Yoo-hyun asked him anyway.

"Can I ask you what it is?"

“Well. What I’m working on is...”

Kang Chang-seok excitedly told him his story.

“You’re doing something really interesting. You’re in charge of the advanced technology side.”

“It’s just a concept similar to PDA that I’m trying out. It’s not really a future technology, it’s more like a mishmash of various things.”

“Hey, that’s amazing.”

Yoo-hyun stuck out his thumb and Kang Chang-seok felt proud and said.

“You’ll get to do something good soon too.”

“I hope so. Your story is so interesting.”

“Yeah?”

“Yes. Really.”

“Haha, this is nothing.”

Yoo-hyun followed Kang Chang-seok and smiled faintly.

It felt like everything was going according to plan.

He only had to ask what he was curious about and he got answers right away.

“Hyung, can I ask you a few more questions? It’s so interesting.”

“What are you curious about?”

“Phone is much more complex than LCD panel. How do you manage your schedule?”

“Oh, that? It’s nothing. How I do it is...”

Thanks to that, he went a long way in one go.

He could see at a glance what he had to do next with Kang Chang-seok’s explanation.

Yoo-hyun showered him with praise with that feeling.

“That’s awesome.”

“Awesome? That’s just medicine. There’s more than that...”

It was a wish come true for Yoo-hyun, even if it was deafening to him.

He was very grateful to him for telling him everything without even asking.

What Kang Chang-seok was doing was making phone boards.

He was in charge of advanced technology and preparing for the next-generation product rather than the current one.

This meant that his team had a high chance of being involved in the next-generation model that won the contest.

It was the same last year and the year before that.

Yoo-hyun had already taken the first round of the contest for granted.

To pass the second round and the final, he had to match not only the panel but also the phone schedule.

In fact, it was impossible for a component company to adjust the schedule of the finished product of the customer company.

No matter how hard Yoo-hyun tried, he couldn't do that.

What Yoo-hyun could do was to match the release date of the color phone that he would submit to the contest as much as possible according to the progress of the phone business division.

For this, he needed the schedule of the next-generation phone product, and Kang Chang-seok gave him a hint.

He didn't know everything, but he could figure out enough about the internal situation with just a few words.

Kang Chang-seok finished his long explanation and took a breath.

"...Is that enough?"

"Yes. You're doing a really hard job."

"It's nothing."

He smiled lightly and glanced at his watch.

It had been 30 minutes since the meeting time, but the other party had not arrived yet.

He could have contacted them first, but he didn't seem to have the courage to do so.

He looked like a tough opponent.

Who was he that he was so nervous about?

Yoo-hyun was about to ask when it happened.

Kang Chang-seok bowed his waist stiffly as if he saw someone.

“Hello. I’m Kang Chang-seok.”

“Sorry, sorry. Did you wait long?”

“No, sir.”

Yoo-hyun slowly got up and checked the other person.

He saw thick eyebrows and glasses without frames that highlighted his sharp eyes.

It was not a familiar face, but a face he knew for sure.

Kim Sung-deok, Manager of the phone business division’s product planning team.

The moment he saw his face, Yoo-hyun clenched his fist tightly.

It seemed like today was a really lucky day.

“Hello.”

“Ah, this kid is...”

“This kid is...”

Timing is everything in greeting.

Yoo-hyun popped up and bowed his head, and Kang Chang-seok, who was startled, tried to introduce Yoo-hyun.

Of course, Kim Sung-deok reacted first.

“Who was it? I know him from somewhere...”

“I met you at the Channel Phone 2 meeting where Laura Parker attended.”

“Oh, the one who did the demo? Oh, right. Right.”

Kang Chang-seok looked bewildered for a moment.

Kim Sung-deok, the Manager, was one of the best people in the phone business division’s product planning team.

Even within the same phone business division, his influence was enough to sway the development direction.

How did he know a new employee from the LCD business division, which was nothing more than a component supplier?

What was more surprising was that Kim Sung-deok treated Yoo-hyun with a cheerful expression.

“Hahaha, I was going to contact you again. You did a great job back then.”

“It’s because you’re so excellent, Manager.”

“What are you talking about? If it wasn’t for you, it wouldn’t have been easy to change Laura Parker’s mind.”

“No way. It was all thanks to Assistant Manager Park.”

The conversation between them was very friendly.

They even looked very close.

The sharp eyes of Kim Sung-deok, who had always seemed fierce, softened a lot.

“Wow, you’re really humble. But what are you doing here? Do you know Chang-seok?”

“Yes, we’re colleagues from the same entrance year. I was curious about the next-generation phone he’s working on and listening to his story.”

“Really? Do you want to listen together? Is that okay with you, Chang-seok?”

“Yes? Oh, yes. Of course.”

Kang Chang-seok, who had been listening blankly, nodded reflexively at Kim Sung-deok’s question.

Somehow Yoo-hyun ended up joining the meeting.

Kang Chang-seok quickly connected his laptop to the TV and did the presentation he had prepared.

“The next-generation phone that our team is working on is...”

He was so nervous that he didn’t even remember what he said.

He had heard from his seniors that Kim Sung-deok’s criticism was very sharp.

He was sure to be crushed.

But the atmosphere flowed strangely.

Yoo-hyun joined in with a glance and supported him.

“The product roadmap is good. If you’re going to go with full-touch phones eventually, it might be good to lead the market with low-end models first.”

“Low-end full-touch phones... That sounds good, but touch panels are so expensive that they can be low-end?”

Kim Sung-deok tilted his head.

Of course, it was not a harsh reaction.

A free discussion followed instead of criticism when it should have come out.

And Yoo-hyun was leading the conversation.

“Actually, our team came up with an idea. We found out that the panel price drops by more than half.”

“Really?”

“We also heard that phones can actually become cheaper if they get rid of unnecessary buttons.”

“If you focus on the price, that might be true. Hmm, do you have any specific plans yet?”

Kim Sung-deok showed curiosity that he didn't show during the presentation.

He seemed to be hooked by Yoo-hyun's words.

Kang Chang-seok stared at him blankly.

Yoo-hyun threw out another answer as if he had been waiting for it.

“We're preparing for the phone business division's contest this time.”

“You mean the contest that our team is hosting?”

“Yes, that's right.”

“Let me see. It sounds good from what I hear. What do you think, Chang-seok?”

It was then.

Kim Sung-deok's question suddenly hit Kang Chang-seok.

His head felt blank.

He had to say something.

But he couldn't think of anything.

What should he do?

In this desperate situation, Yoo-hyun casually said something.

“Chang-seok hyung had an idea during the new employee training. It was the first place idea, and I think it would be good to connect it with this one.”

He winked at him with one eye.

Idea?

He suddenly remembered the team idea that he had opposed during the new employee training.

“Oh, you had such a talent? What was it?”

“It’s an idea to differentiate by putting character-shaped cases on monitors.”

Kang Chang-seok quickly answered Kim Sung-deok’s question.

“Really? It sounds familiar.”

“...”

Kang Chang-seok swallowed his saliva.

He saw Yoo-hyun nodding his head in his sight.

It felt like he could keep talking.

He felt a pull and opened his mouth.

“I think it would be nice to apply it to phones as well.”

“How?”

“We make our full-touch devices as light and slim as possible and then put cases on the edges like this...”

He was about to continue talking as if he was possessed.

Kim Sung-deok, who had been listening quietly, raised his lips.

“You had some thoughts.”

“Yes?”

“What you said just now is much better than the report you gave earlier. If you’re in the advanced technology team, you shouldn’t just do what your boss tells you, but have your own ideas.”

“Oh...”

While Kang Chang-seok was stammering, Kim Sung-deok wrapped it up.

“Anyway, give it a try. I liked your report today.”

“Th, thank you.”

Kang Chang-seok bowed his head quickly.

He thought he would be crushed, but he ended up getting praised.

He couldn’t help but feel good.

After Kim Sung-deok left, Yoo-hyun greeted Kang Chang-seok, who was sitting down and blinking his eyes blankly.

“Hyung, you were so cool today. Well, I’ll be going then.”

“Huh? Oh, Yoo-hyun.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you so much today.”

Thank you.

Kang Chang-seok didn’t know, but Yoo-hyun got two benefits from an hour of investment.

First.

The information about the advanced technology project that Kang Chang-seok was working on.

If the plan of his next-generation product team went as planned, they were already preparing a platform based on full-touch phones.

If they changed the board they were developing well, color phones could also be easily commercialized.

If he incorporated this part into the contest proposal, he could be prepared enough for the schedule tackle that would come out in the second round presentation.

Second.

The fact that he told Kim Sung-deok about the contest.

They say that arms bend inward, and if the results are similar, people tend to favor what they are familiar with.

As long as he belonged to the contest judging department, his influence was bound to have some effect.

At least there would be no reason to exclude the LCD business division’s idea.

This was enough to be a great achievement.

Chapter 86

Yoo-hyun was very grateful to Kang Chang-seok for being his leg.

“Thank you very much. I’ll contact you later.”

“Sure. Anytime. I’ll do anything you ask.”

“Okay. Don’t forget.”

“Of course. That’s obvious.”

“I’ll go now.”

Yoo-hyun smiled and got up from his seat.

A famous golf course near Gyeonggi-do.

A man swung his golf club.

Bang.

People clapped as they watched the ball fly far away.

“Director, nice shot.”

One of the men raised his thumb.

It was Lee Kyung-hoon, the head of the sales team.

An Jun-hong, the mobile group director, was not satisfied.

“It seems like it sliced a bit.”

“Didn’t it fall to a better spot on the course? That’s not something you can do on purpose.”

“Haha, Director An, you’re lucky. You have a subordinate who knows how to please you.”

Then, Yoon Jae-il, the senior manager of the LCD business division of Ilseong Electronics, who was holding a golf club next to him, chimed in.

“What about you, Senior Manager Yoon? You have Manager Sung who is sticking to you and assisting you.”

“Ah, Manager Sung is still lacking. Don’t you think?”

“Yes. He still has a lot to learn. Please teach him a lot.”

Manager Sung Deuk-soo of Ilseong Electronics bowed his waist.

Seeing that, An Jun-hong chuckled.

“Ilseong is really well-organized. I should learn from them.”

The atmosphere was friendly even after they played the ninth hole, at the dinner table afterwards, and at the sauna later.

On the surface, they were rivals and enemies who competed with each other.

But they looked like they needed each other in a symbiotic relationship.

In fact, they did.

In this meeting, which was formed by a sub-organization called Hangolmo (Korea University Alumni Golf Meeting), they shared each other's secrets and gained benefits.

They were people who didn't care about the company's profits as long as they survived.

"Hahaha, isn't Ilseong doing well these days?"

"It's all thanks to Director An."

"What are you talking about? We're helping each other out. Thanks to that, we're both holding the global market at the same time, aren't we?"

"Hahaha, yes. Come to think of it, we're all patriots."

They even wrapped their actions as patriotism.

There was no way that the senior executives of Hanseong Electronics LCD business division and Ilseong Electronics LCD business division gathered here for nothing.

Of course, they had something they wanted, and they were ready to give what they wanted.

They naturally showed their cards and talked happily.

Senior Manager Yoon Jae-il hinted at Director An Jun-hong.

"Director An, isn't there a panel that Hanseong is going to supply to Hyunil Automobile?"

"Oh, that? How's it going, Team Leader Lee?"

"Manager Jo passed it on to the product planning team. But it's not going well. Hyunil Automobile doesn't seem very satisfied with it."

"Haha, wasn't it fine when Team Leader Lee was in charge? Manager Jo seems to cause problems whenever he touches something."

"Yes. He seems to be working too amateurishly."

It was a perfect match.

When Senior Manager Yoon Jae-il subtly revealed his intentions, Director An Jun-hong casually spilled some internal information.

Manager Lee Kyung-hoon gave more details on that.

"Yes. It's still in development stage and there's no fixed quantity or price."

"I see. It's a minor thing, but Team Leader Lee should pay attention to it."

“Yes. I understand. Song Assistant Manager is in charge of it, so he’ll handle it without any problems.”

When Director An Jun-hong nodded his chin, Manager Lee Kyung-hoon looked at Senior Manager Yoon Jae-il and nodded his head.

Senior Manager Yoon Jae-il smiled at the corner of his mouth.

“That’s right. There’s something called reciprocity.”

“Then how about having a drink tonight?”

“Of course. Let’s go.”

Director An Jun-hong got up and everyone got up as if they had agreed.

There was trust in their eyes as they brushed past each other.

A few days later.

Lee Chan-ho brought the data he had printed himself and looked for Assistant Manager Park Seung-woo.

“This is the list of mock-up companies I researched.”

“I saw the email you sent me. It looked good.”

He seemed to be working hard on a simple report.

Yoo-hyun pulled a chair and peeked at the contents.

Semi Electronics was also on the list.

Assistant Manager Park Seung-woo pointed out that part and asked in surprise.

“Oh, Semi Electronics seems to have a good design, don’t they?”

“The problem is that they don’t have any collaboration experience yet. I’m going to visit them later.”

Lee Chan-ho picked out the exact part he needed.

He expected him to work hard, but it was more than he expected.

Not only that, but Assistant Manager Park Seung-woo was also the same.

“Haha, thanks. Let’s make something awesome.”

“Yes. I understand.”

He was busy with frequent overtime and business trips, but his face was always smiling.

Thanks to that, Lee Chan-ho, who was working with him, also felt refreshed.

Why did those two look happy even though they were busy?

Yoo-hyun knew the answer.

It was because they were doing their work proactively.

If they did something they didn't want to do, they could never smile like that.

Seeing this, it was not wrong to say that the reason why most employees quit their jobs was not because they were 'busy', but because they 'couldn't find meaning'.

Now the pieces were gradually fitting together.

The external part was somewhat lowered by Yoo-hyun.

He had almost caught the point, so he just had to help him sneakily at the important moment.

The problem was to implement the idea within the schedule.

The most worrying part was the consultation with the development department.

Assistant Manager Park Seung-woo was capable, but there were many variables.

It was not easy to verify the price reduction methods for the circuit, panel, and touch parts realistically.

Each of them could be a major project.

It was almost impossible to do it all by himself in a month.

He needed more people to do it realistically and pass the competition and make the product as soon as possible.

Assistant Manager Kim Young-gil was busy with the panel for the next-generation Apple phone and Apple pod.

Manager Choi Min-hee would be perfect if she could help him now, but she also seemed to have a lot of trouble with the navigation panel for Hyunil Automobile.

Yoo-hyun looked over the team schedule on the monitor.

This Thursday.

It was the day that Manager Choi Min-hee attended the meeting with Hyunil Automobile.

The final design of the panel that had been delayed for a long time would be decided that day.

He knew how much she had prepared for it.

The reports that he had seen in between were flawless.

But, the fact that the other party was Hyunil Automobile itself was a variable.

Hyunil Automobile was notorious for being abusive.

Just like they suddenly changed the panel they had been working on, they could also go back on their words.

A difficult meeting was expected.

What if she could finish this job properly?

It would be possible to put Manager Choi Min-hee in the competition.

She had already been working on the innovation of the touch part, so she would definitely be helpful.

“Alright, let’s do it.”

Yoo-hyun looked over the list of people who were going on the business trip.

The only person who was going on the trip was Manager Choi Min-hee.

There was enough room for Yoo-hyun to join in.

The problem was how to persuade Manager Choi Min-hee, who had a strong pride.

Yoo-hyun was organizing his thoughts when Manager Choi Min-hee called him herself.

“Yoo-hyun, do you want to have a cup of coffee?”

“Yes. Sure.”

It was a timely offer, so Yoo-hyun had no reason to refuse.

Inside the lounge on the 10th floor.

Yoo-hyun looked at Manager Choi Min-hee who was sitting across from him.

She didn’t talk much because of her personality, so the awkward silence didn’t bother him much.

-Manager Choi is too rigid. She should be more flexible with people.

That was the evaluation that the higher-ups gave her.

He often heard it from Manager Jo Chan-young or Team Leader Oh Jae-hwan, so Yoo-hyun also heard it frequently.

There were also other things like cold, picky, sensitive, etc.

In a way, it was the opposite of Assistant Manager Park Seung-woo's style.

Yoo-hyun knew the reason.

Manager Choi Min-hee was basically success-oriented.

She had to be more thorough to make up for the career gap that occurred after she gave birth and took a leave of absence.

She couldn't help but be sensitive because of that.

She asked Yoo-hyun.

"Is this the first time we're having coffee together?"

"Yes. It is."

"Weren't you disappointed? Your senior didn't take good care of you."

"No way. I know you're busy."

Manager Choi Min-hee raised her eyebrows quickly and sipped her coffee cup.

She was watching Yoo-hyun without him noticing.

Not only then, but also in the office, she often observed Yoo-hyun's behavior.

Yoo-hyun couldn't miss it.

'She must be evaluating me in her mind.'

She had the same standards for others as she did for herself, because she was thorough with herself.

Yoo-hyun didn't try to impress her.

There was silence for a while.

Manager Choi Min-hee's face showed signs of deep worry.

It was a long-distance business trip to Geoje Island.

If something went wrong, she would not only waste a day, but also ruin everything she had done so far.

She had to be nervous because she was meticulous.

When Yoo-hyun was thinking about it, Manager Choi Min-hee put down her coffee cup and said,

"Actually, I have something to say."

“Yes. Please tell me.”

“No. What am I thinking?”

Yoo-hyun was frustrated.

She just had to ask for help, why couldn't she do that?

It was because of pride.

Yoo-hyun used to be like that too.

He used people when he needed them, but he never asked for help.

He hated owing anyone anything.

But then he would only become a loner.

Yoo-hyun relaxed his posture and said,

“Please tell me comfortably.”

“...Do you have time on Thursday?”

“Of course. Is it because of the business trip to Hyunil Automobile?”

Did Yoo-hyun's words hit the mark?

“Pff!!”

Suddenly, Manager Choi Min-hee spat out the coffee she was drinking.

It was an unexpected situation.

Yoo-hyun quickly turned his head, but he couldn't avoid all the coffee that sprayed out like a spray gun in front of him.

“Oh my! Oh my!”

Manager Choi Min-hee was so flustered that she got up from her seat.

Clang clang clang

She didn't care if the chair fell over or not, she ran to Yoo-hyun.

There was a clear liquid mark on Yoo-hyun's right side ribs

“I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I must be crazy.”

“No, it's okay. It's fine.”

“Oh, what should I do?”

Even though there was a tissue next to her, she was so out of it that she wiped Yoo-hyun's side with her arm.

Yoo-hyun flinched at the sudden awkward situation.

“Manager, it’s okay. I’ll do it.”

“No. I’m so sorry.”

Manager Choi Min-hee’s face was already flushed.

It was a very contrasted image from the one she always tried to show as perfect.

Early Thursday morning.

Manager Choi Min-hee, who boarded the train to Busan, looked very uncomfortable.

‘He must be worried about a lot of things.’

Yoo-hyun understood her feelings very well.

It was a business trip to Geoje Island.

She had to do everything by herself without any assistance, so it was stressful.

She was sensitive because she was meticulous.

Chapter 87

On the other hand, Manager Choi Min-hee had a lot on her mind.

She had been through a lot of trouble these days.

It was all because she was caught by Manager Kim Hyun-min, who happened to pass by the shelter where she was washing Yoo-hyun’s body.

And to make matters worse, they had to go on a business trip together, so he teased her mercilessly.

-Hmm. Yoo-hyun is pretty handsome, but Manager Choi, you are married and there is quite an age gap between you...

-He’s not my type, okay!

She was not good at expressing her emotions, but she was annoyed enough to snap at him.

Manager Kim Hyun-min’s jokes were one thing, but it was hard to prevent other people from hearing about it.

She shuddered at the thought that the rumor might reach Yoo-hyun’s ears.

“I swear, Manager Kim... I’ll get back at you someday.”

“What?”

“Huh? No, nothing. Do you want something to eat?”

Manager Choi Min-hee pretended to be casual.

Chiiing.

Yoo-hyun, who got off at Busan Station, had to run after Manager Choi Min-hee.

The train was delayed, so they barely made it to the bus departure time.

“Phew, today is so hectic.”

“It’s dynamic and fun.”

Even in the midst of that, Yoo-hyun matched Manager Choi Min-hee’s mood well.

There was only one Hansung Chemical bus in the square in front of the station.

They managed to get on the bus on time and checked their ID cards before sitting down in an empty seat.

The good thing about being a Hansung employee was that they could ride any bus from other subsidiaries as long as they applied for it.

The bus ran non-stop from Busan to Geoje.

There were no seats next to each other, so Yoo-hyun and Manager Choi Min-hee sat separately. Yoo-hyun took in the outside scenery.

The passing landscape felt strangely new to him.

He had never thought of looking outside from the bus in the past.

He didn’t have any spare time to look away even for a moment back then.

At that time, Yoo-hyun lived fiercely.

He didn’t need to live like that, but he didn’t know it.

Before he knew it, the bus entered Geoje.

It passed by the sea and the old downtown area and arrived at the Hyunil Automobile Factory site.

It was a place that produced more than a million cars a year, so its scale was impressive.

The bus ran a little further.

As soon as they crossed the bridge, buildings crowded together greeted Yoo-hyun.

“We’re here. Let’s get off.”

“Yes, Manager.”

Yoo-hyun got off the bus and looked up.

Right in front of him was the Hansung Chemical building, and next to it was the Hyunil Automobile Research Institute.

Not only that, but there were also buildings of various companies such as Hansung Life Science and Living Health lined up.

It was a majestic large-scale industrial complex created by the government.

It was inside the customer service center located at the entrance of the Hyunil Automobile Research Institute building.

Manager Choi Min-hee submitted the entry confirmation form to the guide and sighed with relief as if she felt relieved.

“Whew, it’s really far. Right?”

“Yeah. You worked hard.”

“What are you talking about? You worked harder.”

Was Manager Choi Min-hee always such a caring person?

Yoo-hyun smiled faintly and she looked away and pretended to read the words on the wall.

-Today you will have amazing luck.

Yoo-hyun added some flesh to the one-line message on top of the four-leaf clover background.

“I feel like things will go well today.”

“I hope so.”

Did her excited mood subside?

Manager Choi Min-hee looked serious as usual.

She didn’t pay attention to Yoo-hyun and muttered about the presentation content.

She looked like she was concentrating hard.

Yoo-hyun secretly smiled and took out his laptop and opened the presentation report in advance.

He prepared it so that he could present it right away whenever he needed to.

As they waited, the meeting time came closer.

But still, there was no sign of the employee who was supposed to pick them up.

“Why isn’t he coming?”

“Didn’t he call earlier?”

“What good is that? He’s not here. Anyway, they’re so bossy... No. It can happen.”

“Yes, Manager.”

Manager Choi Min-hee grumbled and then changed her tone when she saw Yoo-hyun.

She felt that she cared for him.

Just when he wondered when he would come, a short man with curly hair came in.

It was Deputy Kwon Seung-beom from the Hyunil Automobile Interior Product Planning Team, who had also talked to Yoo-hyun on the phone.

“Thank you for coming all this way.”

“I should have come sooner, but I was a bit late.”

“No, it’s fine. Let’s go in.”

Manager Choi Min-hee, who had been sharp-tongued, put on a professional mask.

There was no need to show her displeasure here.

It was better for her to get what she wanted quickly and maintain a good relationship with them.

Shuffle shuffle.

They followed Deputy Kwon Seung-beom into the Hyunil Automobile Research Institute.

The atmosphere inside the building was different from that of Hansung Electronics.

In the lobby, there were display cars from the early days of Hyunil Automobile, and images of car parts could be seen everywhere inside.

He took in the various sights and arrived at a meeting room that was about the size of a medium conference room.

Squeak.

The door opened and there were people waiting inside.

Including Manager Kwon Seung-beom, there were five people in total.

Finally, the greetings began.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Han Seung-wook, the head of the Interior Product Development Team.”

“I should have visited you sooner, but I’m sorry for being late. I’m Choi Min-hee, the head of the Product Planning Team.”

As Manager Choi Min-hee entered the meeting room and approached them, the Hyunil Automobile employees stood up and greeted her.

They exchanged simple greetings and business cards with a smile.

Yoo-hyun also followed her after putting his laptop bag on his seat.

Interior Product Development Team, Interior Device Design Team, Navigation Development Team, and...

There was a man who tapped Yoo-hyun’s shoulder and greeted him.

“Thank you for coming all this way.”

“Hello.”

He was using polite language, but his condescending gaze was strangely unpleasant.

He even flicked his business card with his index and middle fingers in one hand.

He thought Yoo-hyun was easy to deal with because he had a low rank.

It was an action he did to look down on him.

“Nice to meet you.”

“Manager Jo, nice to meet you.”

But Yoo-hyun smiled and received his business card with both hands.

It was a meeting to meet customers as a ‘servant’.

As long as he didn’t mess with Manager Choi Min-hee, who was the main subject of the meeting, there was no reason for Yoo-hyun to step in.

He didn’t get upset over something childish like this.

He had a psycho like Deputy Go Jae-yoon on his team, so this was nothing to him.

Yoo-hyun placed the business cards he received on his table in order.

The Hyunil Automobile employees were sitting across from him in the order of the business cards on the table.

It wasn't because he couldn't remember their names.

It was to show them that he checked their faces again by placing them on his seat.

It was more advantageous to leave a good impression than to shove them in his pocket as soon as he received them.

Business people think of their business cards as another face.

Years of habit had made the process very natural.

It was not something that could be easily imitated by hearing it somewhere.

When Yu Hyun turned his head, he saw the flustered expression of Manager Choi Min Hee.

She looked as if she was wondering how he knew that.

Yu Hyun whispered to her.

"A senior in charge taught me during the new employee training. Is this how it's done?"

"Huh? Oh. Yeah. It's natural."

"Thank you. Manager, I'm ready."

He then casually handed her the presenter connected to the laptop.

"..."

Manager Choi Min Hee looked at the presenter for a moment and took a deep breath.

She regained her focus.

She was good at presentation skills and well-prepared.

"This time..."

"Here..."

"That..."

The product development was also going smoothly, and they responded to Hyunil Automobile's whims right away.

There was not much room for noise in the first place.

The problem was likely to come from somewhere else.

Yu Hyun turned his head and looked at Jo Chi Hoon, an assistant manager from the sales team who was sitting on the farthest side.

He had a wide face and prominent cheekbones that were striking.

He maintained a dissatisfied expression throughout, as if he was born with a mean look.

He finally opened his mouth.

“Manager Choi, did the sales team not come?”

“No. As I told you last time, I will report the progress of this product to you and hand it over to the sales team as soon as I get confirmation.”

“Oh, is that how Hansung does things? They’re a bit slow.”

“It’s our internal process. Please understand.”

She was polite to him even though he was rude.

Hyun Il Automobile was a big client.

Not because they had a huge amount of orders.

It was because of the symbolic significance of being the main supplier for the first self-developed navigation system of a global car company.

They barely received any development fees, and they complied with unreasonable demands without complaint.

They had worked so hard for this, and they wouldn’t ruin it over such provocation.

“Hoo.”

Manager Choi Min Hee lifted her head after taking a light breath and looked around at the people.

She had to get confirmation from Hyun Il Automobile that the development was completed.

Then she could hand it over to the sales team and negotiate the price and quantity, and finally set up the development line accordingly.

She intended to tie up everything at this meeting today.

“Then I’ll continue.”

She pressed the button on the presenter and the screen changed.

People's eyes naturally turned to the screen on the wall.

Manager Choi Min Hee's presentation went smoothly.

"Our Hansung..."

Her voice had enough power to draw attention.

The content was intuitive, and the progress was neat without any redundancy.

It was a perfect presentation.

Even from Yu Hyun's high standards, it was not bad.

But why did he feel so detached?

The attitude of Hyun Il Automobile's employees was not bad either.

They nodded their heads from time to time, and they also checked the printed presentation materials.

But Yu Hyun felt awkward because he didn't sense any desperation from them.

The product launch date was not far away.

Due to spec changes, the main component LCD panel was still under development.

Of course, they had set up an environment where they could test with other panels, but it was hard to see the proper performance with that.

It was their first time developing a navigation system.

The sales team and planning team aside, even the development engineers should have been busy.

They should have asked for more time to reduce risks, or requested additional backup plans.

But there was no such action at all.

It was like they were in the product planning stage.

"...This is our panel's progress. It will be completed by the end of this year and we will be able to check the prototype next month. As we reported, there is no problem with the product in preliminary review and if we get confirmation today, we can ship normal products according to what we agreed on in Q1 next year."

"..."

On the last page, Manager Choi Min Hee emphasized the schedule again and turned her eyes to the development team members.

Maybe it was because she didn't get any questions she expected, but she added one more thing.

"Of course, as soon as we get the prototype panel, we will support our development staff for testing the navigation finished product."

"Yes, please do that."

For a moment, she met eyes with some of them from the navigation development team.

They quickly turned their heads, but Yu Hyun didn't miss the awkward exchange of glances.

"That's the end of my presentation."

Clap clap clap clap.

It was after the perfunctory applause.

There should have been questions from the development team, but the first one to open his mouth was Assistant Manager Jo Chi Hoon from the sales team.

"Assistant Manager Kwon, bring that out."

"Yes. Okay."

What Assistant Manager Kwon Seung Bum brought out was a navigation mockup.

Tick.

The screen came on when he turned on the power.

Chapter 88

Assistant Manager Jo Chi-hoon pointed at the navigation screen and said abruptly.

"Manager Choi, I know you are working hard to prepare. But look at that. The screen is not working properly. How can we trust and confirm it?"

There was a black band at the bottom of the screen that Jo Chi-hoon gestured to.

It looked like the bottom 20% of the screen was cut off.

Why did he show me that all of a sudden?

And that too from the sales team, not the development team.

She tried to figure out his intention while paying attention to him. Manager Choi Min-hee answered first.

“Assistant manager, that’s because we gave you a sample product with a different resolution as a quick response to the changed resolution. That’s why it’s like that.”

“So? Then you should have given us a sample that matches it. Will you take responsibility if there is a problem with the development?”

It was something that had been announced in advance.

Rather, they gave them something they didn’t have to give out of consideration for Hyunil Automobile.

Yet Jo Chi-hoon was picking on it for an obvious reason.

He wanted to tame the company.

In other words, he was trying to bully them.

It was an obvious intention, but Choi Min-hee had a responsibility to finish this matter well.

She had to put the company’s interests before her pride as an employee.

She knew that better than anyone else.

She suppressed her anger and calmly said.

“I also want to give you a sample product that meets the specifications, but I can’t give you a product that hasn’t been developed yet. I believe you know that well enough, Assistant Manager Jo.”

“I’m not asking for a developed product. I’m saying that if you agreed to provide a product that we can test in advance, you should have provided a proper one.”

“There is no product with the same specifications as the resolution is not standard. And that matter has already been discussed. In fact, it’s a special case to provide samples like this.”

“Oh, so you’re doing us a favor?”

Jo Chi-hoon said sarcastically, and Choi Min-hee countered firmly.

“That’s right. Didn’t our development staff come on business trips for several weeks and respond? It wasn’t easy to adjust the existing ones to fit the changed specifications.”

“That’s what Hansung thinks.”

“No. I heard from the head of the embedded product development team that he was grateful. Isn’t that right?”

“I know they supported us well.”

When Choi Min-hee asked the embedded product development team member, he nodded his head.

But Jo Chi-hoon didn't back down as if he had made up his mind.

“That's not the issue. It's slow. How do you explain that?”

“What? What are you talking about?”

“Take a look.”

He smirked and nodded his head toward Kwon Seung-beom, the assistant manager.

Kwon Seung-beom nodded as if he understood and pressed the mock-up button.

Then they saw the screen change with a gap at the top and bottom.

It was so slow that it was easy to see with human eyes.

Choi Min-hee frowned at the unheard-of defect.

If there was really a problem, they should have called the development team from the customer side.

And it would have been common sense to postpone the confirmation schedule until after checking the problem.

The intention was obvious, but Choi Min-hee couldn't back down.

“It's probably a problem caused by lowering the panel frequency to temporarily respond to the changed format. Of course, there won't be such a problem in the sample that will be developed soon.”

“When it's developed? What if it's developed wrong? What do we do then? Do we wash our hands then?”

“That's why we included a revision schedule in case of any problems as much as possible.”

“What if that doesn't work? There are so many problems like this. How can we trust you? What if our schedule collapses because of this?”

Choi Min-hee was frustrated.

She felt like her throat was burning.

The direction of the meeting was moving too differently from what she expected.

It looked like he was determined to overturn the deal.

Where did it go wrong?

“We’ll definitely fix the panel problem. If there was a problem, I wouldn’t be here.”

“Ha, really. That’s not what I’m saying.”

Jo Chi-hoon shook his head repeatedly.

While they were arguing, Yoo-hyun moved his seat and touched the mock-up.

The screen changed slowly every time he pressed the button.

It wasn’t just a problem caused by lowering the frequency.

He didn’t miss the screen shaking up and down when the screen changed.

It was a phenomenon that usually occurred when there was a problem with the video input to the panel.

The gap was because of that.

He understood why the development team member looked embarrassed when they talked about the navigation schedule.

Yoo-hyun asked the Hyunil Automobile employees for the first time.

“Is this mock-up made with the chip that will go into this product?”

“Yes. It’s a new chip that we developed.”

“I see.”

He nodded at the answer of the navigation development team.

It meant that they made the video output chip that connects to the input of the LCD panel themselves.

The navigation software is also uploaded to that chip.

It was the core component that runs the navigation.

Yoo-hyun called Manager Choi Min-heewho was in a lull.

“Manager, look at this.”

“What is it?”

When Choi Min-hee came over, the others also leaned their heads forward and looked at the mock-up that Yoo-hyun was holding.

Yoo-hyun pretended not to know and tilted his head.

“Doesn't the screen shake up and down when it changes?”

“Where? Let me see.”

“Look closely. Assistant Manager Park said that this kind of defect usually occurs when there is a problem with the video input.”

“Wait a minute...”

Choi Min-hee adjusted her glasses and focused.

She looked ambiguous, as if she hadn't found it yet.

It would be dangerous to say something rashly and get burned.

But she was smart enough.

She turned her head to where Yoo-hyun gestured and looked at Jo Chi-hoon, who was scratching his neck.

He said nonchalantly.

“It's not even a proper product. What's the point of testing it with another LCD panel?”

“Didn't you say earlier that the development schedule could be delayed because of the panel problem we gave you as a sample?”

“I did.”

“It looks like it could be because of the new chip developed by Hyunil, don't you think?”

“...”

The navigation development team member looked embarrassed at Choi Min-hee's counterattack.

But Jo Chi-hoon just shrugged his shoulders.

And he used his position as a buyer to change the subject.

“Look, Manager Choi. We are. And now the point is whether we can confirm it or not when the product hasn't even come out yet.”

“We can't decide on the quantity if we don't negotiate with the sales team.”

“That's why the sales team should have come. It's frustrating.”

He even openly mocked them.

Choi Min-hee, who had been patient, narrowed her eyes at his rude behavior.

Would she explode here?

If she did, Yoo-hyun would have stepped in, but seeing her clenched fist open again, she didn't seem to have that intention.

She made a good decision.

There was nothing to gain from fighting.

What Manager Choi Min-hee had to do was a good finish.

She could vent her emotions on Assistant Manager Jo Chi-hoon later.

The meeting that couldn't be concluded was postponed until after lunch.

Choi Min-hee, who came out of the conference room, had a complicated expression on her face as she left the front door.

She seemed to want to get some fresh air.

She didn't go straight to the restaurant in the basement, but went outside. What else could be the reason?

Yoo-hyun suggested quickly.

"The wind is cool and nice. Do you want to sit for a while?"

"..."

Choi Min-hee looked at Yoo-hyun with a strange look and sat down.

Then she stared at a distant place for a long time as if she was lost in thought.

Why did it get so twisted?

What does he want?

Her head was complicated.

She felt like she could find a solution if she knew the reason, but she didn't know it and felt frustrated.

How long had it been?

Choi Min-hee asked Yoo-hyun after thinking hard.

"Yoo-hyun, what about Assistant Manager Jo Chi-hoon of Hyunil Automobile?"

"The one with a big face?"

Yoo-hyun asked back and Choi Min-hee chuckled.

"Yeah. But why is he... Why is he doing that?"

"Maybe he's trying to tame us?"

“Yeah. Let’s say he is. What does he get from doing that to us?”

“Which part do you mean?”

“I mean, he’s just an employee of the company. It doesn’t seem like he’ll get any performance from doing that.”

It was unexpected.

The Choi Min-hee that Yoo-hyun remembered was not the type to expose her weak side.

Yet she was saying that she didn’t know to a junior employee, and a new one at that.

That meant how frustrated she was.

Yoo-hyun carefully guessed.

“Maybe the navigation development schedule is delayed.”

“How can it be? The car release schedule has already been confirmed.”

“It’s just a thought. It doesn’t have to have navigation when the car comes out. They can also make models without it.”

Choi Min-hee nodded her head.

“Even so, they can’t do that to us when we’ve already signed a contract.”

“That’s right.”

“Right? Right? We’re not some hole-in-the-wall shop. Do you think they’ve already talked to the top?”

“...”

“Oh, the sales team! No wonder...”

Choi Min-hee clapped her hands, narrowed her eyes, sighed, and shook her head.

She was playing drums and gongs by herself and Yoo-hyun couldn’t intervene.

Yoo-hyun moved away from Choi Min-hee for a moment and picked up his phone.

Jo Chi-hoon was suspicious anyway.

He was worried that he had no prior information because he had no connections there.

He contacted Choi Seul-ki with the hope of grabbing a straw, hoping that his fellow employee who was in the field would know something.

“Oh, Yoo-hyun oppa.”

“How are you?”

“Of course. I’m...”

He finished the usual greetings and got to the point.

“Do you know Assistan Manager Jo Chi-hoon of Hyunil Automobile?”

“Oh my, how do you know Assistant Manager Jo?”

Jackpot.

He only needed basic information, but he caught a big fish.

Yoo-hyun opened his mouth with excitement for once.

“Well...”

He honestly told her everything.

Then Choi Seul-ki responded immediately.

“Assistant Manager Jo...”

“Yeah? Can you help me out a little?”

“What is it?”

“That’s...”

Choi Seul-ki answered without much hesitation.

“Don’t worry and contact me. I had something I was curious about anyway.”

“That’s good. I’ll contact you if anything happens.”

“I’ll wait.”

Yoo-hyun smiled after finishing the call.

He hoped so, but the result was good.

He had one insurance now.

At that time.

There were people having lunch in the underground shopping mall in front of Hyunil Automobile building.

Kwon Seung-beom, the assistant manager, and Assistant Manager Jo Chi-hoon were also there.

“Assistant Manager Jo, are you sure this is okay?”

“What? Oh, Hansung? What can a parts supplier do?”

When Kwon Seung-beom asked with a worried expression, Jo Chi-hoon sitting across from him laughed and answered.

“But it’s almost over. What if something goes wrong?”

“Don’t worry. There’s no way it will go wrong. We’ve come this far, do you think Hansung will drop out?”

“I guess not.”

“Of course. It’s not for nothing that our team leader told us to negotiate with Hansung.”

“Wow! You’re not really trying to drop them, are you?”

“Of course not. Just give them some pressure.”

Jo Chi-hoon stirred the stew with a spoon and smiled happily.

On the other hand, Kwon Seung-beom still looked worried.

Chapter 89

He knew how much effort he had put into dealing with Hansung for a long time.

“But they are Hansung, after all...”

“Don’t worry. It seems like everything is settled from above. We just have to do what we are told.”

“Yes, I understand.”

“Make sure the development team is on the same page. I’ve already told them everything about the final product.”

“Yes...”

Assistant Manager Kwon bowed his head.

It was because of the problem with the navigation system he had planned.

If this continued, there was a high possibility that they would miss the launch date of the car.

Seeing his expression, Assistant Manager Jo Chi-hoon clicked his tongue.

“Ugh, you’re still the same as when you were a newbie. Straighten up your shoulders, man. I told you not to act like a coward.”

“I’m sorry.”

“Never mind. Let’s take this opportunity to catch Hansung.”

“So you’re not going to confirm it today?”

Kwon asked and Jo Chi-hoon smiled slyly.

“Of course, I’m going to send it back. And I’ll add that it’s because of Hansung that we’re delayed.”

“Oh...”

“They have no choice but to follow us. What are they going to do after they’ve already developed it?”

“...”

Let’s see how they handle a day or two of bullying.

Jo Chi-hoon grinned as he stuffed a grain of rice into his mouth.

The underground shopping mall that connected the Geoje Industrial Complex was quite large.

But since each company had its own cafeteria, there was no place to eat separately.

Most of them were old Korean restaurants, and there were only a few fast food joints.

Manager Choi Min-hee apologized with a sorry expression.

“I promised to buy you something delicious today, but I don’t know what to do.”

“Don’t say that. It was very good.”

“Do you want some coffee? You can buy expensive coffee.”

Choi Min-hee’s voice brightened up by one tone at Yoo-hyun’s smile.

Was Choi Min-hee always like this?

He thought she was always cold and stiff, but today she was very different from usual.

Yoo-hyun thought that maybe he didn’t know Choi Min-hee well enough.

Ding.

It was the moment when the two entered the coffee shop.

A thick male voice was heard.

It was Jo Chi-hoon, who was standing in front of the cashier.

“Hey, I’ll buy you coffee.”

“...Is cake okay too?”

Choi Min-hee seemed to be holding back her anger with a sharp reply that didn't suit him.

“Sure thing.”

“Thank you. Yoo-hyun, you didn't eat properly, right? Choose whatever you want.”

But it wasn't.

This was her timid revenge.

Yoo-hyun suppressed his laughter and answered.

“Can I choose two?”

“Sure, sure. It's okay if Jo buys it. Right?”

“...Well, whatever you want.”

Jo Chi-hoon answered casually, but he couldn't hide his sour stomach.

He had wrinkles on his forehead.

For a very short moment, Yoo-hyun secretly picked up his phone.

“Seul-gi. I'm here...”

“I know. Just stall and wait.”

He heard Choi Seul-gi's cool answer.

A moment later, the table was full of drinks and cakes.

Choi Min-hee ate heartily and thanked Jo Chi-hoon who was sitting across from her.

“Mm, this is really good. Thank you.”

“Yes. Please eat a lot.”

“It would be nice if you were this considerate during the meeting too.”

Of course, there was a thorn hidden in her words.

“Yes. It's nice to see you enjoying it. Please pay more attention to the panel too.”

“Don't you think we're paying enough attention for a company like ours?”

“Well, it's all about the results, right?”

“Aren't results something we make together?”

“There's no need to waste time on something that won't work.”

Jo Chi-hoon also had a stubborn side to him.

The two who seemed to match well in strange parts ate and had a childish psychological battle in front of them.

“That’s not what I mean...”

“No, what I’m saying is...”

There were some parts that seemed to cross the line, but Yoo-hyun didn’t bother to stop them.

It wasn’t work-related anyway, and this kind of pride fight was common enough.

Instead, he drank his coffee and organized his thoughts.

He had roughly confirmed his suspicions.

Hyun-il Motors couldn’t let go of Hansung Electronics easily either.

If they were going to give up, Jo Chi-hoon wouldn’t have pushed them like this.

The problem was one thing.

He had no intention of negotiating at all today.

It was then.

Jo Chi-hoon’s mood was not good.

His breathing was rough as his nose flared, and his face was very flushed.

He looked like he was barely holding his patience.

Seeing him, Choi Min-hee said.

“I’m sorry if that’s not the case.”

“Choi, if you keep saying that, what do you want me to do?”

“I meant it as a way to discuss it together.”

Choi Min-hee tried to keep the line subtly, but Jo Chi-hoon didn’t.

He was ready to get up and make a scene.

You think he wouldn’t?

Yoo-hyun was sure with a high probability after observing many types of people.

It was a loss to clean up after the trouble.

Even if there was a problem, it was better for Yoo-hyun to cover it up than Choi Min-hee in terms of negotiation.

As Jo Chi-hoon was about to explode, Yoo-hyun saw something and got up from his seat.

Screech.

“Choi, I think we’re out of time.”

“Really?”

“No, wait. How can a newbie interrupt the seniors’ conversation?”

Jo Chi-hoon suddenly got up and yelled.

He vented his anger on Yoo-hyun, who had a lower rank than him.

He held back his swear words because it was a coffee shop, but it was obvious that he was angry.

In this case, he had to bow down firmly.

“No, right now...”

Yoo-hyun stopped Choi Min-hee from stepping forward and bowed his head in apology.

“Sir, I’m really sorry.”

“Hmm. No, it’s not that...”

Jo Chi-hoon couldn’t go any further because he felt the eyes of the people in the coffee shop.

He felt like he was the only bad guy because of Yoo-hyun’s apology.

As Jo Chi-hoon fixed his sleeve and tried to say something, a high-pitched voice rang out from the side.

“Oppa! You’re Yoo-hyun oppa, right?”

Everyone’s eyes turned to the side because of the loud noise.

There was a young woman standing there.

Her long hair had been cut short, but Yoo-hyun couldn’t miss her.

It was Choi Seul-gi, who had been on the same team as him during the new employee training.

“Seul-gi.”

“Oppa, what’s going on here?”

“I’m meeting with some clients.”

“Hmm...”

Choi Seul-gi crossed her arms and turned her head sharply.

Jo Chi-hoon flinched for a moment.

“Haha, Seul-gi. Long time no see.”

“Sir, are you causing trouble to the people from the company in the cafe, by any chance?”

“No, of course not.”

“...”

Yoo-hyun blinked his eyes as he listened to their conversation.

They obviously knew each other.

But their relationship seemed to be wrong somehow.

Rather, it was the young Choi Seul-gi who was pushing Jo Chi-hoon around.

“I’m disappointed to see you like this. And I’m sure Yu would be very disappointed too.”

“You must have misunderstood something. Isn’t that right, Yoo-hyun?”

She was a woman who had already heard the explanation from him.

Yoo-hyun smiled slightly at that moment.

He quickly organized his thoughts and gave Choi Seul-gi a hint.

Then he immersed himself in the act.

“Yes, of course. Seul-gi, Sir Jo gave us the contract confirmation today during the negotiation. Don’t be rude.”

“Oh? Really? Is that true, sir?”

“...Haha, yes, yes.”

Choi Seul-gi responded very naturally to Yoo-hyun’s sudden change.

She had a knack for cornering Jo Chi-hoon softly.

“Then I’m sorry. I’ll say something nice to Yu as an apology.”

“Really?”

“Of course. But only if you’re not lying, sir.”

“...”

Her skill of pushing and pulling with an apology and a condition was beyond excellent, it was art.

“You wouldn’t lie about something like this, right? You’re a man with pride, aren’t you? Right?”

“Yes. Of course.”

She even touched his pride and got a definite answer from him.

He had seen her teach dance during the new employee training and knew she had some sense, but this was more than that.

It was as if she had been looking at the whole situation from the beginning and acting accordingly.

Yoo-hyun gave her a thumbs up from an angle that only she could see.

Choi Seul-gi smiled brightly and wrapped up the situation.

“Okay, sir. I’ll trust you then. Let’s have a meal together sometime.”

“Sure. I’ll set a date.”

“Yes. Oh, Yoo-hyun oppa. Call me when you’re done. Let me know the result of the meeting.”

“Got it. Thanks.”

After Choi Seul-gi left, an awkward silence enveloped the four people.

“...”

Yoo-hyun spoke politely to Jo Chi-hoon.

“Shall we go to the meeting then?”

“...Yes, let’s do that.”

Jo Chi-hoon’s expression looked complicated.

Yoo-hyun thought that Choi Seul-gi’s words had worked to some extent.

He could tell by Jo Chi-hoon’s change of expression.

He didn’t believe that the meeting result would change dramatically though.

It was enough to see a slight crack in his armor.

But what do you know?

The reaction of Jo Chi-hoon throughout the afternoon meeting was unexpected.

He had completely changed as a person.

“I hope you understand that we are being careful because of this.”

“Of course. I understand.”

“This is our first navigation system. We have to start well. Start well. Hahaha.”

“Thank you. Can I ask you to check the specs then?”

“Yes. We’ve checked the development specs and it seems like this is it. We’ve met all the requirements too.”

He suddenly became gentle and his attitude towards the meeting was also serious.

“What? Do you mean...”

“I think we can do this much.”

“Can you send me a confirmation email?”

“Yes. Let’s do that.”

He gave an immediate answer to Choi Min-hee’s direct question.

There was no trace of his attitude that seemed like he would never agree.

He even winked at Yoo-hyun.

“...”

Yoo-hyun lost his words as Kwon Seung-beom, the other assistant manager, whispered to Jo Chi-hoon.

“Sir, are you okay? You were...”

“Hey, I’m fine, man. The team leader just told me to tame them, not to cut them off.”

“So you’re really doing it?”

“Yeah. This is enough, right? Let’s go nicely. Nicely.”

“Oh, okay.”

It was a conversation that Yoo-hyun couldn’t hear.

But he could read the situation from their expressions.

Kwon Seung-beom also didn’t expect Jo Chi-hoon’s sudden change of attitude.

This was entirely Jo Chi-hoon’s unilateral decision.

Finally, Jo Chi-hoon concluded the meeting with a completely different tone from before.

“Choi, I’ll end this meeting here. Thank you for your hard work.”

“Yes. Thank you...”

Choi Min-hee was stunned by Jo Chi-hoon’s confirmation.

She glanced at Yoo-hyun.

She had asked him to go on a business trip with her, just in case, but she didn’t really think he would be of much help.

No matter how talented he was, there was a limit to what he could do as a newbie.

But this happened!

Who would have thought that a newbie’s connection would move a troublesome Hyun-il Motors assistant?

An unbelievable thing was happening in front of her eyes.

The meeting ended and they said goodbye as a courtesy.

“Thank you for your hard work.”

“Yes. Thank you for your hard work.”

The people from the navigation development team also apologized politely.

Although there were some difficulties in the middle, the end was professional.

Chapter 90

The meeting was a success.

There were some difficulties in the middle, but they achieved their goal.

However, Manager Choi Min-hee’s face was still gloomy.

She looked the same even after they came out of the Hyunil Automobile Research Institute building.

As they walked along the road, she asked cautiously.

“Yoo-hyun, how did this happen?”

“I don’t know either. I have no idea what’s going on.”

“...”

Yoo-hyun said no, but Manager Choi Min-hee was sure.

This couldn’t be a coincidence.

A thought flashed through her mind.

‘Did he use the situation to his advantage?’

She remembered that he had made a phone call before they entered the restaurant.

Maybe that was to call his colleagues.

It felt like he had deliberately exploited Manager Jo Chi-hoon’s weakness.

Thinking about it, it seemed like everything fell into place.

Wait.

Did he know who Manager Jo Chi-hoon liked all along?

That didn’t make sense.

Manager Choi Min-hee shook her head vigorously.

She felt like she was possessed by a ghost.

She wanted to take a break and sort out her thoughts.

“I must be crazy.”

“Are you okay?”

Yoo-hyun asked with a worried expression.

He understood why she was holding her head right now.

It was because of the stress she had received during the meeting today.

She needed to rest at times like this.

“Do you want to take a break?”

“...No. Let’s go.”

“Then let’s go.”

“...”

Manager Choi Min-hee wanted to ask more persistently, but she stopped herself.

That would be rude to Yoo-hyun who had worked hard today.

The important thing was that the work went well.

She soon relaxed her face and smiled at Yoo-hyun.

“You’re such a helpful colleague. I should buy you dinner. You said you had to contact someone earlier.”

“I’ll check my schedule first.”

“No. I’m fine. You can go see your colleagues later.”

“Hey, how can I do that when you’re waiting for me?”

It was a one-day business trip.

Yoo-hyun had decided to accommodate Manager Choi Min-hee, so he didn’t bother to tell his colleagues.

But it seemed like Manager Choi Min-hee had other thoughts.

“I have to go home because I have a kid, but you’re young. When will you come to Geoje again?”

“Still...”

“I’m going to go in tomorrow afternoon because it was a long-distance trip. Of course, I’ll tell Mr. Kim about it. You can come in then too. Is that okay?”

She kept caring for him even though she must have been exhausted herself.

Yoo-hyun couldn’t refuse her all the time, so he nodded his head.

“Okay. Thank you.”

Manager Choi Min-hee smiled brightly at Yoo-hyun’s answer.

It felt like her cold heart opened up like the smile on her lips.

Maybe it wasn’t Manager Choi Min-hee who changed, but Yoo-hyun who didn’t pay attention?

He finally saw her true colors after 20 years.

He had received an unexpected gift from her who had to leave the company in the past.

At that time, what Yoo-hyun received was the result of her hard work and sweat.

And now.

Yoo-hyun received her sincerity.

He still had plenty of time until his appointment with his colleagues since he was still working.

He took a taxi alone and went to the nearby sea.

Splash splash.

The sound of waves hit his ears.

The flying seagulls, the sharp cliffs and the sea created a beautiful scenery together.

It was as beautiful as his old memories.

-This place is really nice. It makes me feel refreshed just by looking at it.

Yoo-hyun leaned back on the bench and looked at the setting sun over the sea with a faint smile on his face.

He felt comfortable even by just being there.

He understood why she liked this place so much.

Then he suddenly remembered the scene where she was crouching in front of him here.

She was drawing something on the ground with a stone.

-What are you doing?

-Just... Is this my signature on the ground? Isn't it cute?

She turned her head and smiled brightly at him.

On the ground, there was a half-heart symbol with a cupid arrow stuck in it.

It was her signature made with Da (多), meaning many, in Chinese characters for Jung Da-hye's name.

He guessed that she wanted him to draw the other half of the heart himself by looking at how she glanced around nervously.

He didn't know back then.

No, he didn't even bother to know.

Yoo-hyun in the past was not the type to care about romance.

But why did he think of this now?

Swoosh swoosh.

Yoo-hyun picked up a stone and left Jung Da-hye's signature on the hard clay ground.

It wasn't hard to follow the familiar thing.

And he drew the other half of the heart to connect it.

This is so embarrassing.

And childish.

He kept giggling even though he was just drawing a line.

It felt like he went back to his high school days when he was innocent.

Zing.

When the sun was setting, he got a call.

It was Choi Seul-ki who he was supposed to meet for dinner.

Soon after.

Choi Seul-ki appeared with a familiar face.

It was Jung Da-bin, who was in the same team as him during the new employee training.

Did she change because of her work life?

She was no longer the innocent-looking girl she used to be.

She had become more sophisticated.

“Oppa, how could you come down without contacting me?”

“I didn’t expect to see you here. How have you been?”

“I’ve been fine. I’ve been thinking about you, oppa. How about you?”

She still had the habit of being straightforward as before.

He found that very endearing.

Yoo-hyun winked at her playfully.

“I’ve been thinking about Seul-ki. Seul-ki, thank you so much today.”

“Oh, oppa!”

Jung Da-bin pouted when Choi Seul-ki giggled.

“You two, that’s not a very beautiful reunion scene.”

“It’s not like we haven’t seen each other for years.”

“That’s true. But what are you doing here?”

“Just. Waiting. Why did you come all the way here?”

“I thought you might be bored, oppa. And Da-bin was so impatient.”

Choi Seul-ki nodded at the place where Jung Da-bin was hanging her shoulders.

Yoo-hyun gave her a little boost.

“Da-bin, I’m kidding. I thought about you too.”

“Really?”

“Of course. Just a little bit.”

“Tsk. You’ve changed since you went to work.”

“I’ve improved.”

Jung Da-bin stuck out her tongue at Yoo-hyun’s cheeky answer.

Then she noticed the drawing in front of the bench and exclaimed.

“Huh? Oppa, what is this? A heart? Don’t tell me...”

“Yes. No.”

“Aha, I knew it?”

“No.”

“...”

Yoo-hyun cut it off cleanly and walked out, turning his eyes to Choi Seul-ki.

It was time to move to the place where he had agreed to meet his colleagues.

“Seul-ki, should we go now?”

“Yes. Let’s go.”

“Da-bin, let’s go.”

“Huh? Oh, yes.”

Jung Da-bin answered Yoo-hyun’s words, but her eyes were still on the ground.

The heart that Yoo-hyun drew was not just a heart.

It looked like he had drawn something else with it.

But it looked familiar somehow.

She furrowed her brows.

A moment later.

The colleagues gathered in a seafood restaurant near the sea.

There were five men and two women, including Yoo-hyun.

They all had one thing in common: they were in group 2 during the group training.

“Nice to see you. How have you been?”

“I’ve been good. You look good too.”

“Haha, Yoo-hyun, only you would say that?”

They were not in the same team, but they had seen each other every day for a while, so there was no awkwardness.

It was more surprising that they all came out without any missing.

“How did you come out?”

“A colleague came from far away, so of course we had to come.”

One of them answered proudly and kept looking sideways.

There were Choi Seul-ki and Jung Da-bin there.

That’s right.

The two female colleagues who had become prettier had captivated the hearts of the male colleagues.

Yoo-hyun held back his laughter and said.

“Let’s have a drink. I’ll pay for this place.”

“What are you talking about? You’re the guest, we should pay.”

Then one of them came out strongly.

Then Choi Seul-ki reacted to him.

“Wow, that’s manly.”

“Order more. Order as much as you want.”

“Yeah, let’s eat a lot. When will we have this time again?”

That was the start.

The male colleagues rose up like flames.

And Jung Da-bin added fuel to the fire.

She came with bottles of alcohol in both hands and raised her voice.

“Well then, let’s have some fun.”

“Ooooooh!”

The atmosphere was so hot that it burned.

“...”

Yoo-hyun licked his lips at the sight.

Buzz buzz.

They exchanged stories while drinking glasses of alcohol.

Of course, the center of their conversation was work.

It was the same everywhere except for the location: work stories had similar aspects.

The troubles from their bosses, frequent overtime work, drinking culture that forced them to socialize, etc.

In the middle of their chatter, Jung Da-bin asked him.

“How about you, oppa?”

“I’m the same.”

Actually, Yoo-hyun didn’t have much to complain about.

He liked his part in many ways.

He felt that more when he compared himself with others like this.

He enjoyed chatting for a while and then went outside for a moment.

He wanted to sort out his thoughts for a while.

Whoosh whoosh.

The sea breeze cooled his hot body.

Yoo-hyun sat on a red plastic chair and looked at the distance.

The noisy sound came through the gap of the restaurant door.

It was quite pleasant to be here like this.

Squeak.

Then the door opened and Jung Da-bin came out.

Her face was red from drinking too much.

“What are you doing here alone?”

“Just. I like it.”

“Can I sit down for a bit?”

“Sure.”

Creak.

Yoo-hyun pulled out a chair behind him and placed it next to him.

She sat next to him and stared blankly at the same place as Yoo-hyun.

“...”

After a brief silence, she called Yoo-hyun.

“Oppa.”

“What?”

“Can I like you, oppa?”

“No.”

Was it because he answered too quickly?

Jung Da-bin flared up.

“Why? I’m pretty good, you know? I’m very popular at work.”

“That’s right. You’re pretty.”

“Then why?”

Jung Da-bin, who had lost her baby fat and dressed up, looked good to Yoo-hyun too.

She was not someone who would be left out anywhere.

Not only her appearance, but also her personality was bright and she had passion for her work.

She was attractive enough.

But Yoo-hyun already had someone else in his heart.