

Yes, It's Me. The Obsessive Side Top

##001 - Read Yes, It's Me. The Obsessive Side Top #001

#001

"Son of a bitch."

Wow. Was that phrase meant to be said so politely? The voice was low and measured, like a company owner calling for "Secretary Kim." I couldn't help but smirk at his sophisticated tone.

It was a relief. This distinguished-looking man, who seemed to be my father, didn't appear particularly angry. If he were truly mad, he would've been shouting loud enough to burst eardrums, rather than speaking like this. After all, the wealthy families you see in dramas always appear hysterical. Compared to what I'd expected, this level of cursing was quite a reasonable reaction.

"You must find this kind of life entertaining, huh? Causing trouble everywhere you go, earning yourself that charming nickname, 'son of a bitch.'"

His words were biting, yet he sounded more like an executive presenting a new product than an enraged parent. I couldn't help but smile at this unique style of discipline, scolding me in such a gentle, soft tone. But come to think of it, it was somewhat unfair to hear such words from my own father—after all, the "son of a bitch" he was referring to wasn't even me.

"What's going on inside that head of yours, my dear son, that makes you act this way? Should I split it open to find out?"

Even his menacing words carried no weight when spoken so politely.

I stood at attention, listening to his words. Perhaps impressed by my upright posture, the corners of my father's mouth twitched several times.

"You bastard. Didn't I tell you not to hit people? That's the hardest thing to clean up."

I could have said, I didn't hit anyone, but with the blood on my fists still fresh, I decided to keep quiet. Anyone could see my fists bore clear evidence that I had properly beaten someone.

"The company's legal team might as well be your personal property now. Is such capable talent to be wasted on mere assault cases?"

I couldn't just stand there listening to accusations about things I *hadn't* done—even if they were things I actually *had* done. Just as I opened my mouth to protest, something flew toward me, making me reflexively squeeze my eyes shut. An intense pain shot through my forehead.

“Ugh.”

A groan escaped my lips. Looking down at the object that had thudded onto the carpet, I saw a transparent glass ashtray. Judging by the situation, it had to be what hit my forehead. Sure enough, a streak of bright red blood marked the ashtray's edge.

Isn't this a scene I've seen countless times in dramas? Experiencing it in real life was far more brutal. Surprised by the contrast between my father's polite tone and his violent behavior, I looked at him, startled. Was this bastard supposed to get hit like this? This wasn't how I thought it would be. A character with a broken personality who only sought pleasure—it all made sense now. He turned out this way because he was exactly like his father.

“Does it hurt? You shouldn't feel pain. After nearly killing someone, you shouldn't be hurting from something as small as this, right?”

Apparently unsatisfied with just throwing the ashtray, my father stepped closer and kicked my shin with the pointed tip of his dress shoe.

“Argh!”

A pained cry escaped me. Damn, this hurts like hell. Do luxury shoes have metal tips or something?

If I'd known this would happen, I should have gone straight home. At least then he wouldn't have been wearing those dress shoes. I shouldn't have come so obediently. I should've resisted and insisted on going back. I lifted my injured leg like a crane, clutching it with both hands. The pain was so intense that even pressing on it did nothing to ease the stabbing sensation in my shinbone. While I was still trying to cope with the pain, my father extended a large hand toward me.

“Hand over the card.”

“?”

What card?

I stared at him blankly until he called for Secretary Kim, who I hadn't even realized was in the room. Right—the one who had brought me here to my father. The one who was just standing by, watching me get hit. For someone who had tried so hard to stop me during our first meeting, he seemed to have no intention of stopping my father now.

“Suspend this bastard’s cards. And confiscate his car keys.”

“Yes, Chairman.”

“Know that if you cause trouble again, I’m sending you to the military.”

“What?”

Aside from pain-filled groans, my first real response was just a dumb “What?” But I was horrified at the mention of military service, and I had to question it.

“Military service?”

Why me? Why military service? Wait—military? Damn. I’ve already completed my military service!

Why is military service even coming up here? People say they wouldn’t go through that again even for a billion won.

“Secretary Kim, get this out of my sight immediately.”

My father’s voice was resolute, dismissing me as if I were nothing more than a nuisance. Though I tried to resist as Secretary Kim pulled me away, it was useless—I hadn’t realized he was this strong.

As soon as we entered the executive elevator that connected directly to the CEO’s office, I looked over at him, feeling wronged.

“Did I really do something bad enough to deserve getting hit?”

Secretary Kim barely glanced at me, maintaining the blank, stoic look of an overworked employee. But as I continued staring, he finally opened his mouth, a hint of irritation slipping through.

“You shouldn’t have caused trouble—at least not now. The incident you were involved in hasn’t even been settled yet. If anything else happens, not even we’ll be able to help you.”

What other trouble did I cause here? Wow, this guy really is a bastard.

“Ah, damn.”

It was impossible not to swear in this body. How trashy must his life have been to deserve this kind of treatment from Secretary Kim? Thinking about it, the term “bastard” that always came up in related searches with his name suited him perfectly.

Secretary Kim, perhaps feeling a hint of sympathy, offered a bit of consolation.

“I’ll have to suspend the cards—there’s no choice. You know the Chairman’s temperament. He’ll probably double-check to make sure they’re really suspended.”

“Then what about my money?”

Secretary Kim just shrugged, his gaze fixed on the changing floor numbers. His attitude made it clear he had nothing more to say, so I touched my forehead with one hand and my shin with the other.

“Since it hurts, I guess this isn’t a dream...”

Even though it wasn’t a dream, the situation still felt surreal. Wasn’t possession supposed to happen in a more traditional way—like waking up from sleep, examining your unfamiliar body, and thinking, Ack! How am I the XX from the novel? But I hadn’t fallen asleep and woken up like this, nor had I been hit by a “possession truck” and died. And the moment of possession hadn’t even happened during the fight that caused this mess; it happened afterward, when Secretary Kim tried to stop me.

“This is pretty unfair.”

I get possessed as a chaebol character, only to immediately have my cards and car taken away. Of course it’s unfair. How could it not be? And to top it all off, they’re threatening to send me to the military if I cause any more trouble. I just finished my military service two months ago!

“That’s not right,” I muttered.

Secretary Kim glanced at me, perhaps feeling a little sorry, and added, “If you stay quiet for about a month, the Chairman will probably let up, Young Master Ha Jin.”

Young Master Ha Jin. Though that wasn’t my name, it was what Secretary Kim called me. But it was a name I knew well—how could I not know it?

The infamous Ha Jin. The webtoon character who looks exactly like me.

Yes, that’s me. The Obsessive Side Top.

* * *

Could anyone’s life be as hard as mine? As soon as I got to school, my classmates were eager to mock me.

“Did you see the news today? You were on broadcast TV!”

“What? Did Ha Jin cause another incident?”

For the record, my name isn't Ha Jin. So the Ha Jin they're talking about isn't me, yet people always compared me to Ha Jin. Why? Because he's a webtoon character who looks exactly like me.

Curious, Ji Min dramatically snatched Min Woo's phone. After checking the content, his jaw dropped.

“Wow, it's true. Ha Jin actually made the news! Has the world gone crazy?”

“It's insane. Are they so desperate for news that they're using webtoon characters?”

I wished my classmates would pick one: either mock me or be shocked by this whole situation.

“Is it about power abuse? Was Ha Jin known for that?” Ji Min asked, looking curious.

Min Woo replied with his usual know-it-all attitude. “Power abuse? That's just the beginning. He does every awful thing you can think of—total bastard. Don't you know how famous he is? Ha Jin equals bastard. Don't you know that equation?”

“Well, I don't read webtoons.”

Annoyed by their pointless chatter, I snatched the phone from Ji Min's hand.

On the screen, an anchor sat at a desk, with a large title behind them: [How Long Will We Tolerate Chaebol Power Abuse?] In the upper right corner of the screen, there was a picture of Ha Jin, the webtoon character, prominently displayed like a wanted criminal.

Yes, Ha Jin—the infamous webtoon character everyone calls a bastard—was being used as reference footage on broadcast news. When I saw this scene on TV while getting ready for school this morning, I'd stopped what I was doing and blinked several times, screaming internally. This can't be real.

“Check out the comments. You'll die laughing,” Min Woo suggested.

Following his lead, I scrolled down to the comments section.

– WTF LOL why is our bastard on here?

– Ha Jin? Why pull power trips, you punk? You don't get caught for violence and your messy private life, but you make the news for power abuse?

– Ha Jin, it's grandma. Tsk, you can't do that.

- Ha Jin’s debut on broadcast TV! Marking XX/XX/XXXX as a special day.
- If you don’t fall for Ha Jin’s sub-villain disease, are you even human?– Ha Jin, my heart swells seeing your face on the news first thing in the morning. You bastard.
- What is this? Some cartoon?
- ㄱ That’s our Ha Jin!
- ㄱ Ha Jin? Who’s that? Why does this police sketch look like a cartoon?
- ㄱㄱ LOL I’m dying
- ㄱㄱ Police sketch—are you crazy?
- ㄱㄱ LOLOLOL police sketch LOLOLOL
- ㄱㄱ Someone please explain to this newbie LOLOLOL – ㄱㄱ It’s from a webtoon called The Lives of the Golden Spoons. The sub-villain Ha Jin. AKA, certified bastard: super handsome, super rich, super terrible personality…
 - ㄱㄱㄱ ?????
 - ㄱㄱㄱ LOL this person doesn’t get it!!!
- ㄱㄱㄱ Such a concise explanation! Perfect summary. You could totally teach a class on Ha Jin.
- Is the news on something? How did this footage even get approved? That’s from an R-rated BL webtoon!
- While the author tries to crash stocks with Ha Jin’s insane antics, here we are, getting swept up in the chaos. The side effects are no joke. Proud of our bastard Ha Jin, now even acknowledged by the news.
- (Comment deleted)
- ㄱ Please, take this down. The webtoon might get pulled due to controversy. I heard the creator hates attention.
 - ㄱㄱ What did it say?
 - ㄱㄱ It was about someone who looks like Ha Jin.
 - ㄱㄱㄱ Are you serious? A look-alike? Our Ha Jin exists in real life? Spill the details!

– LLL Apparently at some university...

– LLL No way, A University? Must be smart! I'm giving up my dream of being his junior.

– LLL (Deleted) He's actually a senior in our department LOL. Looks exactly like him IRL. Everyone went nuts when he came back from the military. The Lives of the Golden Spoons basically became required reading thanks to real-life Ha Jin.

I stopped reading and tossed the phone back to Min Woo.

"That's just how rich people roll, huh? Throwing phones around?" he joked, clearly trying to catch another "incident" in the making.

Great. My head throbbed just thinking about the gossip waiting for me today.

"I'm telling you, the author is from our school. The setting is obviously based on our campus. And don't you look exactly like Ha Jin? They should at least pay you if they're using your face."

"Min Woo, have you actually read it?"

"Of course! Gotta support my friend who's apparently in it."

"Isn't it R-rated? Doesn't it cost money to read?"

"I paid for it! Haven't you seen it yourself?"

Unable to tolerate my classmates' teasing any longer, I got up. Min Woo tried to stop me, maybe feeling a bit sorry, but I brushed him off.

"So cold. You'll be getting a lot of attention today. Want to borrow a cap? I brought one."

"Oh, Min Woo, why did you bring a cap? You never wear caps. Don't tell me it's for Ha Jin?"

"We're friends. Gotta look out for you."

"No, thanks."

I rejected the cap he was holding out and left. Walking to the lecture hall, the stares were ten times worse than usual. Now that it had been broadcast on the news, everyone who'd vaguely suspected would know for sure. I was a genuine celebrity now.

'Damn that webtoon! Damn Ha Jin!'

My normal life had been completely ruined because of him.

#002

Muttering curses under my breath, I walked past the front entrance of the lecture hall and slipped in through the familiar back door. A few people turned to look at me, and then they dramatically nudged the arms and backs of those who hadn't noticed yet, forcing them to turn around too. Within ten seconds of entering, I had everyone's attention, as if I were the professor.

Because of all this unwanted attention, I couldn't even use the front door anymore and had to sneak in through the back—but these people didn't appreciate the trouble I went through.

Among the quiet whispers, hearing the name "Ha Jin" felt like a stab to the heart.

'Ugh... should I sue the author?'

As Min Woo had pointed out, since the webtoon was set at our school, the character Ha Jin had to be modeled after me. Why couldn't they have based the other characters on our classmates too? Then the attention would be spread around, focusing on the main characters instead. But no—unfortunately, I was the only one who matched a character's face exactly.

While seriously contemplating my lawsuit options and setting my bag down on the desk, I suddenly felt something wrap around my torso. Startled, I glanced down to see an arm in a black suit jacket.

'Huh?' Before I could process what was happening, I was pulled backward. Even though the lecture hall had tiered seating and this shouldn't have been possible, I looked back.

'Secretary Kim?'

The previously bright lecture hall had somehow turned dim. Secretary Kim, with his neatly styled hair and a work-worn expression, met my eyes. His gaze was empty, devoid of any emotion, as he opened his mouth.

"That's enough. If you continue, you'll kill them."

What? Stop what?

Secretary Kim nodded toward the front. I turned my head in the direction he indicated and saw a long table covered in shattered glass, with someone lying unconscious in the middle. Surrounding the table were several people dressed in expensive clothes, all with strikingly handsome faces, trembling in fear.

“What should we do...”

“That crazy bastard, why did he have to mess with Ha Jin...”

“What if he’s dead?”

I heard their anxious whispers. As I glanced toward the murmuring group, I made eye contact with someone who looked wealthy but mean-spirited. When our eyes met, he quickly looked away, fear evident in his expression. That was strange—I’d never been told I had an intimidating look.

Turning back to the collapsed figure, I tried to force my brain to process this bewildering situation.

What is this? I was just in the lecture hall.

How had it come to this: someone unconscious in a shadowy room, people around them cowering in fear, and me being held back by Secretary Kim?

No, wait, that’s not even the important part—how do I know the person holding me is Secretary Kim?

Well, that’s because I paid to read the webtoon *The Lives of the Golden Spoons*. And Secretary Kim in the webtoon looks exactly like this.

‘Huh? Something is seriously wrong here.’

I never imagined I’d end up reading a BL webtoon. What drew me, someone who didn’t even read webtoons, to a BL series was none other than Ha Jin. It’s embarrassing to admit, but I’ve been complimented on my looks since childhood. However, after finishing my military service, those compliments changed to, “Wow, you look just like Ha Jin.”

So who was Ha Jin? Completely clueless about the trend, I had no idea why everyone was obsessed with this name. Since he rarely appeared in mainstream media, I initially assumed Ha Jin was some minor celebrity. But who would have guessed he was a webtoon character? And not just any character, but one in an R-rated BL webtoon!

As time went on, my surroundings became increasingly dominated by the name Ha Jin, to the point where people called me Ha Jin more than my actual name. Eventually, my curiosity got the better of me. So I typed the name into a search bar.

[Ha Jin]

The related search terms popped up:

[Ha Jin bastard] [Ha Jin wealth] [Ha Jin body]—seeing these made me want to call him a crazy bastard myself. Thinking he must be a real piece of work, I clicked to see his picture. Or more precisely, his illustration.

“That’s me?”

Staring at the illustration of Ha Jin, I ended up saying the same thing everyone else did. I’d assumed there was no way we could look that similar, but Ha Jin was drawn as if the artist had traced me directly. If there was a character in a webtoon who looked exactly like me, I had to check it out.

Despite hesitating over the title, *The Lives of the Golden Spoons*, and the R-rating, my curiosity got the better of me, and I quickly flipped through the pages. The more I read, the more my jaw dropped, and I couldn’t help blurting out, “Oh, fuck.” Ha Jin was way more of a bastard than I had imagined.

The R-rating? It was all because of Ha Jin. He was the ultimate villain, tormenting the main character, Sun Woo Choi, who initially looked down on him. But after making Sun Woo’s life hell, Ha Jin went completely crazy, pushing him around in every conceivable way—only to find himself getting pushed around later in the story.

Despite being a thoroughly messed-up character, Ha Jin had moments of twisted satisfaction that made the story compelling. You know how it is: when the crazy guy is on your side, it feels oddly reassuring.

Ha Jin was the type who couldn’t stand seeing others bully Sun Woo, even though he relentlessly tormented him himself. After saving him from other aggressors, he’d turn right around and harass him even more disgustingly. The author had the audacity to call it love.

‘They sure have an interesting definition of “love.”’

Though the author framed it as a romance, Ha Jin was a character whose violent and erratic behavior defied all logic. It was no wonder he earned the undisputed title of the webtoon world’s biggest bastard. He was infamous enough to make headlines in real-world news.

* * *

Sitting in the back seat of a glossy black luxury car, I tried to wrap my mind around this impossible situation. No matter how I thought about it, none of it made sense. One moment I had been walking into the lecture hall and sitting down, and the next moment, as if someone had suddenly flipped a switch, I had become the webtoon character Ha

Jin. Since Ha Jin and I already looked identical, my body hadn't changed—but everything around me had transformed completely.

No matter how hard I tried to understand what had happened, I couldn't. But then a thought began creeping in: maybe this wasn't so bad? Now that I thought about it, aside from being a complete bastard, Ha Jin was perfect in every other way. Just the fact that he was the only son of the Galaxy Group's CEO—one of Korea's largest corporations—meant his life was set.

Compared to my life of unwanted attention because of Ha Jin's name, maybe becoming Ha Jin might be an upgrade. After all, being Ha Jin came with compensation—the compensation of immense wealth.

"You showed good restraint. Both at the meeting and in front of the Chairman," Secretary Kim's voice interrupted my thoughts. Sitting in the front passenger seat, he turned his head to examine the wound on my forehead.

"We'll go to the hospital," he said firmly.

"No. Let's go home. It's just a minor wound," I replied.

Secretary Kim looked puzzled, checking on me once more through the rearview mirror before instructing the driver to head home without further comment. My polite response must have seemed out of character. If I were the Ha Jin from the webtoon, I probably would have smashed something by now.

As I absent-mindedly watched the cityscape speeding by, we eventually entered a high-end neighborhood lined with imposing houses behind towering walls. The car pulled to a stop in front of one such house, its exterior familiar—the mansion where Ha Jin lived alone after moving out of his family home.

"I'll be going now," Secretary Kim said as he stepped out of the car, gave a formal goodbye, and departed.

I checked my pocket and was relieved to find the house key. Staring up at the palace-like mansion I had only ever seen on TV, I couldn't deny that Ha Jin was indeed living the life of a true chaebol.

Inside, the house looked just as it had in the webtoon. Ha Jin, who chose to live independently while attending university, had a mansion spacious enough to accommodate an extended family, yet he lived here alone. Everything was extravagant, from the high ceilings to the tastefully minimalist decor.

I pulled out Ha Jin's phone from my pocket again. It was set to silent mode, and the screen was flooded with countless missed calls and messages. True to his character,

Ha Jin always kept his phone on silent, only responding when he needed something from others.

"I should sort out the people around me first," I murmured.

Since Ha Jin was such a bastard, it made sense that everyone around him was either a thug or trash. All the contacts coming through on his phone were people I needed to cut ties with. Without a second thought, I turned off the phone and tossed it into the trash, where it landed with a satisfying thud.

"Ha Jin, you owe me some compensation for the way you've messed up my life," I muttered.

I was determined to experience how a commoner like me would splurge when handed sudden wealth—though that plan would have to wait a month. After all, the webtoon mentioned that Ha Jin's cards were about to be suspended.

Once my mind settled a bit, the sting on my forehead became hard to ignore. I began searching for a first aid kit, but this massive mansion turned out to be all style and no substance. The countless drawers were either empty or filled with useless decor, like a model home made only for show. In desperation, I even checked the refrigerator—though, of course, there was no first aid kit there. At least the fridge had a reasonable amount of groceries, and none of the ridiculous situations suggested by webtoon commenters, like "Ha Jin's fridge only has Evian," seemed to be true.

After searching fruitlessly, I finally gave up and sank into the plush sofa. I should have listened to Secretary Kim and gone to the hospital. Worried the wound might scar if left untreated, I decided to head out. Though my wallet only had cards in it, I figured the cards probably wouldn't be suspended until tomorrow. Surely I could manage a quick pharmacy visit tonight.

It was late, and finding an open pharmacy proved challenging. Even after leaving the residential area, I walked for quite a while before spotting one brightly lit and still open for business.

"Thank goodness," I sighed.

The bell above the door chimed as I stepped in. There was already a customer at the counter, so I waited behind them. The pharmacist, busy helping the other customer, glanced at me and asked kindly:

"What are you looking for?"

"I need some ointment and bandages for a wound," I said.

"Yes, just a moment," the pharmacist replied.

Since the other customer was waiting for prescription medication, the pharmacist quickly handled my over-the-counter request. A moment later, they handed me the items and said, "That'll be 6,000 won."

I quietly handed over my card, but I couldn't shake the feeling of being watched. I turned, and my breath caught in my throat.

"Oh?"

Standing beside me was a face I knew all too well. With striking, almost ethereal features that seemed meticulously crafted by the author, he had an aura that would draw attention anywhere. His light brown eyes, slightly moist and full of emotion, matched the description from the webtoon perfectly. Maybe that was why Ha Jin was always obsessed with the thought of making him cry.

Seeing him in real life was disorienting. He felt different, more real and undeniably captivating. There was a sensual quality to him that I hadn't fully appreciated in the webtoon. Maybe it was because I had seen his illustrated body in all its glory countless times, or perhaps it was simply because he was the one who drove Ha Jin absolutely mad.

I found myself staring, utterly lost in his face. For a split second, I wondered if this was love at first sight. No, that would be Ha Jin's feeling. I was just admiring his beauty, purely and simply.

'Handsome yet pretty,' I thought, taking in the flawless features that seemed to blur the line between delicate and strong.

As I stared, his expression subtly twisted with discomfort. He must have recognized me. He turned his head away, clearly wanting to avoid my gaze, while I continued looking at him, intrigued and slightly fascinated by this unexpected encounter. Meanwhile, the pharmacist returned my card with an awkward expression.

"Um, sir? The card is showing as invalid..."

#003

"Oh really? That was quick..." I murmured to myself.

I already knew from the webtoon that Secretary Kim was efficient at handling tasks, but I hadn't expected this level of efficiency. Less than an hour had passed, and my card was already suspended. Secretary Kim had handled it so cleanly and swiftly that, in my mind, I gave him five rounds of applause.

Taking back the now-useless card from the pharmacist, I found myself staring blankly at the person next to me. Sun Woo, the main character, was deliberately ignoring my

gaze. It was precisely this kind of nonchalant attitude that drove Ha Jin crazy. Ha Jin, who was always surrounded by people eager to suck up to him, found Sun Woo's indifference infuriating.

But I was nothing like Ha Jin. My appreciation for Sun Woo was purely aesthetic—admiring how much effort the author had put into drawing the main character. If I wanted anything from him right now, it would just be borrowing 6,000 won to pay for the bandages.

“Sun Woo,” I called out.

The unexpected familiarity made his eyebrow twitch as he turned to look at me. Ha Jin had never addressed Sun Woo so informally before. I was aware that I'd been inserted into this body at a point just before the webtoon's events began. We were both sophomores at A University, and in Sun Woo's mind, Ha Jin was merely a classmate, not yet the full-blown antagonist of his story.

Wasn't this just the perfect timing to get possessed?

Sun Woo's look of disdain was understandable. Ha Jin had a notorious reputation for being a jerk on campus, and I couldn't blame Sun Woo for his contempt. With that in mind, I gave him a sweet, genuine smile—a sight that had never once appeared in the webtoon—and extended my palm toward him.

“Just 6,000 won,” I said, my smile as innocent as I could make it.

Sun Woo didn't seem to find the sight of Ha Jin's pure smile appealing. Though his expression barely changed, I noticed a flicker of disdain in his eyes. True to his character, he ignored me. When his medicine was ready, he paid for it and left the pharmacy without a single word, the doorbell chiming as he exited.

The clear ringing sound echoed in the awkward silence that followed. Left behind were the anxious-eyed pharmacist and me, breathing a little more roughly from the embarrassment of being ignored.

‘Sun Woo is completely ignoring me, huh?’

Despite not actually being Ha Jin, I felt a strange surge of irritation. Some kind of primal desire to get back at him simmered within me. But I closed my eyes, taking a deep breath to calm down. I reminded myself of an important fact: Sun Woo was excellent at fighting.

The main character's combat skills were almost legendary, and Ha Jin's ability to match him made their confrontations intense. While they were evenly matched in strength, Ha Jin's edge came from his sheer madness. And you know what they say—you can't outfight a mad dog.

“Excuse me, are you going to pay?” the pharmacist’s voice interrupted my thoughts.

“ ... ”

The pharmacist broke the awkward silence, asking once again for payment. Faced with this very reasonable request, I was struck mute, fiddling helplessly with the suspended card. Today was supposed to be the day I embraced my new life as a chaebol. Who could have guessed that this “chaebol” wouldn’t even have 6,000 won to his name and would be pitifully playing with a useless piece of plastic?

* * *

Surprisingly, dealing with school matters wasn’t as difficult as I’d feared. Ha Jin’s university was modeled after the one I’d attended myself. Familiar with the campus and how things worked, I printed out Ha Jin’s class schedule and headed to school with purpose. For the next month, I decided, Ha Jin would purify himself of his worldly sins. And once my suspended cards were reinstated, I’d start a new, lavish chapter of my life.

While walking across campus, a sleek foreign car slowed down beside me. The tinted window rolled down, and a voice called out, “Ha Jin.”

I couldn’t place who it was just from their voice, but since they seemed to know me, there was a 100% chance they were trouble. Choosing to ignore them, I kept walking. Moments later, I heard the car door open and close, followed by footsteps as someone caught up to walk beside me.

The person, slightly taller than me, had a strikingly handsome face with a bit of a fierce edge. Yet, when he smiled brightly, his expression softened. It was almost charming.

“Are you okay?” he asked. “That bastard Jung Woo has been acting up without reading the room, and now he’s getting ahead of himself. I should’ve been there, but I had to stay home yesterday for my grandfather’s death anniversary. You know how conservative my family is.”

No. I didn’t know anything about how conservative his family was. His family drama went in one ear and out the other. What concerned me more was the car he’d abandoned on the school road. Who parks like that? It was a side road that students and faculty frequently used, and leaving a luxury car there would definitely block traffic.

“What about the car?” I finally asked, more annoyed than anything else.

The moment I focused on his face, I recognized him. Kim Shin. He was a familiar supporting character from the webtoon, brought to life with perfect detail. The second son of Sky Group, he’d been following Ha Jin around since childhood. Among Ha Jin’s circle, Kim Shin was one of the more normal ones. Maybe the webtoon artist had felt guilty for making everyone else complete trash.

“Oh?” he replied, glancing back. “It’s fine. I’ll grab it later.”

“Go get your car,” I insisted.

He paused, considering. “Oh, should I? Want a ride?”

“No.”

“Then let’s walk together,” he said cheerily, completely unbothered. His eyes suddenly fixed on my forehead. “What happened to your forehead? There’s a scab.”

“Kim Shin,” I interrupted, exasperated.

When I called his name softly, Kim Shin grinned, his eyes full of an unspoken anticipation, waiting for me to continue. His expression reminded me of a fierce hunting dog wagging its tail happily in front of its owner. After dealing with classmates who always mocked me, it was strange to see this tall, sharp-featured guy who looked like he could fight acting so eagerly for my attention.

‘Is Ha Jin’s character really all that bad?’

“Take your car. I want to walk alone,” I said, deciding I’d rather be left alone.

“Really? Alright. Take care then.”

I felt a wave of relief wash over me as Kim Shin turned back, heading toward his car, which passed by me as I walked in the opposite direction. With each step, my mood improved. I was no longer the center of attention. It felt normal again—peaceful, even. And yet, as I walked into the school, that sense of peace began to crumble.

I couldn’t help but recall my life up until yesterday, before becoming Ha Jin.

Wherever I went, people would glance at me, whispering. The barely disguised clicks of phone cameras, too obvious to ignore, were a constant reminder that I was always being watched. My photos spread online without my consent, and the attention was especially intense on Thursdays, when the latest webtoon chapters dropped. Days with adult-rated scenes? Those were the worst. With all the stares, I felt naked, exposed, and completely embarrassed.

Now, in this strange new reality, I was starting to feel some relief from all that attention. I was Ha Jin now, and no one was looking at me in that way. After all, there was nothing waiting for me back in my real life.

Finally, I reached the lecture hall. To make up for always sneaking in through the back, I walked confidently through the front door this time.

“Ha Jin, you’re here?” someone called out.

“This is rare! You actually showing up to class!” another added.

As I entered, a few classmates greeted me with a mix of surprise and curiosity. I returned their greetings with a half-hearted wave, trying to play along with the atmosphere.

“Hi,” I said.

Suddenly, the room fell silent, as if a cold chill had swept over the space. The energy shifted, the air growing thick with an unspoken tension. No one spoke to me after that.

Ignoring the uncomfortable atmosphere, I scanned the room. The back row of the lecture hall, Ha Jin’s usual seat, remained empty. Ha Jin had a designated spot in the center of the back row. His gang always sat there, and no one else dared take those seats.

‘Playing gang leader at this age, really?’

Since I wasn’t Ha Jin, I shrugged and decided to sit in the front row instead. As the lecture hall slowly filled with students, I noticed that no one came to sit beside me.

‘Wait, isn’t this basically ostracism?’

I tried not to care, but it was hard not to notice that everyone was deliberately avoiding the front seats. It felt like loneliness in the middle of a crowd. If I still had my phone, I could at least distract myself. But yesterday, for some unfathomable reason, I had thrown it away. Now, with no phone and no money, I regretted my decision. I briefly considered digging through the trash to retrieve it, but the cleaning lady had already taken it out by the time I thought of that.

No phone, no money—I was completely broke. As I sat there grumbling internally, someone unexpectedly sat down next to me when no one else would. Looking to see who was kind enough to take the empty seat, I was surprised to find it was Sun Woo.

As expected of the protagonist. I propped my chin up and examined his face, as if watching a celebrity through a TV screen.

For a main character, he wasn’t delicate or fragile-looking. Instead, he was exceptionally handsome, with a kind of beauty that wasn’t just pretty, but sensual. He had an intensity about him, an allure that seemed to pull you in. Plus, he was well-built. The adult-rated webtoon definitely didn’t shy away from showcasing Sun Woo’s sculpted, muscular body in those scenes—scenes I couldn’t help but remember now.

“Ah, shit.”

Why was I feeling embarrassed about something I didn't even do?

"Want to sit somewhere else?" he asked, his voice deep and smooth, yet as cold as a record-breaking winter chill. If he spoke kindly, it would have sounded like music to the ears.

My curse must have seemed directed at him because he frowned. Even his frown looked sensitive and somehow attractive. The more I looked at his face, the more I couldn't understand the author's choice of "dominant" for Ha Jin.

'How is this someone who gets dominated? He looks more like the dominant type himself.'

"No. Stay next to me," I said before I could stop myself.

After I spoke, I immediately wondered if I needed to add "next to me" for clarification. Was I syncing with Ha Jin just because I'd read the webtoon? This felt strange. Trying to smooth things over, I flashed a smile at Sun Woo, but he ignored me, focusing on whatever he was doing instead.

For the entire class, Sun Woo paid me no attention. And I, for my part, tried my best to focus on anything but the awkwardness between us.

The webtoon comments popped up in my mind, distracting me from my discomfort:

[The Lives of the Golden Spoons]

– Ha Jin's Forbidden List

Robot Vacuum Cleaners Prohibited

└ What is this? lol How are we supposed to clean then, teacher?

└ Is using a regular vacuum cleaner allowed?

└└ Vacuum cleaners are also forbidden.

└ If vacuum cleaners aren't allowed either, do we have to use a broom?

└└ Touching a broom equals death sentence.

└ What kind of prohibition is this? What's with List 1? Is this going to be a series?
lololol

└ Can we imitate curling when the robot vacuum cleaner moves around?

LL Are you crazy, curling? lolol

LL Think that's possible? Death sentence.

I couldn't help but smile a little at the ridiculousness of it all. At least the webtoon still had its moments of absurd humor.

#004

After the first class, I couldn't hide my disappointment. Ha Jin had always been a top student, never missing the number one spot. He was a character blessed with every good attribute—except for his personality. A cheat character who could easily maintain top grades while going out to play every day, thanks to his clever mind. But where did that intelligence go now? Why did it feel like there was only an empty can rattling around in my head?

Business administration wasn't even my major, so I couldn't understand anything throughout the class. While everyone was leaving the lecture hall, I sat there blankly, alone. Maybe I should transfer to engineering. Would that mean I couldn't inherit the Eunha Group? Frantically running my fingers through my aching head, I glanced at Sun Woo, who was still organizing his class notes beside me. In the webtoon, Ha Jin used to mock Sun Woo's efforts, asking why he studied so hard.

Sun Woo had answered that he needed to get a scholarship, and Ha Jin had laughed even more condescendingly, calling him a "poor bastard." But now, I realize I'm the poor one, and I'm the one who needs to study harder. Am I paying for Ha Jin's karma now?

God, you've got the wrong person. I'm not that bastard Ha Jin.

As I was calling out to God in my mind, a god-like figure actually appeared before me.

"Ha Jin, what are you doing here? Did you attend class?"

Kim Shin spoke nonsense, as if it were strange for me to be here, even though he was taking this class too. The simple reason I knew he was in this class: Kim Shin had registered for exactly the same schedule as Ha Jin. I guess that's the kind of effort it takes to be friends with a crazy person.

Kim Shin glanced at Sun Woo and gestured with his head for me to leave. Being penniless, I stood up, hoping to at least get a free meal from him. Until then, Sun Woo hadn't shown even a bit of interest in me.

The place Kim Shin took me to was their hangout: the tennis club room. It was a spot where Ha Jin frequently appeared in the webtoon. Though it was called a tennis club, it was really just a social gathering for the children of wealthy families, led by Ha Jin.

“Ha Jin, didn’t you see my messages?”

“I don’t have a phone.”

I stared at Kim Shin while answering, contemplating whether I should maintain this friendship with him. When Kim Shin asked, “Why?” with a puzzled look, I kept calculating in my head. The conclusion was simple: he wasn’t a bad character to have as a helper, so I’d keep him around. For someone in Ha Jin’s circle, he wasn’t too much of a wreck personality-wise. In the webtoon, he had even been quite helpful to Ha Jin. His personality was relatively mild compared to others, which is why most readers called him God Kim or Freshly-Baked Kim.

“What happened to your phone?”

“I threw it away because of strange messages.”

“Really? By the way, Ha Jin, what did Jung Woo say to you yesterday? The others said he fell face-first onto the table right after whispering something to you.”

I just stared at Kim Shin without responding.

How would I know? I was possessed after everything was already over.

Kim Shin chuckled.

“Whatever. It was Jung Woo’s fault for whispering.”

Kim Shin was meticulously cleaning the table with wet wipes. It felt surreal to watch someone who looked like he’d never worked a day in his life doing something so domestic.

“Did the Chairman do that to your forehead?”

Hearing him refer to a friend’s father as “Chairman” sent a shiver down my spine. It really drove home the reality that I had become Ha Jin, a member of the wealthy elite.

“Yeah.”

“Why haven’t you treated it? It’ll leave a scar. Want me to apply some medicine?”

“No.”

“It hurts my heart to think of Ha Jin’s face being scarred.”

“Don’t worry about it.”

“Hmm, Ha Jin, did something good happen today?”

Kim Shin grinned. This guy clearly had no sense of social cues, asking if I was in a good mood despite my curt responses.

“It’s nice that you’re answering properly, unlike usual.”

Ah, this definitely wasn’t how Ha Jin would act. He was always on edge, perpetually irritated, and looked like he was ready to kill anyone who bothered him. Taking Kim Shin’s hint, I fell silent and focused on eating the meal delivered by one of Kim Shin’s sharply dressed employees. The food, which seemed to come from a high-end restaurant, was incredibly delicious.

After finishing lunch, I brushed off the clingy Kim Shin with a single word and headed to the library. With my knowledge of business administration practically nonexistent, I planned to spend my free period looking through some books. I swiped my card at the library entrance like I’d done it a thousand times and found a large table to study. Thirty minutes in, I couldn’t help but curse.

“Damn it. What does any of this mean?”

To someone like me, who had always dreamed of engineering, this was just a sea of black letters on white paper. I tried my best to make sense of it, but the terminology felt like a foreign language. My head made hollow, rattling sounds, and everything seemed dark and confusing. Even a decent engineering student like me could turn into an idiot in this new world of business administration.

Frustrated, I packed up my books and stood. There was no point in staring at something I didn’t understand—divine inspiration wasn’t going to strike. As I walked slowly, I noticed two people, their terrible personalities practically written on their faces, harassing someone who was trying to study.

Who picks fights with someone studying? They’re college students, for crying out loud.

Had I entered a school bullying webtoon instead of a campus one? Ah, Ha Jin shouldn’t think like this. In the webtoon, Ha Jin’s specialty was bullying Sun Woo while he studied—taking his books, deliberately spilling coffee on his laptop. He did all sorts of terrible things.

Wow, what a bastard. Good thing I possessed him before he could do those things.

As I got closer, the two troublemakers spotted me, and their faces slowly lit up. When I was within range, they waved enthusiastically.

“Oh, damn it.”

Yeah, I should've expected this. It made perfect sense for these types to be Ha Jin's friends. Ignoring their greetings, I passed by and warned them in a low voice. Ha Jin was the kind of character who could get away with being harsh.

"Why are you talking in the library?"

"Sorry, were we too loud?"

They immediately became submissive and started following me. I told them to shut up and not to follow me, but they didn't listen. As I headed out of the library with these two in tow, I caught a glimpse of who they had been harassing—it was Sun Woo.

Sun Woo's good at fighting, so why is he just taking it?

I clicked my tongue at the protagonist's incomprehensible behavior.

"Ha Jin, what's with that wound on your forehead? It wasn't there yesterday."

This guy must have been at the scene of yesterday's incident.

"That crazy bastard Jung Woo must have a death wish. Who does he think he is, approaching Ha Jin?"

"But how did he know to come there? Nobody invited him. After you left yesterday, Ha Jin, we just wrapped things up and everyone went home. What's the point of us gathering without you there?"

"It's creepy. How did he even know where to find us?"

"Jung Woo's getting way too big for his boots. Just because he has some money, he thinks he's on our level. Nouveau riche bastard doesn't know his place."

The two kept chattering as they followed me, but when I didn't respond, they finally got the hint and left on their own.

* * *

When I returned home after all my classes, I was first moved by the steaming food on the table and then touched again by the first aid kit placed beside it.

"Housekeeper."

When I showed my gratitude, the housekeeper gave me a cold look.

"Do I have to find it for you every time, young man?"

She pointed to the side of the TV cabinet with a ladle in her hand. It definitely hadn't been there when I looked earlier.

"I'll remember."

I answered, feeling intimidated by her presence, and started eating.

Wow, how long has it been since I had a home-cooked meal?

Living alone in this world was harder than I'd expected. It felt like standing under harsh sunlight with no shade—sometimes, a passerby might create a momentary shadow for me, but they soon left. Standing alone in that shadeless place sometimes felt suffocating.

Back in elementary school, when all I cared about was playing and my only worry was homework, I went on a family trip to Jeju Island. Wearing a tube float, I jumped into the azure sea and urged my parents to come in quickly too. But my parents—my solid fence, my shade—sank into the deep sea. I had to watch as they were swept away by the rip current, while I floated helplessly on an inappropriately cheerful yellow duck tube.

I'm sorry. It was my fault for asking to go into the water.

As soon as the rescue team pulled me out, I cried and apologized desperately. I thought that if I confessed my fault, they might somehow save my parents too. But the beautiful azure water only rippled a few times. The miracle of my parents reappearing never happened.

That's why this home-cooked meal, made just for me, felt so precious and wonderful. I must have looked pretty pathetic, sniffing while eating, because the housekeeper scolded me from the kitchen.

"Stop sniffing and blow your nose before eating, Ha Jin."

"Housekeepeer..."

I immediately got up from the table and hugged her, earning a knock on the head with the ladle before returning to my seat. I instinctively felt that bastard Ha Jin must have been well-behaved with the housekeeper.

Her food was warm and incomparably better than anything I'd eaten before. She watched me eat quietly and handed me a glass of water.

"It makes me so happy to see you eating well, Ha Jin."

When I looked at her with teary eyes, she clicked her tongue.

“Oh, stop acting pitiful. Someone might mistake you for a lost puppy.”

“It’s really delicious.”

“Then stop eating out and come home to eat.”

“Yes.”

I have to eat at home anyway, now that I’m penniless.

Damn it. Why did I have to possess Ha Jin right after he caused trouble? If he’s supposed to be so wealthy, he should at least have some cash stored away—or even gold bars! There wasn’t even a piggy bank with coins in it.

#005

“Shall we have lunch together again today?”

As class ended, Kim Shin smiled brightly beside me. I shook my head. He was always smiling in the webtoon too—faithful to his character. Despite saying he never came to lectures before, this guy had been occupying the seat next to me since the first class today. I could concentrate well enough when sitting next to Sun Woo, but this Kim Shin... did he have a certificate in annoying people? He kept talking and staring, and it was driving me up the wall.

When I gathered my books, Kim Shin didn’t follow. It seemed like an unwritten rule among people around Ha Jin not to do things he said not to do. Considering Ha Jin was a crazy person who could nearly kill someone if he was in a bad mood, it made sense to avoid crossing him.

Thinking about where to go, I remembered a place from the webtoon where no one ever went. I headed toward this perfect spot for a hideout. After a short walk, I opened the door, and the rusty hinges made a loud creaking noise. Even with the lights on, the room wasn’t very bright, as several fluorescent bulbs were burnt out. An A4 paper with “Business Administration Department” printed on it was drearily stuck to the wall.

As the sign indicated, this was the Business Administration department room. The university’s Business department was known for its wealthy students. Maybe that’s why you never saw anyone hanging around here. During breaks, everyone either drove off somewhere or went to exclusive social clubs. Nobody wasted time in this room filled with cheap, worn-out furniture.

Sitting on the old sofa with my feet propped up on the table, I contemplated whether I could skip lunch for a month. Suddenly, the creaky iron door opened, and there stood the protagonist who originally used this room as his hideout. I waved cheerfully and greeted him.

“Hi, Sun Woo!”

I didn't expect him to return the greeting, but he didn't have to show such obvious distaste. Upon seeing me, Sun Woo frowned and stood there, holding the door without stepping inside. He probably wanted me to leave, but sorry, protagonist. Let's share this space.

When I continued to sit there smiling, Sun Woo sighed, closed the door, and left.

“At least return the greeting,” I mumbled.

I pulled out my books, clutching my hungry stomach, and hoped that something would sink in if I kept reading. I made good use of the department room. The next day, I went there again, and like clockwork, Sun Woo appeared at lunchtime. But upon seeing me, he closed the door and left once more. And then again, the day after that.

Watching Sun Woo repeat this behavior—opening the door, confirming my presence, and leaving—for several days, I started wondering if he was some kind of macro program. After a week, on the first day of the new week, Sun Woo appeared at lunchtime just like always.

“Just come in. There's no rule saying only one person can be in the department room. What's wrong with sharing the space?”

At my words, Sun Woo finally seemed to give in and stepped inside for the first time.

“Hi, Sun Woo,” I said.

Still, Sun Woo ignored my greeting. No wonder Ha Jin had lost his temper and caused such a scene before. Clicking my tongue internally at Sun Woo's personality, I leaned back, propping my feet on the table and clutching my book, trying to ignore the gnawing hunger that came with my current state of hardship.

Peeking over my book, I noticed Sun Woo taking out a triangle kimbap. As he unwrapped it and took a bite, I gulped involuntarily. He frowned at my reaction, but I couldn't help it. I was starving! A 21-year-old guy with a high basal metabolic rate, skipping lunch every day—how could I possibly stay calm in the presence of food?

Forgetting my dignity, I found myself staring blankly at the triangle kimbap in his hand.

“What are you looking at? Never seen one before?”

At Sun Woo's cold voice, I realized I must have been staring way too intently.

“Huh? Isn't that triangle kimbap?”

“A rich kid knows about triangle kimbap?” Sun Woo’s sarcasm was razor-sharp. Still, I figured this might be my chance to score some food.

“Is it good? You’re eating it like it’s the most delicious thing in the world.”

“...,” he stayed silent, visibly annoyed.

“Can I try just one bite? I’ve always wondered what it tastes like.”

I must have looked desperate because Sun Woo’s expression turned into one of extreme irritation.

“You can’t eat this. It’s expired,” he said.

“Why expired?”

“It’s past its sell-by date.”

I wasn’t asking because I didn’t understand the word expired—I was questioning why that even mattered. Waving my hand dismissively, I tried to brush off his concern.

“Hand it over. It’s not like I’ll die from eating it.”

Give it here! Even if it was expired, it probably only passed its sell-by date by a few hours. I figured Sun Woo must work part-time at a convenience store, bringing back expired food, still quite poor at this point in the story. Desperate, I held out my hand, pleading for the triangle kimbap.

With an exasperated look, he tossed one to me, as if he were giving alms to a beggar.

“Thanks. I’ll buy you a proper meal next time,” I said, even though we both knew I was broke.

“Never mind. Just eat and stop talking nonsense,” he snapped.

I quickly unwrapped it, maybe too skillfully. Sun Woo stared at me like I was some kind of strange creature. I gave him a sheepish grin and happily devoured the kimbap, finally soothing my growling stomach. As I ate, I made sure to flash a grateful smile at Sun Woo, the provider of my daily bread.

“This is delicious!” I exclaimed, but Sun Woo didn’t offer any more food. With enough conscience not to steal more of his lunch, I turned my attention back to my book.

Damn, eating so little just makes me hungrier...

The next morning, I rummaged through the kitchen, taking out lunch boxes and stuffing them with rice and side dishes. The housekeeper noticed and approached, curiosity evident on her face.

“What are you doing, Ha Jin?”

“I’m... thinking of packing lunch for school,” I replied.

She looked at my attempt, unimpressed. “You call this packing lunch? It looks like you’re collecting food waste. Why pack lunch? Don’t you eat at school?”

I hesitated. “Well... I don’t have money.”

She sighed. “Oh dear, that’s what happens when you cause trouble.”

She must’ve remembered the situation with my suspended cards and the strict instructions not to give me any cash. Clicking her tongue, she took the container from my hands, pushing me aside.

“If you don’t have money, just get food from your friends. Why act so shabby, packing lunch like this? There’s a school cafeteria, you know.”

“Housekeeper, I... don’t have... friends,” I admitted.

Her expression softened, and she looked at me with pity. “Go get ready for school,” she said, resigned. “I’ll pack the lunch for you.”

“Housekeeper,” I said gratefully, walking up behind her and wrapping her in a big hug.

“Ha Jin, I’m holding a knife.”

“Ah, yes,” I quickly let go.

* * *

Sitting in the department room, I started second-guessing my decision to bring a lunch box. It felt awkward to take out an elaborate, homemade meal in front of Sun Woo, who probably only had a simple triangle kimbap again. Even though I didn’t want to care, I couldn’t help but be conscious of him, especially since he’d shared his food with me yesterday. If I started eating this lavish lunch box after he’d been generous, he might think I was mocking him.

That’s exactly the kind of assumption Sun Woo would make.

But I couldn't just not eat either, so I wracked my brain for a solution. Maybe he wouldn't come today... but, like clockwork, the door creaked open, and Sun Woo appeared. Ah, why does he look even more handsome today?

He glanced at me once, still without greeting me, and then sat down, taking out his food. After hesitating for a moment, I gathered my courage and called out to him.

"Sun Woo."

Without answering, Sun Woo just stared at me, a guarded expression on his face. Undeterred, I held up my lunch box and tried again.

"Let's eat this together," I offered with what I hoped was a friendly smile.

Sun Woo's expression clearly said, What's with this guy?

"No thanks. This is enough for me," he replied, pointing to his simple triangle kimbap.

"I brought a lot of food," I insisted, trying to sound casual.

"You eat it," he said, his tone as firm as ever.

"I'll get in trouble if I don't finish it," I added, hoping to appeal to his sense of reason.

"Next time, pack the right amount," Sun Woo shot back, rejecting me perfectly and decisively.

Feeling a little foolish, I mumbled, "Ah, um, okay," and opened my lunch box. The moment I saw its contents, I couldn't help but burst out laughing. The intimidating housekeeper had packed it with adorable decorations, like I was a kindergartener on a field trip. There were octopus-shaped sausages and heart-shaped rolled eggs, all arranged cutely with character picks.

"Pff," I snorted, trying to stifle my laughter. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed Sun Woo glancing at me, his brow slightly furrowed. Embarrassed, I lowered my head, my shoulders shaking as I tried to contain my giggles. When I finally managed to look up, I found Sun Woo's eyes fixed on me for a moment before he looked away, his expression as cold as ever.

He's really something else. If it were me, I'd at least ask why I was laughing.

From that day on, I made it a habit to offer my lunch to Sun Woo first, and he made it a habit to reject me each time. Then, feeling somewhat awkward but amused, I'd eat it myself.

—

Meanwhile, in the online world, the webtoon fandom was having a field day:

[The Lives of the Gold Spoons]

– Ha Jin's Banned List 2: No washing except with the sunflower showerhead.

└ What? But you need a cobra showerhead to clean thoroughly!

└└ Keeping a cobra is allowed.

└└ Wait, why are we suddenly talking about keeping a cobra? lololol

└ What about washing your face? Can't give up the splish-splash face washing.

└└ Splish-splash lololol who even washes their face like that?

└└ My dad does the splish-splash face wash lololol.

└└ Ha Jin doesn't wash his face. He only showers.

└ Crazy lolol this is series part 2 lolol.

└ Then can I brush my teeth with Pororo strawberry toothpaste while using the sunflower showerhead?

└└ Strawberry toothpaste lol, of course not!

└└ Ha Jin doesn't brush his teeth. Death penalty for drooling toothpaste foam.

└└└ But you'll get cavities if you don't brush!

└└└└ Light novel characters have magic teeth. Cavities don't exist!

└└└ lolol Ha Jin dies again while brushing teeth.

#006

School life was manageable enough. Though classes were still overwhelming, I was living the life of an extremely ordinary student without any incidents. On my way home, without even 1,000 won to my name, I walked. Thankfully, Ha Jin had gotten a place close to school; otherwise, I might have become like those protagonists in stories who walked over mountains for two hours with their bundles to get to school.

My steps were light as I wondered what delicious meal the housekeeper would make for dinner tonight. As I walked cheerfully, someone stopped me.

“Excuse me, student.”

A kindly-looking grandmother held out a crumpled piece of paper to me. Seeing her troubled face, I could tell something was wrong.

“What is it, grandmother?”

“I need to get to this place, but I forgot my glasses and can’t read the signs well. Could you help me?”

The grandmother, carrying bags full of goods, looked like she was bringing food to her children’s home. The paper had “OO Villa” written on it, but how would I know where that was? If I had a phone, I could check the map, but I was just a beggar without even a phone.

“I’m sorry, grandmother. I just moved here recently, so I don’t know the area well.”

“Oh dear, I’ve bothered the wrong person, then. Don’t worry about me, go on your way.”

The grandmother smiled kindly while gently pushing my back. As I reluctantly walked away, I looked back and saw her still holding the paper and looking around. After hesitating briefly, I turned back and approached her again. Seeing me return, she tried to shoo me away once more.

“No, no, it’s fine. I can ask someone else.”

“Let’s ask together.”

“Oh my, why bother?”

“Give me those bags.”

“No, no, they’re not heavy.”

“If they’re not heavy, then I can carry them.”

“My, what a cheeky student.”

The grandmother laughed and playfully patted my back as I took her bags. It was a pleasant touch—not painful, but warm, like a gentle caress.

We stopped a passerby to ask about the “OO Villa” written on the paper. They didn’t know either but said, “Just a moment,” and searched on their map app. Fortunately, it was a villa in a nearby alley. After bowing thankfully to the person, I smiled at the grandmother and told her I knew where it was. “Let’s go.”

Walking side by side, the grandmother asked me various things.

“Are you a student?”

“Yes.”

“Oh my, my grandchild is also a student.”

“Really? Since it’s nearby, are they in university?”

“Yes, A University.”

“Oh? I go to A University too!”

“Is that so? You go to a good school.”

“Your grandchild goes to a good school too. They must have studied hard. If they take after you, they must be good-looking too.”

“My, how do you speak such sweet words?”

The grandmother held my arm and laughed heartily. As I laughed along, she watched me for a moment before bragging about her grandchild.

“Looking at you reminds me of my grandchild. My grandchild is fair-skinned and pretty.”

“Prettier than me?”

“Oh my, how can you even ask? My grandchild was known throughout the neighborhood for being pretty since childhood.”

She must have a very pretty granddaughter. Looking at the grandmother’s face, if the grandchild took after her, they would definitely be pretty.

“That child came up to Seoul alone and is having a hard time.”

“They must be happy to have you taking care of them like this.”

“They’ve loved my cooking since childhood. I raised them as best I could... but I always feel sorry for not being able to do more.”

As we chatted about various things, we arrived at OO Villa. As I handed the bags back to the grandmother and said goodbye, she held me back.

“Student, why don’t you stay for dinner?”

"No, thank you. Someone's waiting for me at home too."

"Oh, of course! You should eat with your family at home. Thank you, student. Without you, I would have been wandering the streets for a long time."

"It's nothing, grandmother. Enjoy lots of delicious food with your grandchild. I'll be going now."

As I bowed and turned to leave for home, the grandmother called out again.

"Wait a moment, student."

The grandmother set her bags down and quickly came to me, pulling out a 10,000-won bill from her pocket and holding it out.

I raised both hands, strongly declining.

"Oh, come now. It's because you remind me of my grandchild. Won't you let this grandmother give you some pocket money?"

The grandmother quickly stuffed the money in my pocket and ran toward the villa. It didn't seem right to try returning it. Gratefully accepting the grandmother's kindness as if she were giving pocket money to her own grandchild, I bowed deeply once more. From a distance, the grandmother was waving her hand, saying, "Go on now."

Seeing that made me feel both melancholic and happy. Her grandchild must be really fortunate.

* * *

Sun Woo's expression had been looking better lately, though he was still cold toward me.

"What are you looking at?"

At Kim Shin's words, I withdrew my gaze from Sun Woo. Kim Shin smiled kindly and nodded his head toward something. Looking that way, I saw a tall woman wearing a hat pulled low, talking with one of Ha Jin's associates. While talking, she glanced at me, then quickly turned her head and left through the hallway. Since I'd never seen her before, she probably wasn't from our department.

As I sat quietly, Kim Shin asked with a low laugh:

"Aren't you going after her?"

"Why would I?"

“Right. I knew you’d react like that. I-na won’t last long either.”

Who’s I-na?

Kim Shin just smiled at me brightly. Seeing him smile as if amused by my reaction, I almost asked him who she was, but stopped myself. Ha Jin’s connections were probably just thugs anyway, so there was no need. Besides, if after two weeks I still didn’t know who someone was, we probably weren’t that close anyway.

* * *

“Ha Jin.”

As I was taking my lunchbox from my locker and about to open the department room door, a woman wearing a hat called my name coldly with a sharp tone from the corridor that should have been empty. I heard footsteps behind me, but I hadn’t expected anyone to be following me. It was strange enough that she followed me to the department room, but her hostile tone was even stranger.

Usually, people call my name very sweetly and politely.

Who is she to call me like that?

As I stood still, the woman had already approached me. With a mask on, I couldn’t make out her face, but seeing how loose even a small hat was on her, she must have a tiny face. Even though I couldn’t see her face at all, I could tell she was extremely angry. How peculiar.

“Ha Jin, you can’t be reached?”

“I don’t have a phone.”

“Are you crazy? Who says that in this day and age? Should we exchange letters instead?”

She had a point. Not having a phone in this smart era didn’t make sense. I completely agreed, so I couldn’t make excuses and just listened. This seemed to anger her more, and she let out a very slow sigh.

“Even so, you should be reachable somehow. You have endless ways of tormenting people. You’ll be my party partner today, right?”

“What party?”

“Chang Ki’s birthday. Didn’t you hear it’s today? Oh right, you don’t have a phone?”

She sarcastically pointed out my lack of a phone again. Come to think of it, Kim Shin did mention something about a yacht party and invited me... That must be it. Oh dear, I'd already told Kim Shin I couldn't go. It would look bad if I changed my mind now. Besides, it would probably just be full of rich thugs anyway.

"I'm not going."

"What? I've been patient for two weeks because you weren't going to other gatherings and I hadn't heard about you hanging out with other women. If you're going to treat me like yesterday's news like this, I can't take it anymore."

"Can't take it?"

I asked because I genuinely didn't understand. The woman flinched and took a step back.

"Damn, Ha Jin, you're really something. I'm risking getting kicked out of the broadcasting industry to date you. I know all about how people who get involved with you end up with ruined reputations and leave the industry. But I'm different from them. I'm on a different level! How can you do this?"

"..."

"Am I short on money? Brains? You know I'm different from those girls you date for money. You know my family's influential and deeply connected to political circles. That's who I am, dating you! A daughter from a prestigious family! An actress beloved by the public, getting involved with you!"

She caught her breath for a moment, clenching her fist so tightly her knuckles showed. Then, with great difficulty, she spoke:

"...Hah... I won't be possessive. I'll understand whatever you do. So please don't treat me like this. Ha Jin."

The woman was clearly hurt in her pride but still pleading with me.

Standing before her, I was at a loss in this situation that seemed both familiar and unfamiliar. So basically, Ha Jin was dating this popular actress from a good family and ghosted her for two weeks? Ha Jin did the dating, but I did the ghosting.

Still wounded in her pride from what she'd said, the woman was trying to steady her rough breathing. Either way, ghosting was wrong, so I started to apologize.

"Is your name I-na?"

I think Kim Shin mentioned that name earlier, though I wasn't sure since I hadn't paid much attention.

At my question, the woman stopped breathing and just stared at me. Though her face was covered, I could only see her eyes, but I could feel those eyes slicing me to pieces. If looks could kill, I would have died ten times over right there.

Muttering "bastard" under her breath, she walked away down the corridor. I didn't have enough information to chase after her. Seeing no other option, I entered the department room. Sun Woo, who usually came late, was already there.

'Ah, I wonder if he heard? The room's not very soundproof...'

"Hi, Sun Woo. You look even more handsome today?"

Sun Woo ignored my greeting as usual, but his gaze seemed upgraded somehow. If I had to measure it, it was about contempt level 2.

[The Lives of the Gold Spoons]

– Ha Jin's Banned List 3. No alarms

└ How do you wake up without an alarm?

└ Isn't an alarm essential?!

└└ Must wake up feeling Sun Woo's coldness when he's not around.

└└└ lol if you can feel that, shouldn't you wake up right when Sun Woo leaves?

└ lol it's already series 3

└ Alarms are necessary. What about being late?!

└└ Being late is no big deal for Ha Jin.

└ Is the "pa pa pa" alarm sound allowed?

└└ Ha Jin gets the death penalty the moment even a "p" sound comes from his alarm.

└└└ Ha Jin dies here again lolololol

#007

On my way home from school, I spotted a familiar figure from behind: a grandmother I recognized. I quickly ran over and snatched the plastic bags from her hands. It was the

same grandmother I had helped with directions and had often seen on my way home lately. Startled at first, she soon recognized me and began laughing, hitting my back repeatedly.

Huh? There's some real force behind this! It hurts.

"Oh my, are you trying to scare an old lady to death?"

"Ouch, grandmother. I'm sorry! Were you scared?"

"Of course I was scared! How could I not be?"

"I didn't know you'd be so startled. Please tell me your name. Next time, I'll call out to you so you won't be surprised."

The grandmother fell silent and looked at me thoughtfully after my question.

"What's wrong? Still angry?"

"No," she replied softly. "It's just... it feels like it's been a long time since someone asked for my name."

Her eyes grew moist as she grabbed my arm. She patted it gently with her palm and answered in a quiet voice.

"Kim Ok-bun."

"Ok-bun-ssi," I said immediately, calling her by name. She gave me a playful punch on the back and smiled gracefully.

"You little rascal, how dare you call an old lady by her name."

"What's wrong with it, Ok-bun-ssi? It suits you. It's a pretty name, just like your face."

"My, my, how did such a young person get so smooth-tongued?"

"What did you buy so much of?" I asked, gesturing at the bags.

"I'm going to make something delicious for my grandchild," she replied.

"Your grandchild is lucky, Ok-bun-ssi. I'm a good eater too, you know."

"Want to eat together?" she offered.

I shook my head. "No thanks. There's someone at home who gets really angry if I don't come back for meals."

“Must be a strict mother?” she guessed.

I just smiled. The grandmother smiled along with me, and warmth spread through my chest. Just talking and laughing with her filled my heart with joy.

“What’s your name?” she asked.

“I’m Ha Jin,” I replied.

“Oh my, so you’re Jin-ie,” she said, a hint of affection in her voice.

Taking just the end of my name, she repeated “Jin-ie” several times, then suddenly launched into matchmaking.

“Jin-ie, you’re pretty and gentle. You’d make a good bride for my grandchild.”

What? Grandmother, I think you misspoke. You mean groom, not bride, right?

Before I could voice my confusion, she took back her bags at the entrance to the alley. Then, she shooed me off and hurried away.

“See you next time, Ok-bun-ssi,” I called after her.

The grandmother shouted back, “Are you going to keep calling my name?” Her small laugh at the end of her words was warm and pleasant.

—

Early in the morning, Secretary Kim arrived at my house and handed me a phone. It was the latest model, the one constantly featured in advertisements. I accepted it awkwardly, earning an exasperated look from the early-rising office worker.

“Young Master Ha Jin, did you really throw away your phone?” she asked, clearly displeased.

“...Yes,” I admitted.

“My heart nearly stopped when I couldn’t reach you,” she said. “I wondered where I’d have to rush off to next. And if you think throwing away your phone is a good form of rebellion, you’re mistaken. They keep making more, you know.”

I could only laugh apologetically. Seeing my expression, Secretary Kim sighed and finally said something welcome.

"Your cards have been reactivated. These past few weeks have been the quietest since I joined this group. The Chairman is in a good mood, and the company is lively. Please remember the influence you have and keep things running smoothly."

"I'll do my best," I promised.

She handed over my car keys, and I saw her off with a polite bow. It seemed Ha Jin was finally stepping back into the role of a proper heir. Wary of causing more trouble, I made a quick note to the housekeeper, who was busy in the kitchen.

"Housekeeper, you don't need to pack lunch boxes anymore," I said.

"Did you make a friend?" she asked, curious.

"Ah, no..." I replied.

"Tsk," she said, clicking her tongue in disapproval.

—

"Sun Woo, let me buy you a meal," I offered, now that I could finally use my credit cards again.

Sun Woo stopped walking, gave me a look that reminded me of a wary stray dog, and said, "No thanks." He then continued on his way.

Damn protagonist's personality. Determined, I walked beside him, but he rejected me again.

"No need. Don't buy me food," Sun Woo said.

"Why not? Let's go eat something good. I'll treat you. I can't eat alone," I insisted.

Sun Woo shot me a look that said I was a nuisance, but then, for some reason, a hint of a smirk curled one corner of his mouth. Wondering about the sneering smile, I was surprised when he unexpectedly agreed.

"Fine then. But I choose what to eat," he said.

"Of course," I replied.

His face seemed to be plotting something, and I half-expected him to suggest some outrageously expensive meal at a five-star hotel. Instead, Sun Woo took me to a humble sundae soup restaurant right in front of our school. Ah, the author must have been a student here! This place was a well-known hangout for students seeking hangover soup.

The restaurant was packed with people, and we managed to snag the last table in a corner. Almost immediately, whispers started circulating around us.

“It’s Ha Jin.”

“What the hell is Ha Jin doing here?”

“Must be trying out the commoner life.”

“Wow, if Ha Jin’s here, this place must be legit good.”

“Owner, shouldn’t you get Ha Jin’s autograph?”

The whispers were nothing compared to what I used to hear. Before being possessed by Ha Jin’s character, I’d overheard rumors like, “Ha Jin must be here for hangover soup because Sun Woo rejected him,” or “Is he tired from filming some R-rated scene yesterday?” Remembering those made me involuntarily frown.

“If you don’t want to eat, we can leave,” Sun Woo said, misinterpreting my expression. His voice was indifferent.

“No, we should eat what you like. It must be good, seeing how packed this place is,” I responded with a bright smile.

Sun Woo ordered for both of us and then watched me quietly, his eyes reflecting a hint of curiosity. Though we were technically the same person, it felt like there was a strange disconnect between me and the character of Ha Jin, especially in this simple sundae soup restaurant. While I felt like I naturally fit into the setting, Ha Jin stood out, like oil refusing to mix with water.

Everything I wore screamed luxury, from the designer clothes down to the diamond-studded watch on my wrist. Even my underwear bore a luxury brand label. But it wasn’t just the expensive attire that set me apart; it was the aura I exuded, the pure chaebol energy that made me unapproachable.

When the food arrived, the server glanced at me and hesitated. “Would you like an apron?” she asked. I suppose my expensive clothes were hard to miss.

I told the server it was fine and picked up my spoon. As I debated whether to mix the rice into the soup, noodles suddenly appeared in my bowl. Startled, I looked up to see Sun Woo doing the unthinkable—he was putting the side dish noodles into my soup.

“You seemed like you didn’t know,” he said. “Eat them when they’re soft.”

Am I crazy? Why am I feeling touched by this? I rolled my eyes dramatically, pretending to be deeply moved. Was this really the same ice-cold Sun Woo who wouldn't even blink when Ha Jin made a fuss, desperately trying to get his attention?

Ha Jin, you should be bowing to me for this.

The sundae soup tasted perfect—comforting and grounding, the kind that both fills you up and clears your head. I ate the rice and soup separately, pretending it was my first time and that I didn't know any better, all to make sure Sun Woo wouldn't feel disappointed for having added the noodles. Though it really does taste best mixed together...

Even while we ate, Sun Woo kept glancing at me.

This is really touching.

"It's delicious, Sun Woo. Do you know any other good places?" I asked, grinning. "Take me there next time too. I'll treat."

Because Sun Woo, you've officially qualified as my eating companion. Quiet, undemanding, and focused—exactly how I like it.

When I finished my bowl clean, I tried hard to solidify my spot as his eating buddy. But Sun Woo just stood up without a word. Ah, I guess it's still too early to call us companions.

I handed over my card to pay and waited anxiously. Please don't decline. That would be so humiliating. Thankfully, with a satisfying ding, the receipt printed out smoothly.

"I'll come again," I said to the owner as we left. Sun Woo gave me a look that clearly said, Let's part ways here, but I ignored it and grabbed his arm. It must have been our first physical contact because he looked surprised, then quickly shook off my hand.

Ha Jin, see this? This is how you do skinship subtly. Not by forcefully pinning someone down.

"Sun Woo, let's get coffee," I suggested.

"No thanks," he replied flatly.

"I like having coffee after meals. While I'm buying mine, I'll get yours too," I pressed on. "You get sleepy after eating, right? Let's wake up with some caffeine."

Sun Woo looked at me strangely, as though trying to figure me out. It hit me then—Ha Jin wasn't supposed to be someone capable of casual, everyday conversation like this.

But hey, it was still early in the semester. Plenty of time for him to get used to the new me.

“I’m full. Thanks for the meal,” Sun Woo said, standing up.

“Huh? You’re just leaving? Won’t you have coffee with me?” I asked, trying to lure him with a smile.

But despite my sweet talk, Sun Woo made a beeline for school, stubborn as ever. *How does he resist the temptation of coffee so easily?* With a sigh, I headed in the opposite direction toward a nearby Starbucks. Instead of ordering Ha Jin’s usual espresso, I opted for a white chocolate mocha with espresso whipped cream on top. See? I kept a bit of the espresso tradition.

When my drink was ready, I eagerly took a sip right at the counter. Having been deprived of luxuries for weeks due to lack of money, I anticipated the heavenly sweetness. But as I took a big gulp, I almost spat it out.

It’s so sweet.

Damn. My little corner of happiness had betrayed me. It clashed horribly with Ha Jin’s refined taste. The sweetness was overwhelming, almost painful, and I couldn’t swallow it. Reluctantly, I dumped the coffee into the disposal bin. As I walked away, I heard someone who had recognized me whisper, “Crazy Ha Jin, wasting money at another level.”

—

[The Lives of the Gold Spoons]

– Ha Jin’s Banned List

No electric heating mattress

└ But it’s cold! At least give him a traditional heated floor, lolol.

└└ Light novel characters don’t feel cold.

└ Hey, Ha Jin still needs to survive winter!

└ Doesn’t Ha Jin sleep in a bed? An electric heating mattress is essential.

└└ Light novel characters are cold-blooded.

└└└ What’s with the cold-blooded comment, lol? Though I agree he’s kind of an animal.

└ Totally agree. Major mood killer the moment he turns on a heating mattress.

└└ Death penalty the second he goes “ahhh” while lying down on a heated mattress.

└└└ Yeah, death penalty.

└└└└ Isn't it the same whether he dies from cold or from using the heating mattress?

└ Mr. Ha Jin will be immigrating to a warm place with four seasons.

#008

Lately, I'd been completely overwhelmed. Trying to study business administration—something I'd never dealt with before—felt daunting. Midterms were just two weeks away. I couldn't help but wonder if I'd end up at the bottom of the class. It would be quite a sight to go from being at the top in freshman year to dead last now.

While lying on the department room sofa, mentally overloaded and spacing out, I heard the door creak open. Sun Woo's handsome face appeared.

He must have been coming here regularly. Well, it was his hideout. He hesitated briefly, surprised to see me, but then came in and sat down anyway.

“Sun Woo, how's your exam studying going?” I asked.

He didn't respond. That guy must be doing fine. He always came second to Ha Jin, but at least he was consistently the runner-up.

Ha Jin, where did your brilliant mind go? If you were going to possess me, you should have at least left your smarts behind.

I inwardly called out to Ha Jin's intelligence, hoping for a miracle.

“Not studying today?” Sun Woo suddenly initiated the conversation. It was the first time he'd done that. I couldn't stay lying down during such a monumental moment, so I sat up abruptly.

Sensing my intense gaze, Sun Woo wrinkled his brow, as if regretting speaking to me, and pulled out his books and laptop onto the table.

“My head feels like it's going to explode. I just can't look at books right now,” I admitted.

Sun Woo hesitated, as if wanting to say something, then finally spoke. “I thought people like you didn't study.”

"I thought so too," I replied. Only after I said it did I realize how odd it sounded, so I tried to cover it up with a laugh. Why am I talking about myself in the third person?

Sun Woo turned back to his books, seeming unwilling to continue the conversation. While I was feeling lost and disorganized, Sun Woo appeared to have everything under control. As I quietly watched him study, a brilliant idea suddenly struck me. I immediately pulled out my phone to call Kim Shin.

The phone barely rang before Kim Shin answered, his words pouring out in a rush: "Ha Jin? Why? What's up? You're actually calling me?"

I was momentarily surprised by his lightning-fast response time, though he probably hadn't been waiting with his phone in hand. Still, I had to find him.

"Where are you?" I asked.

"Me? At the club room," he replied.

"Stay there. I'm coming now."

"Okay, okay. I'll wait."

As I got up to leave after hanging up, I made eye contact with Sun Woo, who was still deep into his studies. "I'm going, Sun Woo," I said warmly, but, as expected, he ignored me. I was used to it by now.

The club room had a completely different atmosphere from the department room. Sunlight streamed in through windows that looked like they had been remodeled with the latest fixtures. The air conditioner ran smoothly, emitting a pleasant, fresh breeze. The sofa was soft and spacious, and the gleaming table didn't have a single scratch. It was clear that this place was well-funded.

Kim Shin greeted me with a bright smile. "What's this? You're actually reaching out to me first? Did our Ha Jin even know how to make phone calls?"

Ignoring his teasing, I glanced around the club room. With not a single book in sight, I couldn't help but wonder if these people ever really studied. I turned to Kim Shin, who seemed completely carefree, as if exam stress was a foreign concept to him.

"Can you get the previous exam papers for our department?" I asked quietly.

"Previous exam papers? Why?" he responded.

"Midterms are coming up," I explained.

"So?" he replied, as if the connection wasn't obvious.

What does he mean, 'so'? It was a bit embarrassing to admit, but those exam papers were my only chance at survival.

"To study for the exam," I said.

Kim Shin's eyes widened in disbelief. "What? Ha Jin, did you just say you're going to study?"

"Yeah."

He kept asking incredulously, "You? Study?" Why keep questioning it? Just get me the exam papers already. In the webtoon, he always managed to get anything Ha Jin needed. Kim Shin asked again, as if to make absolutely sure.

"You really want me to get them?"

"Yeah. Get them for me."

"But you're always first without studying," he insisted.

"..."

Damn it. Give me back Ha Jin's brain!

—

Kim Shin managed to get the previous exam papers within a few hours. As expected, his resourcefulness as a helper was top-notch. Of course, he couldn't resist asking again, "Are you really going to study?"

I just thanked him and made my way to my car. Right, I'll just memorize these. If nothing else, I could avoid the disaster of handing in a blank answer sheet.

But when I sat down to look at the papers at home, I hit another wall.

I couldn't figure out how to solve many of the problems. Honestly, I still didn't really understand what business administration even was.

"I'm doomed," I muttered.

The next day, I sat in the department room with the exam papers, waiting for Sun Woo. He was my only hope now. As always, he showed up precisely at meal time. When he saw me holding the papers, he quickly looked away and sat down, taking out his triangle kimbap.

"Sun Woo, going to eat?" I asked.

“Yeah,” he replied.

Even Sun Woo’s one-word answers made me happy. At least he wasn’t completely ignoring me. I was grateful for even this tiny bit of generosity, considering he usually acted like I didn’t exist. Watching him eat his triangle kimbap filled me with regret. I could buy him delicious lunches every day... Why didn’t Sun Woo keep an easy mark like me close? Maybe he had also read *The Lives of the Gold Spoons* webtoon?

I must have lost my mind from exam stress, judging by these ridiculous thoughts.

I waited until he finished eating. Sun Woo must have noticed my gaze, but he continued eating quietly, paying me no attention. If I were in his place, and someone stared at me like that, I probably would have wanted to gouge their eyes out. Our protagonist really is kind, isn’t he?

“Do you have something to say?” Sun Woo finally asked after he finished cleaning up his meal.

I handed him all the papers I was holding. Taking them reflexively, he looked them over and asked, “What’s this?”

“Previous exam papers for our department,” I said.

“Really?” He scanned them briefly and then tried to hand them back. Smiling, I gently pushed them back toward him. I had already made copies for myself.

“They’re for you. Keep them,” I insisted.

Sun Woo gave me a suspicious look but then slipped the exam papers into his bag. This guy, he refused everything else but accepted exam papers because of his scholarship? He once threw away car keys when Ha Jin tried to win him over with a new car. Ha Jin, you were hopeless from the start—never understanding what the other person truly wanted.

“Why are you giving these to me?” he asked. The way he tucked the papers away was kind of cute, but I knew if I smiled, he’d turn cold again. So I held back and got to the main point.

“Would you study with me using these exam papers?” I asked.

“Why? You got top scores at admission and you’re first in the department,” he replied.

“That was just luck. Now that I’m a sophomore, I’m really struggling to keep up with the classes,” I confessed.

Sun Woo thought about it for a moment. A very good sign. The fact that he didn't immediately refuse meant there was at least a possibility.

"It's okay if you refuse. I'm just asking. I won't ask for the papers back, even if you say no."

Hmm, what a pure-hearted friend I am, right? Sun Woo paused and then explained his situation.

"I don't have much time to study separately. I finish work past midnight. And I also work convenience store shifts at dawn every other day."

"Really? What about weekends?" I asked.

"I work weekends too. Finish in the evening."

Sun Woo, how are you managing to attend school normally? If it were me, I'd probably collapse from exhaustion with a massive nosebleed.

Being a protagonist isn't something just anyone can handle, I guess.

I felt guilty for taking up Sun Woo's precious time, so I just nodded.

"It's okay, Sun Woo. Thanks for considering it anyway."

I'd have to try studying on my own somehow. Even if I couldn't understand everything, maybe the professor would give me effort points if I included key words in my answers.

As I got up to leave the department room, Sun Woo called out to me.

"Ha Jin."

Wait, did he just call my name? The great Ha Jin-phobic Sun Woo?

Everyone! Neighbors! Sun Woo called my name! That Sun Woo, who kept his mouth shut tight and wouldn't call my name even when Ha Jin begged him to say it just once—he called my name!

I hid my inner celebration, but Sun Woo continued, his expression like he'd just bitten into a bitter persimmon.

"If you're okay with it, we can study here during free periods."

"Of course I'm okay with it. More than okay. Thanks, Sun Woo. You're saving my life!" I said, feeling a huge sense of relief.

“Don’t expect too much,” he added. “I might not be as good as you.”

What are you talking about? Ha Jin’s brain has flown away and I can’t find it. You’ll be top of the class now, Sun Woo.

I smiled genuinely, feeling the pressure of midterms start to ease.

I’m saved.

Since most of our classes overlapped, we could use our free periods efficiently to go over the exam papers. Sun Woo would explain various aspects of the problems and ask, “How about this kind of answer?” I would respond like an idiot, “Oh, yeah. I see,” like a broken robot.

It was literally a one-on-one tutoring session from Sun Woo, with zero input from me.

Damn, the protagonist really is smart.

Not only was he intelligent, but he was also so good at organizing and extracting key points that my empty head was gradually starting to fill up.

I wasn’t that dumb. Wasn’t I talented enough to enter the prestigious A University’s demanding engineering department? Somehow, I managed to cram Sun Woo’s explanations into my head.

Sun Woo would occasionally give me strange looks, as the only one talking while I remained completely clueless about even the basics of business administration despite our study sessions together.

His look of ‘How did this person get top grades?’ stung like a childhood vaccination.

Since it wasn’t a mutual exchange of ideas but just Sun Woo organizing everything alone, we weren’t progressing very quickly. So out of guilt, I bought him drinks and snacks. That’s how I learned something new: Sun Woo likes sweet things? How cute.

Friday. When he mentioned he didn’t have an evening shift today, I tried persuading Sun Woo again.

“Want to study at my place? It’ll be comfortable since I live alone. If it gets late, you can stay over.”

Sun Woo sighed, glancing at the exam papers that were still half-finished.

I felt sorry. I’d try harder for the next exam.

“Isn’t it kind of dark here? They say reading in dark places is bad for your eyes...” I let the sentence trail off, making excuses. Either way, I was the one who had to yield. If I was going to inherit the Eunha Group, I needed to maintain decent grades. Even if I couldn’t stay at the top of the class after entering with the highest score, I should at least stay in the upper ranks...

Wow, I’m even thinking about inheriting the Eunha Group? I guess I’m more ambitious than I thought.

“Okay,” Sun Woo said finally.

I immediately called the housekeeper to request dinner for two, telling him I’d wait in the car.

Sun Woo sighed once more before getting in. We didn’t exchange many words on the way to my place. It was strange. Seeing Sun Woo quietly riding in Ha Jin’s car was unusual. The Sun Woo I knew only ever rode in Ha Jin’s car when he was either completely drunk or kidnapped.

The thought made me laugh involuntarily.

“What?” Sun Woo looked at me strangely.

Oh, now you’re interested in my laughter? I’m touched. Ha Jin, if you want to feel this emotion, give me back your brain right now.

I couldn’t tell him the truth—that I was amazed he was calmly riding in my car—so I made something up.

“Just surprised to be talking with you and riding in a car together like this.”

“Must be fascinating for rich people? Doing this with ordinary people,” he remarked.

Why does he keep bringing up wealth every chance he gets?

While it’s not wrong that I’m wealthy, it’s actually fascinating because you’re a webtoon protagonist, not because you’re ordinary.

“It’s not that. It’s just my first time bringing a friend home. That’s what’s fascinating,” I explained.

I made my excuse. Honestly, Ha Jin never brought anyone home except Sun Woo. Even Kim Shin probably never set foot in Ha Jin’s house.

When we arrived home and went inside, we ran into the housekeeper, who was about to leave.

“Ha Jin, you’re home? But who’s this?” she asked, clearly surprised that I’d brought someone with me. Normally, when she runs into me while leaving, she just breezes past, always saying punctual departure is her life’s principle.

I introduced Sun Woo to the housekeeper, feeling a bit hurt.

“He’s my friend.”

“Oh my, Ha Jin finally made a friend? Congratulations!” she exclaimed, clapping her hands in genuine joy.

“Ah. Haha...” I chuckled awkwardly.

The housekeeper continued her celebration while Sun Woo’s gaze seemed to show a bit of pity. Perhaps because of that, Sun Woo didn’t contradict the housekeeper’s words about us being friends.

I was tearfully grateful to Sun Woo for that.

#009

Auntie had hurriedly prepared food for two people, yet she had set up a generous spread on the dining table. While telling Sun Woo to look around the house, I tried to heat up the soup, but then I noticed—an induction stove? This was my first time using one...

I went into the living room, thinking I’d search for instructions on my phone. Sun Woo, despite being told to look around, was sitting quietly on the sofa. When I approached, he stood up.

“Stay seated a bit longer. I’ll call you when it’s ready.”

“Let me help.”

“It’s okay. I just need to heat up the soup.”

After asking Sun Woo to stay seated, I took out my phone and searched for “induction stove instructions.” With my head down, studying the operating manual, I headed back to the kitchen. Standing in front of the induction stove, I cursed the unfriendly appliance.

“If it’s a power button, it should be labeled ‘power.’ What kind of power button is this?”

I was stumped by the induction stove, which only had symbols. While fidgeting with my phone, trying to find different instructions, I moved aimlessly, my back bumping into something. The sensation wasn’t hard, but soft, which was strange. Thinking, No way? I turned around and found Sun Woo standing very close to me. I had been so focused on

my phone that I hadn't noticed him approaching. Looking up, I saw his head was slightly above mine. He was taller than I thought.

"Should I turn this on?"

"Ah, yes. Auntie said to heat up the soup."

"I'll do it."

Sun Woo simply turned on the power and adjusted the temperature. As I watched in amazement, he showed the tiniest hint of a smile. Well, how slight? Like an ant's drop? It was so subtle that it would be embarrassing to even call it a smile.

"You've never used one before, have you?"

"Huh? No."

Having only used gas stoves before, I answered honestly, but Sun Woo seemed to assume that Ha Jin, coming from a wealthy family, had never done any kitchen work at all. I was just someone who had never used an induction stove before.

Not good at studying, can't even operate something like this. I wonder how much of an idiot Sun Woo thinks I am...

Soon, the soup was bubbling, and Sun Woo and I sat across from each other to eat. I praised Auntie's cooking skills and mentioned how she had packed lunch for me, telling him how much I laughed when she made character-shaped food.

It was like a 99:1 ratio—me doing 99% of the talking, while Sun Woo contributed 1% with responses.

His replies were mostly just "yeah" and "mm-hmm," but I was touched that he was actually listening.

"It's funny how I'm touched by just this."

After finishing the meal, Sun Woo helped clean up. When I hesitated at the sight of the dishwasher, which I'd never used before, he smoothly operated it without a problem.

How cool. Our protagonist.

After cleaning up, we went to the study room to prepare for exams. I had Sun Woo sit in the nice chair while I brought over a backless stool and sat beside him. It felt strange studying so close to him for the first time.

In the webtoon, Sun Woo never let Ha Jin get close to him, so Ha Jin probably never got to smell that soap scent coming from Sun Woo, right? Being close to someone who was good at everything, handsome, and smelled nice made me feel... good.

Plus, thanks to the protagonist, my nearly-failed midterms might be salvageable. He's just so lovely.

"Sun Woo, do you wear perfume?"

"No."

"But you smell nice."

When I leaned in to sniff, Sun Woo rolled away in his chair to distance himself from me. I couldn't follow, since my stool had no wheels. Thinking I might have seemed creepy, I just laughed.

"I'll stop. Come back."

Sun Woo shot me a suspicious look before rolling his chair back to its original position. And so began Sun Woo's tutoring session. I opened my laptop and carefully noted down everything he said, responding with "yeah" and "right." Unlike during dinner, now it was 99% Sun Woo talking and 1% me making dumb "yes, you're absolutely right" responses.

As Sun Woo continued explaining, the professor's lectures from class started lining up in my head, organizing themselves into relevant folders. Ah! So that's how the professor's words apply here. That's why they used that example. Oh, so that's what they meant!

I was gaining enlightenment as if receiving divine revelation.

The study guide, which had been half-done, was now almost finished. Everything was thanks to Sun Woo's genius mind. While I was barely keeping my tired eyes open trying to listen, my head suddenly dropped and hit the corner of the laptop.

"Ouch."

Even when I opened my eyes in surprise from the pain, I felt dazed.

"You seem tired. Let's stop here."

"Sorry. I'm so sleepy."

I stretched my stiff body and let out a big yawn. Blinking my dry eyes, I saw Sun Woo packing his things into his bag.

"I should go."

"Huh? Why?"

"Let's stop for today."

"No, I mean... you're leaving? It's late. Just stay over."

"It's fine. I have to go to my part-time job tomorrow."

"You could sleep here and go in the morning. Where do you work? I can drive you tomorrow."

"No need. My home is close by."

"But it's so late now."

Looking at the clock, I saw it was 2 AM. Crazy. I had kept him here, tiring him out, when he had work tomorrow, without even noticing the time pass. I smacked my forehead and got up, grabbing Sun Woo's bag.

"Just stay. We have a spare room."

I quickly placed his bag on the desk and grabbed his wrist. As I stood there with my eyes half-closed from sleepiness, suddenly a scene from the webtoon flashed in my mind. The scene where Ha Jin forcefully brought a drunk Sun Woo home and grabbed his wrist to drag him to the room. And then there...

A chill ran down my spine.

I carefully let go of his wrist and apologized with an awkward smile, saying, "Sorry." Sorry for what Ha Jin did to you when you were drunk. Sorry that I read that kind of webtoon.

Sun Woo wrapped his grabbed wrist with his other hand and quietly looked at me. I smiled and made one final attempt.

"Stay over."

If he insisted on leaving now, I was planning to let him go. After that webtoon scene came to mind, things felt quite awkward...

Sun Woo stayed quiet for a moment longer, then nodded.

What? What was that? That wasn't a rejection, was it?

My half-closed eyes flew wide open in surprise.

“Oh! Then I’ll get you comfortable clothes. Want to shower?”

My voice came out sounding flustered. Feeling embarrassed about appearing as excited as a teenage boy, I felt my face growing warm. Really, I was being ridiculous.

Even seeing my reddened face, Sun Woo seemed unfazed.

“Where should I sleep?”

“Follow me.”

Sun Woo quietly followed me. After showing him to the spare room, I told him to wait a moment while I gathered a T-shirt and shorts to give him. Since there was an attached bathroom, all I had to do was close the door and say goodnight to Sun Woo. In this absurd situation, I stared blankly at him, wondering if this was really happening.

“Anything else?”

“When do you finish work tomorrow?”

“Around 9 PM.”

“Then want to come back here? So we can study together tomorrow evening too?”

I spoke and immediately regretted it. He’d probably be tired if he had to study continuously without rest. As I was about to take back my words, Sun Woo easily replied, “Sure.”

“Really?”

Shit... that just sounded totally dorky.

Sun Woo nodded slightly. Then, in my excitement, I went too far.

“I’ll pick you up.”

Sun Woo smiled—not ant-pee-sized, but ant-poop-sized.

“How would you know where?”

“Anywhere.”

“No thanks.”

Only after being rejected did I come back to my senses. Realizing I'd said something ridiculous—as if Ha Jin had temporarily possessed my body—I quickly said, “Good night,” and left.

Flustered, I hesitated briefly in front of the door before returning to my room. Though I knew I should shower, I just threw myself onto the soft bed. Ah, I should at least take off my clothes... But I fell asleep just like that, collapsed randomly on the bed.

In my sleep, I dreamed of Sun Woo staring at me like a grim reaper. I tried to beg him not to take me, but no words came out, only groaning sounds.

Gasp, the reaper Sun Woo was approaching. I tried to turn my head, but my body wouldn't listen. Was this sleep paralysis? I tried to move, but could only twitch. Then reaper Sun Woo placed his hand on my forehead and gently covered my eyes. For a grim reaper, his hand was warm. At his touch, the paralysis lifted, and my body relaxed.

“Damn, what a weird dream.”

Waking up, I shuddered at the dream of Sun Woo as a grim reaper and checked the time. It was past noon. Wow, how long did I sleep? When I went straight to the room where Sun Woo had slept, he had already left, even folding the bedding.

The neatly folded blanket was so like Sun Woo that it made me laugh.

Sun Woo rang the doorbell shortly after 9 PM.

Waiting quietly at the entrance, I opened the door and asked as he entered, “Want to shower?”

Having blurted out something that sounded like a newlywed couple, I severely scolded myself inside, ‘Hey, you idiot.’

Sun Woo was looking at me with bewildered eyes.

I just shut my mouth and led him to the living room sofa. Following me, Sun Woo stopped when he saw the table.

Beer and delivered pizza were spread out on the table.

“Let's eat something light before studying.”

Sun Woo silently looked at it.

“We can start studying right away if you prefer.”

Shit, shit, shit. Why did I thoughtlessly prepare this without thinking it through?

It was meant to be my way of showing gratitude, but now it felt awkward. Sure, between normal friends this would be natural, but things were still very awkward with Sun Woo. Somehow it felt like I was walking down a path of unrequited love for someone who had no interest in me.

How was I any different from Ha Jin at this rate? Just a different approach, that's all.

After seeming to contemplate for a moment, Sun Woo sat beside me and opened a beer can. At that sound, I also opened one and blurted out the stupid words, "Good work today."

Oh god, what's wrong with me... Everything I say just keeps coming out wrong.

Feeling awkward, I turned on the TV and randomly put on some variety show channel. Then I drank a whole can of beer, using the pizza as a snack. As expected, cold beer was the best. Sun Woo and I started eating without much conversation.

After finishing one can, I reached for another, but I noticed a strong alcohol smell on my breath. The kind of smell you'd only get when completely drunk.

My body felt completely normal, but the smell of alcohol hit me strongly, making me pause before grabbing the can. The loud TV screen wasn't blurry, and the sound wasn't buzzing—everything was just fine.

Though I felt drunk inside, my body was functioning perfectly normally. Strange? I thought, as I grabbed and opened another beer can. But unlike the first refreshing, crisp taste, it felt like harsh liquor entering my body, making me freeze after just one sip.

Huh? Could it be?

Damn... So Ha Jin can't drink alcohol either, just like they can't eat sweets?

I felt anger rising at this character who just borrowed my face but made no sense. I can eat sweets and drink well, damn it. If they're going to use my face for a character, they should match these traits too.

Above all, it lacks consistency. A character who does all sorts of terrible things, but is weak to alcohol? They made him such a lightweight that one can of beer is his limit?

Come to think of it, in the webtoon, even when everyone else was drunk, Ha Jin never was.

How could I have thought they were really good at holding their liquor when they just didn't drink? Was that my mistake? Wouldn't all readers think the same?

I sat quietly, trying to make sense of it all, when Sun Woo nudged me.

“What’s wrong?”

“Sun Woo.”

I looked at him completely normally, calling his name clearly. My pronunciation was precise, and my eyes were sharp—so much so that it was hard to believe I was drunk. That’s when I realized it. While my body appeared normal on the outside, I couldn’t control it. If I were in my right mind, I wouldn’t be saying nonsense like this:

“Sun Woo. Your lips look delicious.”

#010

“What’s so delicious? Are you crazy? Can’t you keep your mouth shut?”

No matter how much I scream internally, my mouth keeps smiling and spouting nonsense without hesitation.

“Sun Woo. Are you a good kisser?”

At my casual question, Sun Woo looks at me quietly, assessing whether I’m drunk. But seeing no signs of intoxication, he only looks puzzled.

“You want to know?”

“Yes.”

“Why are you curious about that?”

Sun Woo answers calmly. He doesn’t seem to think I’m rambling from drunkenness; instead, he interprets it as an odd yet genuine question. My body, disconnected from my brain, forms a sweet smile directed at Sun Woo.

“I was thinking about what it would be like to kiss you.”

Ah... I’m doomed. Honestly, I had thought about it before. Seeing Ha Jin, in the webtoon, struggle while completely falling for Sun Woo, I always wondered what was so great about him. Ha Jin cursing between kisses, feeling such intense emotions... I couldn’t help but be curious if it was really like that.

But curiosity aside, I never intended to ask him. And yet, here I am, feeling the urgent need to sew my misbehaving lips shut. My body is completely out of control.

‘Ha Jin’s drunken habits are terrible! Seriously...’

“Why did you think about that?”

I expected Sun Woo to look at me with disdain, but he doesn't. Instead, he listens quietly, trying to understand, as if he were a model student searching for the right answer. My unruly face smiles again.

"You're my type."

No. No. You're not my type—you're Ha Jin's type. If Ha Jin's spirit has possessed me, I wish it would leave, just sparing me my clear mind. But judging by my silly smile, it can't be Ha Jin. That guy doesn't know how to smile; at most, he can sneer. So this must be my unconscious self speaking.

"Really? You have an unusual taste."

"I want to kiss you."

"Now?"

"Yeah. I want to try it once. Would that be okay?"

I speak in a sweet tone, one you might use when whispering to a lover. Sun Woo puts down the beer can in his hand, staring at me intently. My gaze falls on his handsome face, his lips drawing my attention. Feeling an unexpected thirst, I wet my lips with my tongue. Sun Woo's eyes narrow at the sight.

"Are you drunk?"

Yes! I'm drunk. Please knock some sense into me.

"No. Do I look like it?"

"I asked because you look completely sober."

"I'm not drunk."

"Alright. Come here."

"Huh?"

"You said you wanted to kiss."

What?

Sun Woo turns to face me, waving a hand to beckon me closer. What is happening? Even in my dazed state, I smile brightly and reach out, placing my hand beside his thigh and leaning in. As we draw closer, our breaths mingle, creating a warm, intimate space between us.

Sun Woo gently holds my chin, tilting it upward as I gaze at him.

“I might not be good at it,” I whisper.

“That’s okay. I might not be good either; it’s my first time.”

“Are you trying to seduce someone with that obvious lie? I’ve heard about your experiences, some firsthand.”

“It really is my first time.”

“I don’t believe you, but it’s nice to hear.”

His eyes—normally light brown and clear—darken with heat as he leans closer. Sun Woo’s finger lightly brushes my lips, which respond to his touch. I stick out my tongue slightly between my parted lips. Sun Woo frowns at this but doesn’t pull away. Instead?

His face moves even closer until our lips meet. They touch softly at first, tasting one another. His hand, still holding my chin, slides down, and his hot tongue slips between my parted lips. When I wrap my tongue around his, his eyebrows twitch, and he deepens the kiss, passionately exploring every corner of my mouth.

Sun Woo was completely wrong about not being good at kissing.

Though my body acts without control, my mind was clear—until his kisses melted that clarity away. My fingers tangle in his hair, pulling him closer as we continue exploring each other’s mouths. We finally break apart, gasping for air when breathing becomes too difficult.

As we pulled apart, the breath I had been holding burst out.

“Haa…”

“Are you okay?” Sun Woo asked, concerned as I struggled to catch my breath. Still flushed and warm, I found myself provoking him again despite his gentle care. I followed his fingers with my lips, brushing against them.

Sun Woo withdrew his hand with stiff movements, his body tense. I immediately missed his touch. Breathing heavily, I practically begged in a small voice.

“Sun Woo. Let’s do more.”

At my whispered plea, a fierce light flickered in Sun Woo’s eyes. His gaze, now dark and intense, held no trace of the innocence I had seen before. His face came close to mine once more, and when his lips captured mine again, it felt as if I were being devoured.

‘Sun Woo is definitely a good kisser.’

Now, when I gasped for air, he would pause and give me a moment to recover. But as soon as I seemed settled, he would dive in again, more forceful and passionate. Completely surrendering to his lead, I was lost in the rhythm of his rough kisses. Sun Woo seemed pleased, watching me with a satisfied smile. My lips tingled, swelling from the intensity of our kissing. A delicious drowsiness crept over me, my eyelids growing heavy, and my movements slowing.

Noticing this, Sun Woo pulled back. His face was flushed, his features strikingly sensual—far more captivating than the Sun Woo from the webtoon. Now I understood Ha Jin’s obsession.

“Ha Jin. Are you sleepy?” he asked softly.

“Mmm...” I murmured.

“You’re drunk, aren’t you?”

“No.”

“Yes, you are,” he replied, unconvinced. Despite my protests, he gently held me to his chest, stroking my hair with his large hand. The comforting sensation lulled me into a deep sleep, unable to stay conscious any longer.

When I woke up the next morning, I was neatly laid on the bed. I remembered getting drunk and falling asleep in Sun Woo’s arms. He must have carried me to the room... My fingers brushed my swollen lips, still sensitive from last night’s kisses. Memories of the scene replayed vividly, and I shut my eyes tightly.

“Let’s die, Ha Jin,” I groaned.

* * *

Dragging my reluctant feet, I made my way to my academic advisor’s office, exuding the aura of someone heading to exile. The mere thought of facing Sun Woo after my drunken antics made my stomach churn. I needed to explain or apologize, but without any way to contact him, I was stuck waiting until we met in person. Asking Kim Shin for Sun Woo’s number was out of the question; Kim Shin would bombard me with questions I wasn’t ready to answer. He was far too nosy about my personal life.

So I resigned myself to dealing with it whenever we crossed paths at school. What I didn’t expect was to be summoned by my academic advisor as soon as I arrived. After a polite knock, I stepped into the office, where the bespectacled professor greeted me warmly.

The friendliness made me feel guilty for not wanting to be there. I felt like absolute trash.

“Hello,” I greeted.

“Ah, Ha Jin! Come in, have a seat,” he said, gesturing to the sofa. I sat where he indicated, and he joined me, sitting across from me.

“How is Chairman Yu doing?” he asked.

“Father is... doing well,” I replied, though in truth, I hadn’t seen or spoken to him since our first meeting. Secretary Kim had mentioned that the Chairman was happy as long as I stayed out of trouble.

The professor adjusted his glasses, lifting them slightly before setting them back on his nose. The movement seemed oddly precise.

“Yes, I should pay my respects sometime, considering all the help he’s given me. But with the Chairman being so busy, I wouldn’t want to take up his time,” he said.

“Ah, yes...” I mumbled.

“Are you adjusting to school life without any difficulties?”

‘It’s extremely difficult! I don’t understand a thing!’ I screamed internally. Professors always asked these questions out of politeness, so I offered the standard answer.

“No, no difficulties,” I replied.

“I’ve noticed you’re attending your classes quite diligently these days. You’re really making an effort, Ha Jin. I’m pleased,” he said, smiling.

“Ah. Yes,” I muttered. Getting praised for simply attending class—Ha Jin really had set the bar low.

The professor’s smile broadened, and he stood up to retrieve an envelope from his desk. He handed it to me, and I accepted it with both hands, unsure what it contained. Before I could ask, he offered an explanation that left me puzzled.

“Don’t worry about your grades.”

“Pardon?” I said, taken aback.

“I understand it must be hard for you, especially after that big incident. It won’t be like your freshman year. There’s a lot of media attention these days, so just make an effort where you can,” he said.

“What... effort?” I asked, hoping for clarification. But the professor only laughed awkwardly, and I sensed that pressing him further would be pointless. Still confused, I left his office clutching the envelope. How were my grades and this supposed “effort” connected? I couldn’t make sense of it.

‘Ah! So, are they asking me to fill my empty head with effort? Damn,’ I thought, still reeling from the professor’s confusing message. Worried about being late for class, I hurried to the lecture hall without even glancing at the contents of the envelope.

[The Lives of Golden Spoons]

– Ha Jin Forbidden List #5: Studying Forbidden

↳ What? Isn’t Ha Jin a college student? How can they forbid studying? lololol

↳ What about grades if he doesn’t study?

↳ The Crown Prince gets top grades with natural intelligence.

↳↳ LOL, how can you get something from nothing, no matter how gifted? Create something from nothing? Wow—that’s extreme.

↳ You know Ha Jin’s exams are super easy, right? It’s a piece of cake, right?

↳ Ha Jin, you should pull all-nighters studying and get nosebleeds.

↳↳ Nosebleeds only allowed in bed.

↳↳↳ That would stain the white bedsheets.

↳↳↳↳ Well, he’s rich; he’ll just buy new ones.

↳↳↳↳↳ LOL, acting cool like they’re not Ha Jin LOL.

↳ Been waiting for list #5 LOL. It’s increasingly telling him to do nothing LOL.

↳ Let Ha Jin say he’ll check his phone for just 10 minutes while studying, but end up using it for 4 hours. We all do that, right?

↳↳ Ha Jin doesn’t use his phone normally.

↳↳ Take down student posts ^^

↳ Want to see Ha Jin wearing glasses and frowning while studying.

↳↳ Ha Jin has 9.0 vision, doesn’t need glasses.

LLL Why bring up vision here? LOL. And what's 9.0? Is he a hawk? LOL.

L Ha Jin's happy cry after exams: "Yes! 0 won scholarship!!!!"

LL Clap, clap, clap. Congratulations, Ha Jin.

LL Was confused for a sec LOL. A 0 won scholarship means full tuition, right? LOL, that's nothing to be happy about!

L Breaking News: A University's Ha Jin considering abolishing exams.

LL Thought the university president was considering it LOL, but it's Ha Jin LOLLOLOL.