

# **Yes, It's Me. The Obsessive Side Top**

## **##031 - Read Yes, It's Me. The Obsessive Side Top #031**

#031

When I opened my eyes, there was Sun Woo's intensely mature face, filtered through Ha Jin's lustful demon lens. Looking at his mesmerizing face, I couldn't even say my words had slipped out by mistake.

Would Sun Woo properly understand what I meant? As I watched him anxiously, worried he might find me disgusting again, Sun Woo got up from the bed.

"I'll go wash up."

Sun Woo said this and walked to my bathroom with familiar steps.

His movements were uninhibited, as if this wasn't his first time in my room.

I lay on my side, just blinking my eyes toward where Sun Woo had disappeared. My mind was hazy but my eyes wouldn't close. I just wished I could fall asleep before Sun Woo came out. My mouth kept getting dry, and my toes kept curling from tension.

"Wait. Did Sun Woo take clothes to change into? Should I bring a pillow and blanket from the guest room...?"

After pondering for a while, I finally weakly got up to head to the guest room, when the bathroom door opened and Sun Woo appeared with steamy vapor. He had only a towel around his waist and hadn't even dried his dripping hair.

Sun Woo's body in real life was incredible.

His chest was thick and his shoulders quite broad, matching well with his tall height. The water droplets running down his well-defined abs caught my gaze, making it impossible to look away.

"Where are you going?"

"Ah, to get a pillow and blanket."

"What for? Seems like enough here."

My bed is wide so the bedding is sized accordingly... Wait, is he suggesting we share one blanket?

“Clothes?”

Would he be naked if he removed the towel? The curiosity made me ask without thinking. Sun Woo smiled amusedly at my foolish question.

“I don’t wear clothes when I sleep.”

‘Ah... Huh? W-what?’

Is it because it’s rated 19+? Come to think of it, I don’t remember seeing Sun Woo wearing clothes while sleeping in the webtoon.

The image of his naked form becomes clearer in my mind.

Why do I have memories of Sun Woo’s naked body when I’ve never seen it! Damn 19+ webtoon! Why are you so detailed with unnecessary descriptions. It was quite big... Ahhh! Disappear! I said disappear!

When I shook my head trying to rid it of floating images of naked Sun Woo, he laughed softly.

“I’m joking. Lend me some clothes.”

Ah... so it was a joke.

“I’ll go get some.”

“Stay in bed. I’ll find something to wear.”

Sun Woo soon left the room. I briefly considered following him to get blankets in a non-awkward way. As I crossed the living room heading to the guest room, Sun Woo, already dressed, called out to stop me.

“Where are you going?”

“To get a blanket and pillow.”

“Come here, Ha Jin.”

Though it was a command, his gentle tone made it not feel intimidating at all. Is Sun Woo’s gentleness exceeding lethal doses today?

Like an obedient child, I turned back toward the room at Sun Woo’s call. When I headed to the room, Sun Woo followed silently. As he came in and closed the door behind him, my face strangely felt hot.

‘No. No way. It’s not like that, Ha Jin. Get rid of that dirty filter.’

Trying to calm my unnecessarily excited heart, I looked at Sun Woo with a very awkward smile.

“Lie down. You look really sleepy.”

Right. Sun Woo’s just doing this because I look tired. I was the one who suggested sleeping together. He’s just being kind, I told myself repeatedly as if making a pledge. Then I quietly lifted the blanket. After getting in with a proper posture and lying down awkwardly, Sun Woo climbed onto the bed. He lay beside me, propped on his elbow with his hand near my ear, watching me from the side.

Though he must have used the same products in the bathroom as me, somehow the scent coming from Sun Woo felt unfamiliar. So much so that I questioned if it was really what I usually used.

Looking at him still damp, I thought again how truly incredible his face was. Well, his body... was good too.

Come to think of it, those moist eyes that used to drive Ha Jin crazy were now gone. They were definitely always wet-looking in the early days after the possession. Not that his face became any less sensual, but his gaze had clearly become sharper and cooler.

As I was admiring his face, his wet hair bothered me.

“Are you sure you don’t need to dry your hair?”

“It’s fine. It’ll dry quickly.”

Yet he worried about me catching a cold when my hair was wet.

“What about a pillow?”

While I was thinking he should use something as a pillow... Sun Woo asked me to lift my head for a moment. When I did, he smoothly took away the pillow behind my head and extended his arm under my head.

“Tell me if it’s uncomfortable.”

It’s very uncomfortable, actually?

So this is an arm pillow, right? Sun Woo is giving Ha Jin an arm pillow? Unless Ha Jin cut off Sun Woo’s arm to use as his own pillow, how is Sun Woo voluntarily offering his arm as a pillow?

I strained my neck, trying my best not to touch his arm.

Noticing my stiffness, Sun Woo wrapped his other arm around me, embracing me. Due to the completely close position, his breath repeatedly touched my ear hotly before disappearing. I shrank my shoulders at that tingling sensation.

“Uncomfortable?”

“...No.”

Though it was uncomfortable, I didn’t want to say so because I feared Sun Woo would move away.

Being in physical contact with someone is really nice after all.

The warm body temperature and rhythmic breathing sounds were so pleasant that my tense body naturally relaxed. Finally, I closed my eyes while fully leaning on Sun Woo’s arm.

“You seem to have nightmares when you sleep.”

“Me?”

At my drowsy response, Sun Woo patted around my chest area. Maybe because I hadn’t received such warm gestures from anyone since childhood, the bridge of my nose kept stinging and my eyes grew hot.

“When we slept together before. I came to your room to tell you about going to work, and you were groaning in your sleep. I wondered if you were having a nightmare.”

Ah, that must have been when Sun Woo appeared like a grim reaper in my dream. I must have mistaken him for sleep paralysis in my drowsy state. Then was that gentle touch covering my eyes also from Sun Woo?

Feeling sleep overtaking me, I answered “No” in a fading voice.

Just as the patting was making me unsure whether this was reality or dream, I felt the mattress dip beside me and something damp touched my forehead. The cool sensation made my eyes flutter before opening slightly. What touched my forehead was none other than Sun Woo’s wet hair. His face was close enough for his hair to touch me.

In the room without any lights,

Only moonlight filtered in through the window. Sun Woo, backlit and leaning over me, looked exactly like a mystical creature come to enchant someone. His face drew closer, and soon his lips lightly touched my eyes before pulling away.

“Why are you crying?”

There was a slight moisture on his lips.

I must have been crying without realizing it.

When Sun Woo asked why I was crying, I tried to think of the reason but couldn't come up with anything. Well, I'm not sure myself. Why am I crying? I'm not usually someone who cries easily.

When I didn't respond, Sun Woo gently stroked my eyes. His very slow, gentle touch felt especially tender. This made tears well up again and soon roll down the sides of my face.

“...”

Whatever he was thinking, Sun Woo quietly watched me cry. I was grateful he didn't say anything, since I couldn't properly explain why I was crying now.

I'm not someone with unstable emotions.

Nor am I someone who cries easily.

Just...

I must have been starved for human touch.

After my parents passed away, I was sent to relatives who volunteered to be my guardians, but one day I found out there wasn't a penny left of my inheritance. They said they spent it all raising me, but how much could it cost to raise one child for 5 years? They didn't even send me to a single academy.

I felt neither anger nor frustration, just emptiness. I'd never felt any human warmth from them anyway. I didn't even feel betrayed since they'd only provided basic necessities. Fortunately, with help from my father's hometown friend who kept in touch out of concern, I managed to save some money and become independent. I was only in middle school then.

At that young age, I built thick walls around myself to prevent anyone from taking what little inheritance I had left. I distrusted people's kindness and refused to rely on anyone. Even though I was exempt, I volunteered for active military service, worried about potential social complications.

It was truly awful not being able to open my heart to those who approached with kindness.

I'd always been alone, so much so that I couldn't even tell it was strange how Ha Jin's family was falling apart.

Someone who was always alone suddenly receiving warm gestures from a trustworthy person – it just felt so good.

Sun Woo is the undoubtedly trustworthy protagonist, after all.

Though it was through a webtoon, I know everything about Sun Woo. Of course, the Sun Woo I know is different from now – sad and dispirited – but I know his inner self, right? Thanks to that, I think I've opened my heart to another person for the first time.

So this is what human comfort feels like.

But I can't just happily accept it.

As Ha Jin who's done terrible things to Sun Woo. I wonder if it's okay for me to receive such tenderness from him.

I swallowed the unspoken words and smiled with closed eyes.

Oh dear, I must be suffering from lack of affection.

"Haa."

Sun Woo's sigh broke me from my thoughts. He whispered softly in my ear with a low voice.

"You know you drive people crazy?"

His warm hand that had been patting my chest moved to stroke my face.

"Ha Jin requires a lot of attention."

Sun Woo said this with a slight smile, then immediately covered my lips with his. The careful kiss was full of tenderness and comfort. His lips, which gently held mine before pulling away, tasted of salt from my tears.

His kiss, as he pressed his lips to mine again, was gentler than ever before. His warm tongue, which felt like it could melt, soon began to explore my mouth. Sun Woo held me tightly to keep me from being pulled into the swamp of sleep.

My mind was hazy but the sensations were utterly blissful. If I hadn't been drowsy, I would have surely clung to Sun Woo eagerly, exploring him completely while gasping for breath. Even in my sleepy state, I instinctively accepted and entwined with his tongue.

But even that couldn't continue due to my drowsiness.

Finally, seeing me completely limp, Sun Woo gave me a few short, regretful kisses before pulling away.

I pushed my lips out in a pout toward him as he tried to move away.

This earned me another lingering kiss before he pulled back. I heard him chuckle softly by my ear.

"Stop tempting me and go to sleep."

Even with my eyes closed, I could feel Sun Woo's breath lingering above my face for a while. I drifted into deep sleep while feeling his gaze on me, as he hadn't even laid down yet.

It feels nice. Someone's warm presence. So nice I wouldn't want to wake up if this were a dream.

[The Lives of the Golden Spoons]

-Ha Jin's Forbidden List 9. No peaceful sleep

└ Come on, at least let the kid sleep.

└└ Sleep is allowed. Peaceful sleep isn't.

└ Ah, I think I get it! They should be sensitive and wake up at small sounds. That's what makes a tyrant.lol

└ So this is why they have dark circles under their eyes?

└ Ha Jin sleeping peacefully with a calm face is illegal. They should sleep with furrowed brows, right?

└ Peaceful sleep only allowed when using Su as a body pillow.

└└ lol No wonder all the tyrants are obsessed with Su

└└ We only acknowledge things when Su does them or is present

└ Ha Jin. It's grandma. Be strong. That's all I can say.

└ They're taking away one of the three basic needs?

└└ Guarantee Ha Jin's basic rights!

LL Ah, no. That's too pitiful.

#032

When I opened my eyes feeling like I had slept deeply for the first time in a while, the clock was pointing to 11 o'clock. Feeling something empty beside me, I turned my head to find Sun Woo wasn't there.

"Did he leave?"

We definitely slept together, but I was so drunk with sleep that I barely felt his presence. The warmth I felt before falling asleep was nice. I should have savored it more before passing out completely. I got up from bed, shaking off the regret.

My eyes felt heavy from crying.

"Wow, this is crazy... really."

Even if I was half-asleep, to cry in front of Sun Woo. Not only did I make a drunken scene, but now I've shown him my crying face too. What a mess of a collaboration between me, Ha Jin, and myself. Rubbing my heavy eyes, I headed straight to the bathroom.

Taking a hot shower made my body feel languid again. After drying my hair, I thought if I was still feeling groggy, I might as well go back to sleep. While drying myself with a towel, I came out. As I was looking for the hairdryer in the powder room, I sensed movement from the bedroom.

Wondering what it was, I peeked into the room and my jaw dropped.

It was because Sun Woo was standing in the middle of the room, turning towards me. I quickly looked down to check myself. Fortunately, the towel was barely covering that area as I had been drying my legs. I adjusted the towel to cover myself more completely. Sun Woo's gaze followed my hand movements.

"Did you shower?"

"Y-yeah."

As I stammered my response in surprise, Sun Woo walked toward me with an unchanged expression.

"What are you doing? Why are you coming closer?"



I fired off questions while backing away slightly. Thankfully, Sun Woo stopped at my desperate cry. After seeming to think about something for a moment in response to my questions, he reached out his hand while continuing to approach.

“I’ll dry your hair for you.”

“It’s fine. I can dry it myself. By the way, Sun Woo, you haven’t left yet? I thought you had gone. Haha... I’ll go dry my hair and come back.”

Right. If I had known you were here, I wouldn’t have come out looking like this. I spoke rapidly like I was rapping and quickly closed the middle door to separate Sun Woo and myself. Looking for a lock, I found there wasn’t one since it was a middle door. I quickly backed away toward the bathroom. Grabbing the bathroom doorknob, I tried to calm my pounding heart while checking if Sun Woo might come in.

‘Yesterday Sun Woo showed me his body, so is it my turn to show mine today?’

I found myself unnecessarily examining my body. Since I’ve been getting personal PT whenever I have time, my body wasn’t bad compared to Sun Woo’s. I put my clothes back on and dried my hair. Originally, I was planning to get clothes from the dressing room while naked, but Sun Woo’s appearance changed those plans. From now on, I’ll need to keep spare clothes in the bathroom.

When I finished drying my hair and went out, Sun Woo wasn’t in the room. Going to the living room, I found Sun Woo sitting on the sofa, changed back into his own clothes.

Looking completely comfortable as if it were his own home.

“Get dressed and come out. Let’s go.”

“Where?”

“To eat escargot.”

“Escar...? What’s that?”

“The restaurant where we had our date before. I heard they officially opened recently. We agreed to go back when they opened.”

A date? Ah right. I was doing an assignment with someone who was over-committed to getting an A+.

My face quickly drained of color as I remembered the embarrassing history with the wine aide. Thanks to Sun Woo, I became wide awake without any chance to remain drowsy. As my mind cleared, I suddenly felt hungry and replied “Okay” before quickly entering the dressing room.

Instead of just throwing on any clothes, I carefully chose what to wear.

\* \* \*

“What’s with all these people...”

I looked at Sun Woo with a frustrated expression at the long line of people in front of the restaurant. At least 10 groups were waiting in the heat without any shade.

“Sun Woo, are we going to wait?”

The restaurant isn’t even that big. At this rate, wouldn’t it take an hour or two to get in? How are there so many customers when they just opened?

“Do you hate waiting?”

“Yeah.”

Obviously. There are restaurants everywhere, why should we wait to eat? Sun Woo seemed pleased with my answer and smiled. While I was wondering why he suddenly smiled, he pulled me toward the restaurant.

‘What? Are we going to wait? Did he smile because he’s going to make me do something I hate? What a terrible main character.’

“Let’s come back when it’s less busy. It’s probably crowded because it’s the weekend.”

Despite my rebellious tone, Sun Woo just smiled more happily.

“I made a reservation.”

“Ah, a reservation.”

I take back what I said earlier. That’s our main character for you.

“When I called today about coming, they said they’d keep a table for our arrival time.”

“When did you call?”

“This morning when I woke up. While watching you sleep.”

The way he said that with a smile felt strange. It seemed like something had reversed.

According to the setup, Sun Woo was supposed to be the one groaning and unable to get out of bed, but here he was, waking up first and watching Ha Jin sleep. He seemed

too healthy. More than that, he thought about having lunch with me and made reservations first thing in the morning?

'Wow. Sun Woo is really thoughtful.'

When we entered the restaurant, the owner welcomed us warmly. Despite the dark circles under their eyes showing fatigue, their smile looked very happy.

"Oh my! Here come my precious customers who keep me from resting!"

"Are you okay? You look very tired."

"Ah honestly, I feel like dying. We were running it with just two people, but it was impossible so we hired another employee. They'll start next week, so if we can just get through this weekend, it'll be okay. We didn't expect so many customers, so we thought we could manage with two people."

The owner removed the reservation sign from an empty table and gestured for us to sit.

"I prepared the best ones especially for you two. I'll make it delicious. Look forward to it."

The owner soon brought out escargot and cream pasta.

"It's a shame we can't chat more because we're busy. Once the opening rush dies down, it should get quieter. Come back then."

"I hope you continue to do well."

"Ah... honestly, I didn't open this place to make money. I'd prefer if there were fewer customers."

"If it stays this busy, you might need to expand?"

"Oh no. Don't say such scary things. I'm already seriously suspecting that Mi-eun started this whole thing as a project just to kill me."

The owner, seeming too busy to chat more, quickly greeted us and headed back to the kitchen. Seeing the restaurant full of customers somehow made me happy.

Sun Woo peeled an escargot and placed it on my plate.

'Crazy, this is so thoughtful, isn't it?'

"I could do it myself."

"I'm just giving it to you while I'm peeling mine."

Though his tone was casual, it was nice to hear. Ah, our main character is growing up so well? If things continue like this, he might turn out quite proper. And Ha Jin isn't here to torment Sun Woo anymore.

But thinking about it, the fundamental problem lay somewhere I couldn't solve.

The death of Sun Woo's only family member and the appearance of his biological father.

As that thought hit me, I felt my blood run cold.

When I stayed quiet, Sun Woo looked at me and smiled slightly.

"Want me to feed it to you?"

"Ah... no."

Why make such an intense joke? When I hastily declined, Sun Woo peeled another escargot and placed it on my plate. I quietly watched him smiling contentedly.

I worried about his future that would eventually come. Knowing someone's future isn't always a good thing.

"Owner, thank you for the meal."

After paying with another employee, I approached the kitchen to say goodbye, and despite being busy, the owner poked their head out to greet us. Then, seeing the receipt and card in my hand, they burst out:

"Ah! Why are you paying? Just eat for free!"

"I was going to eat for free if it wasn't good, but since it was delicious, I'll pay."

"Wow, Ha Jin, you're really guilty!"

Though I didn't understand what that meant, they looked busy so I just bowed. The owner waved back with a smile.

As we left the restaurant, I saw two familiar figures bickering as they walked toward us. One seemed to be getting scolded one-sidedly, and the familiar scolding voice hit my ears clearly.

"Is that Mi-eun?"

I asked Sun Woo as if seeking confirmation, but he wordlessly pulled me in the opposite direction from where they were coming.

‘Huh? But we parked on the side where Mi-eun is walking?’

As I was being pulled along, Mi-eun must have spotted me from behind as she called out my name cheerfully.

“Ha Jin oppa!”

Soon there was the sound of rapid footsteps behind us, and Mi-eun quickly grabbed my arm that Sun Woo was holding. When I turned around gladly, I could see Beom-jun walking slowly behind Mi-eun, silently mouthing “ugh, split personality.”

“What are you two doing? Coming out of the restaurant? Or heading back because it’s too crowded?”

“We just finished eating. What about you? Going to eat with Beom-jun?”

“No. We’re not eating.”

“Hey! You’re the one who came all the way to my house and dragged me out to eat this!”

“Shut up, Cha Beom-jun.”

Mi-eun spoke fiercely before instantly switching to a bright smile.

Wow, scary. Her expressions change so quickly.

“There are too many people here, right? Let’s eat another time.”

“Ah... but I’m hungry. Are we going somewhere else then?”

“Yeah. I’m going to follow wherever Ha Jin oppa goes.”

Mi-eun answered Beom-jun’s question cheerfully while rhythmically swinging my arm. The swinging stopped when Sun Woo grabbed my arm.

“We’re finished eating and heading to a café.”

Sun Woo spoke in a dry voice, as if suggesting we should all go our separate ways. Beom-jun seemed to understand his intention and replied “Yeah, okay,” but Mi-eun maintained her smile and spoke up.

“Perfect! I was wanting coffee too!”

Beom-jun grabbed Mi-eun's shoulders with a dumbfounded expression and shook her vigorously.

"Hey! What about food? I'm hungry! If you hadn't dragged me out, I could've been eating warm rice at home right now. If you drag someone out, you need to take responsibility!"

"What, are you possessed by the ghost of someone who starved to death? Just eat some bread at the café!"

"...How is bread the same as a proper meal..."

"If you don't like it, don't come with us."

Sun Woo looked at me during their petty argument. I could only respond with a faint smile.

#033

In the end, all four of us drove to the café together.

When we arrived, it was the same café I'd been to with the grandmother and with Sun Woo.

Right. This makes three times now.

"You come here often."

Thinking about it, I probably came about once a month. Is that considered frequent? I just smiled back at the employee's friendly business smile.

"Do you come here often? Oh, we've discovered one of Ha Jin's regular spots."

Beom-jun said this while starting to choose bread. He filled a tray with bread and still added sandwiches from the display case. When I returned to the table after finishing all the orders, Mi-eun was smiling and talking to Sun Woo. Sun Woo was just nodding his head.

'Sun Woo is warm on the inside, but he acts so cold.'

As memories of whispered words and touches while half-asleep naturally came to mind, I quickly erased them and sat down. Somehow I ended up sitting next to Mi-eun. Beom-jun, who was following behind, stood there with a slightly awkward face before sitting next to Sun Woo. It seems Beom-jun isn't comfortable with Sun Woo.

"The owner looked really busy. Must be nice that business is doing well."

Mi-eun showed a sour smile at my words.

“Ah, don’t even mention it. They should be giving me a gift for making their business so successful, but instead they keep talking about dying from exhaustion. It’s annoying. Today they asked me to come help out but I refused. If they need help, they should properly hire and pay someone, right? Ah, I should have been born even one day before my sister.”

“Didn’t you take down the post now? Are they still busy?”

“Yeah. I took down the post after our presentation. But somehow the photos got copied somewhere and still show up sometimes. I report them and ask for the photos to be taken down whenever I see them. Ha Jin, I’m sorry. I didn’t know the photos would spread like this.”

Mi-eun puts her hands together apologetically.

“It’s okay.”

Ha Jin’s face was already circulating well on the internet anyway. As the heir to one of Korea’s leading conglomerate families, at least photos were bound to be online. Looking at the uploaded photos, it was like a growth album. Except for very early childhood, there were photos from around elementary school onwards.

Since he lived abroad when young, is that why there aren’t any earlier ones?

While thinking about this and drinking my ordered espresso, Mi-eun shook her head vigorously.

“No, no. Sweet drinks suit our Ha Jin oppa better.”

“Ha Jin doesn’t like sweet things.”

At Sun Woo’s words, Mi-eun made a sad face.

“Espresso doesn’t suit you!”

Is that so? I think it suits me well. Crazy Ha Jin and strong espresso.

After chatting at the café for a few hours, we had dinner together at Beom-jun’s suggestion before parting ways.

After returning home, finishing studying with Sun Woo, and seeing him off, it suddenly occurred to me that while I knew Sun Woo inside and out, I didn’t really know much about myself, that is, Ha Jin. It was still surprising that Ha Jin was treated that way by his father, and strange that Baek Su-ah, clearly his birth mother, acted so coldly.

“Can I find out?”

Then thinking that family photos would be best for understanding family relationships, I searched the room for albums. I found one untouched album on the neatly organized study bookshelf. When I took it out, it looked brand new, as if it had never been opened.

Somehow my heart was pounding as if I’d found evidence while playing detective.

The album was ordinary. Inside, it was filled with his photos.

Family photos seemed professionally taken, with very deliberate composition and expressions, but there was no sense of warmth – more like roommates who happened to live together.

“It was a strange household from childhood.”

Young Ha Jin somewhat resembled me but wasn’t identical. Compared to my childhood, he looked absolutely angelic. As he grew, he gradually came to look more like me. By the time he fully matured, he had my exact face.

It was fascinating how a somewhat similar-looking young Ha Jin gradually came to resemble me more.

Either way, young Ha Jin was cute, unfitting his reputation as a jerk. With his white face and large sparkling eyes, he was simply pretty. There were even photos of him smiling with rosy cheeks. But despite Ha Jin’s adorable smile, not one parent was smiling in any photo.

I unconsciously smiled upon finding what seemed to be an elementary school entrance ceremony photo taken in the school auditorium. Ha Jin stood in the front row due to his small stature, beaming brightly. Among many children, he stood out for being particularly pretty and tiny, with a smile full of excitement.

The cute Ha Jin in those photos gradually became expressionless as he grew taller. In his high school graduation photo, his expressionless face stood out due to his height being above his peers. The graduation photo was the last one. There were no photos after that.

After examining the album, I looked through it again in puzzlement.

But nowhere could I find photos of Ha Jin before elementary school.

Not even the common first birthday photos.

I had no way of knowing if they were just missing from this album. I thought I should check if I ever visit the main house, and closed the album.



\* \* \*

After the whirlwind weekend passed, ordinary daily life continued.

The life of a regular college student. I was in the middle of taking unremarkable final exams. Studying daily with Sun Woo had been quite effective. He had transformed empty-headed Ha Jin into a decent business student. Enough to fully keep up with academics from the second semester.

In just 4 months, I caught up on years of their studies. Amazing, Ha Jin. An engineering graduate really struggled to adapt to a barely related liberal arts field.

After tomorrow's last exam, second year first semester would be over. Summer vacation would begin. A college student's vacation period. Not only plenty of time, but now overflowing with money too. Therefore, I was looking forward to my true vacation life. I wanted to see grandmother soon too.

I was studying in the library with Sun Woo, who had decided to burn the midnight oil for tomorrow's final exam. Just when it seemed like another unremarkable day was passing, Secretary Kim suddenly burst through the door, making my heart jump like a live fish.

"Oh my heart."

Sun Woo stood protectively in front of me, wary of Secretary Kim's sudden appearance. I pulled him back reassuringly.

"It's okay. He's not a burglar. This is Secretary Kim from our group."

Secretary Kim looked at Sun Woo once, then reproached me with a worried face.

"Young Master Ha Jin, why haven't you been answering your phone?"

"I usually keep it on silent."

"Please answer my calls at least. I'm sorry for the rudeness of entering without knocking – I was urgently searching for you, thinking something was wrong."

"What brings you here? Is there something urgent?"

Seeing Secretary Kim come all the way here... it must not be good news.

Secretary Kim looked at the books covering the desk, briefly showed a faint pleased smile, then quickly composed his expression.

"Were you studying?"

“Yes.”

Secretary Kim stood silently, seemingly reluctant to speak here.

It appeared this wasn't a conversation meant for Sun Woo's ears. I told the still-wary Sun Woo to wait alone for a moment and headed to my room with Secretary Kim. As soon as we entered, Secretary Kim wordlessly handed me a photo. I took it with many questions, having no idea what to expect.

The photo showed me dynamically posed holding a shotgun. The problem was that it was too dynamic.

“It's quite a well-taken shot.”

“This is no joking matter.”

“Really? But honestly, it is well-taken. Makes me look like the perpetrator.”

Secretary Kim sighed deeply at my words. The photo indeed captured me appearing to brandish a shotgun at Jung Woo. Amazing how they caught such a perfect moment.

“They're planning to release this to the media tomorrow.”

“Who is?”

“It was sent anonymously, we're checking into it now.”

“What would it take to stop it?”

“They want us to hand over lobbying materials related to the Supreme Party congressman.”

“Are we going to give it to them?”

Secretary Kim made a troubled face at my question.

“The Chairman wants to let it be.”

“So he's not going to deal with it?”

“He seems quite hurt by your recent actions, young master.”

What hurt? He's probably just annoyed that I'm not doing what he wants.

But to not even try to block a photo like this... how narrow-minded. When this blows up, I won't be the only one affected. Galaxy Group will obviously take a hit too. The stock price will fall, and they'll face criticism for their association with me.

Seeing my lack of reaction, Secretary Kim spoke with a serious face.

"If this gets out, it will be difficult to recover your image. The tabloids are already full of negative stories, and this photo will be the final nail in the coffin."

"I didn't hit him. Secretary Kim, do you believe this photo?"

To anyone looking at the photo in my hand, it clearly showed me swinging a shotgun. Although I've been behaving well lately, Secretary Kim had long witnessed Ha Jin's days of acting like a jerk. From our first meeting after my possession, he had come to clean up after Ha Jin who had hit someone. So naturally, he couldn't easily say he believed me.

"I know you were threatened with the gun, but people will only focus on what they see in this photo."

"If this photo gets out, everyone will think I hit him regardless of the circumstances."

"They will."

I took a moment to organize my thoughts at Secretary Kim's words. After some time passed, Secretary Kim couldn't hold back and tried to persuade me.

"Young Master Ha Jin, what if you met with the Chairman and asked him?"

"No need. Let them release it to the media."

"This won't blow over quietly. A gun, a chaebol, violence – these keywords will create quite a stir in Korea."

"They'll be busy chewing it up. Most people already know I'm a jerk. It's like pouring oil on a burning house – no, more like dumping it."

"I really think we should stop this one."

"We should follow father's wishes."

Secretary Kim looked at me like I was talking nonsense.

He seemed frustrated by my strange stubbornness.

"When the photo gets out, everyone will tear me apart. How juicy is that story? Violence from a troublemaking chaebol."

"If you know that... The Chairman probably wants you to yield just this once."

Secretary Kim, looking full of worry, tried to convince me.

But I didn't want to yield to a father who uses violence against his son.

"You know he's not someone who easily changes his mind."

"Then I'll find another way. We might not be able to stop the article, but we could release an explanation."

"No. I won't explain. Once the photo's out, they'll be so focused on tearing me apart that any explanation will be met with 'So what?' It won't be easy to convince people who have already firmly decided I'm in the wrong."

At my words, Secretary Kim weakly asked, "Then what?"

"I'll go down to the countryside and quietly spend time there until things calm down."

"The countryside?"

"Yes, I'm planning to go somewhere with nice mountains."

Secretary Kim said nothing more. He seemed dumbfounded by my casual talk of going to the countryside.

#034

"Based on the angle of this photo, it was clearly taken by someone at the gathering. If we investigate the families that are at odds with the Supreme Party among the group members, we should quickly find the person who took the photo."

"That's right. By the way, Young Master Ha Jin, once the news breaks out, you'll likely need to lay low for a while."

"You know I don't hang out with those kids anymore."

At my answer, Secretary Kim finally relaxed his expression and laughed slightly.

"Right. It's ironic that a strange photo has surfaced precisely because you don't associate with them."

"Don't worry. It's not the truth anyway."

“Yes. But only we know that...”

Secretary Kim finished his words bitterly and left after saying goodbye. Left alone in the room, I looked down at the photo in my hand again.

“How exquisite.”

Since we refused the deal, the photo will probably spread by tomorrow morning.

Then I'll have to release what I've prepared as well. I had it ready just in case Jung Woo approached me again, but I guess I'll use it like this?

I should turn this crisis into an opportunity. Let's try to boost Ha Jin's image while we're at it. Damn you Ha Jin, look at how much I'm suffering for you.

By the way, how will I be able to show my face at school tomorrow? How thick-skinned was Ha Jin to be able to shamelessly go around while handling these social issues?

As I was organizing my thoughts about the future, Sun Woo entered the room. He seemed to have noticed, but when I hurriedly hid the photo in my pocket, he didn't ask about it.

“What's going on?”

“Nothing. It's no big deal.”

“Really?”

I smiled awkwardly at his gaze staring at me intently.

“Let's go study.”

Even after being dragged by me to the study, Sun Woo quietly looked at me for a long time. When I didn't bring up anything despite his gaze, he simply let out a shallow sigh. He seemed frustrated, and finally Sun Woo spoke first.

“Is it really nothing?”

“Yeah.”

At my answer, Sun Woo's eyes momentarily took on a cold light. After looking at me like that for a while, Sun Woo eventually averted his gaze and continued studying.

And the next day, my photo appeared in an online news article. At least they seemed to have blocked it from broadcasting. But these days, everyone reads online news articles anyway...

Statistics show that assault cases that shock the entire nation are typically caused by chaebol heirs. How should the public accept their lack of morality?

It's been 10 years since the so-called "compensation for beating" incident occurred. The voices of the public demanding them to come to their senses back then don't seem to have reached the chaebol yet. There was a chaebol heir who beat someone and paid money as compensation, and recently there was an incident where a chaebol heir assaulted someone while wielding a dangerous firearm.

On XX month, XX year, at a shooting range near Seoul.

A gathering of chaebol heirs whose names everyone would recognize. Among them, the heir of the Eunha Group, who plays the most pivotal role, Yoo XX (21), is the person who reigns as their king. He has caused various incidents in the past, but everyone kept quiet about it, so it couldn't be properly verified. At this time, a single photo caused a huge stir. In the photo, he is holding a gun in one hand and relentlessly striking down at the other person... (omitted)

– Wow, the scale is different. The compensation beating used an aluminum bat, but now it's a gun?

– He took the gun that was supposed to be used for shooting clay pigeons and beat someone up with it. Crazy.

– Let's require a mental evaluation when issuing firearm licenses.

– Look at the scale of chaebol heirs, lol

– Yoo XX, 21 years old, a chaebol heir. Damn, I'm jealous.

↳ Wow, I searched him and his face shows up. He's freaking handsome. Damn, damn, damn.

– How much do you get paid if you get hit by a gun? The compensation beating back then was 3 million won, right?

↳ What are you going to do if you know how much they pay? Get beaten up for it? Lol

↳ I'm just curious. If you don't know, then just move along.

– Hey, aren't all the rumors about that jerk in the tabloids true?

↳ What rumors? Tabloids?

↳ Let's just say he's done all sorts of trashy things.

– Everyone be careful of lawsuits ^^ Whew, since I don't have money, I'll hold back.

– Isn't Eunha Group blocking this? It's strange.

└ They probably released it. I heard he causes a ton of trouble.

└ Isn't he the only son?

└ Lol yes

└ He was an only son? But why aren't they blocking it? It really is strange.

– The media companies must be terrified of Eunha Group. Lol I acknowledge your true journalism.

I turned off my phone screen after reading the article that came out in the morning. Comments were pouring in, it had already been ranking #1 in interest for a long time, and it was also heading towards #1 in the most sympathized news.

Although the face in the photo was blurred, with a little searching, one could easily find my face.

Before leaving the house, I picked up a hat but put it back down.

I had no reason to be ashamed. Ha Jin might have, but not me. I thought I'd be used to people's whispers by now and it wouldn't bother me... but I guess it's still a bit hard to be cursed at?

I let out a deep sigh and left the house.

The sky was unusually blue and clear today. Too nice of a day to be getting cursed at.

I felt a lot of stares on the back of my head while walking to the lecture hall for the exam. Hearing whispers behind my back for the first time in a while felt strange.

The atmosphere in the lecture hall I entered on time was quiet, unlike before. I thought it might be because of the exam, but obviously everyone had seen the article.

Thinking that this was the last exam and it would be over after this, I pulled myself together and focused on the test.

After the exam, I tried to leave quickly but was stopped by Kim Shin. He erased his usual smiling face and expressed his concern for me with an expression full of anger.

Wow, Kim Shin is really scary. The atmosphere changes so much with just his expression.

“What’s with that photo? Why is it in the news?”

Although Kim Shin’s voice wasn’t particularly loud, the people in the quiet hallway all turned their attention this way.

“Let’s move somewhere else to talk.”

I said that, feeling uncomfortable with their attention, but Kim Shin didn’t listen to me.

“Damn it...”

I was honestly surprised to hear a curse word from Kim Shin’s mouth for the first time. Even in the most terrible situations, Kim Shin never uttered profanity. His usually smiling face was all scrunched up.

“First, calm down.”

“How can I be calm? Why didn’t you block this? Why did you let the article come out?”

What power do I have to block it? Father said to just leave it alone.

As I forcibly dragged Kim Shin out, Mi-eun and Beom-jun followed along. In the end, the four of us had an unintended trip together to the tennis club room.

As soon as the clubroom door closed, Mi-eun finally pushed Kim Shin back and approached me.

“Ha Jin, are you okay? Don’t mind the article.”

“I’m fine, Mi-eun.”

“What a shitty article to put out. Our Ha Jin could do that too.”

Could do that, huh?

Mi-eun seemed to believe that I had actually used violence. Well, looking at the photo, it’s obvious that even I would believe that. But I felt like I should let Mi-eun, who was misunderstanding that I really hit someone, know the truth.

“Mi-eun, I didn’t hit anyone. The photo was taken in an instant, but I was in a situation where I was taking away the gun.”

“Huh? You didn’t hit them?”

Seeing her surprise, she must have really believed I hit someone. I guess the image I’ve built up until now collapses in an instant like this...



“Ah, I thought there’s no way Ha Jin would do that.”

Even though she believed I hit someone until just now, Mi-eun quickly changes her stance. Kim Shin, unable to quell his anger, took another step closer to me. Seeing them standing side by side with angry faces somehow made me burst into laughter.

“You’re laughing? Ha Jin. Ha... Is this a time to laugh?”

“Are you crazy, Ha Jin? This isn’t the time to be cheeky. Can you please read the room? Why are you charming people everywhere?”

“Hey, Ha Jin can laugh too. Why are you scolding him over that?”

“What? Beom-jun, why are you here?”

“Ah, no. I’m worried about Ha Jin too.”

I barely held back my laughter and calmed them down.

“I appreciate your concern. But I’m really fine. This kind of thing just needs time. If we stay quiet, it will naturally fade from people’s memories.”

At my words, Kim Shin looks at me intently.

“Ha Jin, why didn’t the group block it?”

“It’s not a serious enough situation to go that far.”

Kim Shin furrowed his brows, seemingly displeased with my answer.

“Should I take care of it on my end?”

“It’s fine. It’s too late to gather up a photo that’s already spread.”

“Haa, really Ha Jin. Stop being so precarious. You’re driving me crazy these days. Hasn’t the chairman summoned you?”

“I don’t think he will. He probably knows the details through Secretary Kim.”

Kim Shin’s expression was still dark, as if he really didn’t like that I was taking this lightly.

When his gaze started to feel burdensome, Mi-eun separated us with her bright, loud voice at just the right timing.

“Oh come on, if it’s not Ha Jin, then it’s not. We rented out a tavern today too. Let’s go!”

“Yeah, let’s. Ha Jin worked hard again for the final exams this semester. Let’s go together.”

At Mi-eun and Beom-jun’s words, I shook my head.

If I go to a tavern in this situation, I’ll only be called more of a crazy bastard. Because then I’d become Ha Jin who beat someone up with a gun and showed up at a drinking gathering like nothing happened.

Close friends would believe me if I said I didn’t do it, but I could clearly see how others would think of me. They’d think my true nature has emerged after laying low. I expressed my intention to decline, not wanting to ruin the mood for no reason.

“I have something else to do.”

“Huh? It’s no fun if you don’t come.”

“Right. Let’s go together.”

“No. I’ll get going now. You all have fun.”

I gave a quick goodbye and tried to leave, but turned back around. It was embarrassing how all three of them were looking at me with the same worried expression. Do I look that pitiful? I’m not really bothered though...

“Have a good break.”

“Yeah, you too Ha Jin.”

“Ha Jin! Reply when I contact you. You never reply. And download KakaoTalk too. What kind of person doesn’t have KakaoTalk? Says it costs money to text!”

I just waved my hand without any particular response. Kim Shin was still silently looking at me. Seeing a serious face from Kim Shin, who always smiled with squinted eyes, felt unfamiliar. Anyways, he worries about Ha Jin’s matters like his own. What an amazing friendship, really.

#035

I left the clubroom and headed to the parking lot, receiving glances from people again. I wanted to quickly escape their gazes and run away home. As I rapidly approached my parked car, I saw someone standing next to it.

“Sun Woo.”

At my call, Sun Woo turns to look at me. Seeing his coldly hardened face, I felt uneasy for some reason. He’s probably upset that I didn’t tell him yesterday.

His cold expression didn’t last long, and Sun Woo soon looked at me with concern.

“Ha Jin, are you okay?”

“You saw the article too? I’m fine. It’s not true anyway.”

“It must be noisy around you. Have reporters tried to contact you or anything?”

“That probably won’t happen. Eunha Group is known as the grim reaper to reporters because they immediately take legal action if they try to get close.”

“Was the person who came to your house yesterday because of this?”

“Ah, Secretary Kim. Yeah, he came to let me know beforehand.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

I hadn’t told Sun Woo because it was completely unrelated to him.

When I awkwardly smiled, as if I had hidden it, Sun Woo called me with a slightly deflated expression.

“Ha Jin. Let’s go somewhere quiet together for a while.”

Sun Woo, who made the sudden suggestion, still had a worried air about him.

Crazy Sun Woo is worried about Ha Jin? And wants to be with him because of that?

It’s crazy, completely crazy. This webtoon is going insane.

His suggestion was sweet, but I had to refuse because I had my own plans.

I clicked my tongue, feeling regretful.

“I have something planned from before, so I appreciate the thought but I can’t.”

“What plans do you have that you can’t?”

Unlike his character in the webtoon, Sun Woo was curious about my plans. He was someone who intentionally tried not to hear about things related to Ha Jin. But these

days, whenever I said I was doing something, he kept asking about this and that. I think he asked for details when I said I was going to a gathering too.

“I have someone I’m supposed to meet during summer break, so there...”

At that moment when I tried to tell him about my plans, someone ran into my arms, cutting me off mid-sentence. Caught off guard by the momentum of them running into me, I instinctively took a step back and lost my balance, naturally wrapping my arms around the person who had clung to me. It was just an automatic, reflexive action.

“Ha Jin, are you okay?”

The person asking me tearfully was... I-na?

The one nestled in my arms was I-na, who had dated Ha Jin. She was still wearing a mask, covering her face, but there was no way I could forget those eyes that had glared at me that day as if she wanted to tear me to shreds.

With her large eyes brimming with tears, she burrowed further into my embrace.

Making sounds of surprise like “uh, um”, I alternated between looking at her head buried in my chest and Sun Woo standing in front of us.

I had commented that the sky was unusually clear today. Sun Woo’s handsome face, displaying his always elegant looks befitting a protagonist, had coldly stiffened. Where did the warm Sun Woo, who had been worried just now, go? And who was this person here emitting a frigid chill?

“You were threatened with a gun by Jung Woo? Why did you let the news report strange content?”

I-na shed tears, her pretty face nestled in my arms. Her voice was so choked with emotion that her small frame felt even more pitiable. To think she’s crying because of Ha Jin.

The world must be ending.

I slowly stroked her back to comfort her. At that, she sobbed even louder.

I felt conflicted. Sun Woo’s gaze, coldly observing from the front, felt as painful as thorns persistently pricking my heart. And I felt sorry that I-na, who had been Ha Jin’s girlfriend, seemed unable to forget him still.

‘Damn it... Ha Jin’s past, please just leave me alone.’

“I-na, don’t cry.”

When I lowered my head and gently whispered in her ear to soothe her, I-na stifled her sobs and tightened her arms around me in a firm hug.

“You jerk.”

“Sorry, sorry. I-na.”

“Why are you making me worry like this? If you treated me that way, then you should live well at least. Constantly getting injuries on your face. And now you’re saying you were threatened with a gun.”

I-na was well aware of my injuries too. As if she had been keeping an ear out for news about me. When I detached the now calmer I-na from my embrace, she looked up at me with eyes ready to cry again at any moment. I needed to console I-na first and then finish my conversation with Sun Woo.

“Are you a bit calmer now?”

When I bent over to meet her eyes and asked, I-na nodded slightly. Her eyes had turned red from crying, making me feel concerned. She must have a lot of schedules here and there with her movie opening soon.

I grabbed the front of the t-shirt I was wearing, lifted it, and firmly dabbed at the tears in I-na’s eyes.

Sun Woo’s eyes crinkled in dissatisfaction for some reason. His gaze was fixed on my lifted t-shirt.

“Don’t touch your eyes with your hands. You can’t let your pretty eyes get swollen.”

“...Then don’t make me cry.”

“Okay. I’m sorry, I-na. I won’t make you cry anymore.”

Restlessly checking on I-na, I lifted my head to see Sun Woo standing in front of us with a crooked posture, looking this way.

I needed to quickly console her and send I-na on her way.

“...Ha Jin.”

“Yeah. What?”

Perhaps finding my gentle words awkward, I-na lifted her eyes and examined me. When I smiled slightly at her staring at me, she bit her lip and averted her gaze. I-na kept her eyes lowered as she fidgeted with her fingers and spoke.

“The plans we made to go to Paris together during summer break. I made all the reservations on my end.”

“What?”

What did she say?

A small spasm ran through the corner of my smiling mouth.

My startled gaze naturally flew to Sun Woo. He curled up the corners of his lips and smiled at me. But his elongated mouth shape somehow felt chilling.

“Sun Woo.”

I wasn't sure if I should properly set things straight, but for some reason, I felt I had to. It was absurd, soothing I-na with my hands while calling Sun Woo with my mouth. At my call, Sun Woo slightly nodded his head as if he understood, then turned around and walked away like that. I could only move my lips as I watched his receding back.

‘What does he understand? Is he misunderstanding that my plans are to go to Paris with I-na?’

I-na was still sobbing in front of me.

Sun Woo's distancing back and the weeping I-na.

‘Ah, damn it.’

In the end, I had I-na get in my car. I had no choice with several people constantly stealing glances around us.

“I-na, are you a bit calmer now?”

“Yeah.”

Unlike my first impression, I-na answered me very meekly. Then she opened her large eyes wide, looked at me, and smiled very prettily.

“Why?”

When I asked, worried she might spew venomous words again, fortunately, I-na opened her mouth, seeming to be in a good mood.

“Just because I'm happy. Thinking about how you were this caring. Have you finally come to your senses now?”

What, was Ha Jin a jerk to his girlfriend too?

I realized my mistake, but I felt too bad to act like Ha Jin. I gently asked I-na, who had worried for me and cried for me.

"It's about time I did... Do you have any schedules?"

"I do. Will you take me?"

"What about your manager?"

It was just a casual question asking if she was busy, but she's asking me to take her. Don't celebrities usually go around with their managers?

I-na seemed to ponder my question for a bit, then brightly smiled.

"Everyone went to take care of a newly joined rookie today. I told them I'd go to the shop myself."

"What?"

I-na gave an absurd answer. Leaving I-na, who's the hottest star right now, to take care of another rookie? It was an obvious lie, but before I could question her further, I-na lightly tapped my shoulder.

"Let's go. I have a special preview to attend in the evening, so I need to move quickly."

I-na's eyes, excited and happy, were red-rimmed. I felt too bad to refuse her here.

Feeling apologetic, I drove to the address I-na told me. She busily moved her hands, exchanging messages with someone. Seeing her reject calls in between, it seemed her manager was trying to reach her. The company was probably in an uproar too. Since I-na had abruptly said she would go alone.

Sitting in the passenger seat, she played songs she said she liked and also told me about her recent movie. As I listened, my heart gradually grew heavier, and I felt I couldn't let this continue.

"I-na."

At my call, I-na smiled brightly.

"Ah, Ha Jin, do you want to come to the preview with me today too? It's where we watch the movie together with the audience, but I should be able to arrange a seat for you. Let's eat something delicious after the preview."

“No, it’s fine. An article about me came out today, so I might stir up unnecessary rumors.”

“I don’t care though.”

Seeing I-na speak as if it didn’t matter reminded me of how she had begged while hurting her pride. And I made up my mind. I-na might get hurt right now, but I had to make it clear.

“I-na. We broke up, didn’t we?”

At my words, I-na was silent for a long time. The lively idol music I-na had put on flowed cheerfully in the car, clashing with the heavy atmosphere. I felt extremely apologetic about unintentionally ghosting her, but wrong was wrong.

My throat felt parched in the heavy atmosphere. I wanted to avoid it, but then I would face an even bigger storm.

I had to confront it. I couldn’t just gloss over it, I reminded myself inwardly.

“Ha Jin. If you don’t want to make me cry again right now, shut that mouth.”

After saying that, I-na turned off the music connected to her cell phone. In the end, I gently consoled her in the silence, afraid she might cry again.

“Let’s talk again after you’re done with work. I might not be able to watch the movie with you at the special preview today, but I’ll wait for you in the car until you’re done instead. Let’s take my car when you go home too.”

“Damn it, I told you not to make me cry. You’re making me cry.”

I-na quietly shed tears.

I awkwardly tried to sound cheerful and made conversation.

“I don’t have a handkerchief. And I can’t wipe your tears like before since I’m driving. Should I take off my shirt and give it to you? Do you want to wipe your tears with this?”

When I exaggeratedly pretended to lift up my clothes, I-na burst into laughter, unable to wipe her flowing tears, worried her eyes would swell up.

“Ha Jin. You’re such a bastard.”

I-na calls me that while laughing.



“Why are you being nicer after we broke up? You’re making me fall for you again, so annoying.”

I-na wiped her tears on my right sleeve and let go.

“Have dinner with me. For a week from now.”

“What?”

“Then I’ll let you off cleanly.”

#036

I was taken aback by I-na’s sudden proposal, but I had no choice. Refusing even that would hurt her too much after already hurting her a lot.

While waiting at a red light, I turned my head towards I-na. She was watching me tensely, waiting for my answer.

What on earth did Ha Jin say to her?

I reached out my right arm and ruffled I-na’s hair.

“Cancel the Paris reservation.”

When her hair got messed up, I-na let go of her tension and immediately grumbled.

“I don’t know. I’m going to go alone anyway.”

“Let me make it clear. I’m not going to Paris with you.”

“...You’re really a fucking bastard. I even reserved a really nice hotel and everything.”

“Should I look into what to have for dinner over the next week?”

At my words, I-na stopped fixing her hair and stared at me blankly. Then she bit her lip. Seeing her face holding back tears made my heart waver again. When I turned my head to look straight ahead, I-na spoke, hiding her joyful expression.

“Ha Jin, you’re really chaotic, hurting me then being nice.”

Pretending to grumble, I-na continued as if doing me a favor.

“Let’s go to the places I suggest. I have a list of places I wanted to go with you.”

“Sorry, I-na.”

"It's fine. It's not like I didn't know you were an annoying person. You really won't ever be able to date a girl like me again."

"Yeah, yeah."

"Gosh, what do you mean 'yeah'?"

I suddenly ended up with a week-long date promise with I-na.

Since it's summer break, I guess it's okay to visit Grandma a week later or so.

Ah, but what should I do about Sun Woo misunderstanding and leaving like that? While I was worried, a question also arose about why I had to make excuses in detail.

No. We're friends, so I should set straight that kind of wrong information. Right. Friends.

Crazy Ha Jin is amazing, even eating with Sun Woo as a friend.

As a friend, Sun Woo is worried about Ha Jin and even said to stay together.

To think I refused Sun Woo's once-in-a-lifetime proposal to be together.

For some reason, my chest felt bitter.

I-na seemed to have it all planned out, having dinner with me every evening.

The place I-na took me today was a chicken soup restaurant with private rooms. We were having a meal as usual in that place built in a quiet, traditional Korean style good for dining. The only unusual point was that today was the last day of the week I had promised I-na.

"Aren't you busy these days? Is it okay for you to be with me for dinner every time?"

"Don't worry about that, Ha Jin. You come before any other appointment for me."

I smiled as if used to I-na's words now. At my smile, I-na showed a bit of irritation.

"Come on, give in a little now. If it were me, I'd at least show some signs of wavering if the other person was trying this hard."

"Sorry, I-na."

"Ha Jin. I like receiving apologies from you. But apologizing while I'm hitting on you is really annoying."

"Sorry. Eat."

“Tsk.”

I-na puckered her lips, stopped, and looked at me.

“Why are you suddenly like this? You used to be far from caring. No, what’s ‘far’? It was nonexistent.”

I just smiled at I-na’s question and continued eating. As if she had no intention of eating, I-na put her elbows on the table, rested her chin on her hands, and stared at me intently.

“Why do I like this more?”

“You’re not hungry?”

“Actually, I liked Ha Jin’s face and reckless personality, but seeing you like this now, I like this more. While you’ve fixed your personality, want to start over with me? I’m really confident I can do well.”

“Do well with what? Just eat. You can’t even have proper meals these days because you’re busy, right?”

“You’re so annoying, Ha Jin. Really. Be moderate even when putting up walls. If you’re going to put up walls, do it properly. Don’t care for me affectionately.”

“Should I do that?”

“Damn... you really... Just try that. Treat me like you are now.”

Having come right after finishing her schedule, she looked as pretty as a celebrity should, enough to make one gasp. Even with her determinedly showing her affection for me like that, strangely, my heart didn’t waver at all.

I made a call before leaving for Grandma’s house. The call connected after ringing for a while, and I heard Grandma’s voice that I missed.

“Oh, is this Jin-i?”

“Ok-bun!”

“Calling me by name again.”

I could picture Grandma’s smiling face over the phone. I briefly told her I was leaving and informed her of my arrival time, and she said she would send her grandson. She said the road here was narrow, so it would be hard if it was my first time. I said it was

fine, but she told me the time she would send him and gave me her grandson's number to contact him.

When I stopped by a rest area after departing and checked my phone, there was a text from [Kim Ok-bun's Real Grandson].

[Let me know when you arrive.]

It was an extremely concise and stiff message. I laughed at the text without even a single squiggly line. As I started driving again, I imagined what kind of person Grandma's grandson would be. Grandma had said he was pretty, so he must be really good-looking. And judging by his texting, he must have a very blunt personality.

"A cold city woman?"

That was exactly the image forming in my head.

A cold and aloof city woman.

I laughed to myself, thinking she wouldn't suit warm and caring Grandma.

I arrived at the meeting place earlier than expected.

I had expected 4 hours, but I arrived 30 minutes early even after stopping at a rest area. Thinking I didn't even step on it that much, I parked my car at the designated meeting spot and waited inside. The village where Grandma lived was at the "ri" level, and this place was an "eup". There were quite a few people coming and going as it was near the intercity bus terminal in the eup.

Every passerby carefully looked at my car as they walked by. It was a rare car even in Seoul, so their gazes filled with curiosity were directed at the car. As time passed like that and the expected arrival time approached, someone knocked on the car door.

I looked at the person knocking on the door, startled, and could only blink.

Damn, is Korea originally this small? Or is the world inside the webtoon small? To think I'd run into Sun Woo 4 hours away from Seoul.

I hurriedly got out of the car, and Sun Woo also looked at me with a surprised face.

"Ha Jin."

"Sun Woo? What's this about meeting here?"

"What brings you here? Didn't you say you were going to Paris?"

Sun Woo erased his surprised expression and asked, lifting one corner of his mouth. I shook my head vigorously right away.

“That’s a misunderstanding. I’m not going to Paris.”

“.....”

“Ah, wait a moment. I have someone I’m supposed to meet here right now.”

“Who?”

“Huh?”

“Who did you come all the way here to meet?”

Sun Woo’s gaze turned sharp and swept over me.

He glanced at my t-shirt with a sea turtle embroidered on it and furrowed his brows.

“The person related to that t-shirt?”

“Yeah.”

“You cherished it so much, saying it was a gift. Who is it?”

At Sun Woo’s words, I brought the phone that was already dialed to my ear. Listening to the dial tone, I faced Sun Woo, who was still looking at me with dissatisfaction.

And at that moment, Sun Woo’s phone rang.

Sun Woo answered the call, telling me to wait a moment.

“Hello?”

At the same time, I heard Sun Woo’s voice from the other end of the phone I was holding.

“Hello?”

When Sun Woo spoke again, the same voice was heard from my phone as well.

Oh... no way... is this?

I hung up and, with trembling hands, checked the name [Kim Ok-bun’s Real Grandson] once more and pressed the call button. Hoping Sun Woo wouldn’t pick up. But my desperate wish was shattered to pieces. Sun Woo brought his ringing phone to his ear

again and said “hello” just like before. Of course, his voice was heard from my phone as well.

‘Fuck. Fuck. This damn webtoon.’

With my hands shaking uncontrollably, I ended up dropping my phone on the ground.

There’s no way. Grandma’s grandson is a woman, right? ...Grandma said she was pretty.

“You....”

When I called out to Sun Woo in a trembling voice, his gaze shifted from the phone to me. Then, with a startled face, he quickly approached me and pulled me up. I was about to collapse, my legs shaking, but I managed to stand thanks to Sun Woo’s hold.

“Ha Jin. What’s wrong with you?”

“Sun Woo, you....”

“What’s this all of a sudden? Are you hurting somewhere?”

Sun Woo examined me all over while holding me up. Looking at his face reminded me of when we went to a cafe with Grandma, and he said, “It’s good because it’s sweet,” while drinking a sweet coffee.

Fucking hell, really.

Soon, my vision turned blurry, and tears welled up.

“Ha Jin?”

“Fuck....”

Then I just cried. Unable to even make a sound, I just kept shedding tears, and Sun Woo hugged me.

“Ha Jin. It’s okay, Ha Jin. I’m here with you.”

I hated Sun Woo, who was trying to comfort me. Why did it have to be Sun Woo of all the many, many people who was Grandma’s grandson? Why am I not allowed even a small patch of shade...?

“Ha Jin.”

The pitiful call caresses my ears. At the sound of his voice, I forcibly swallowed my tears. I tried to pull myself together, telling myself I had no tears to shed here, but it wasn't easy.

Haa, there were times I felt frustrated, wondering why Sun Woo acted like that in the webtoon. I wished he would just boldly shake off Sin Yeo-un and Ha Jin and live more independently. That's crazy. I thought too lightly of someone else's life.

In a situation where even Grandma had passed away, and he was left alone, Sun Woo needed someone to rely on.

Fuck... Even I, who isn't related by blood, am struggling this much after meeting her only a few times.

How hard must it have been for Sun Woo, who was raised by Grandma's hand from the moment he was born?

I broke free from Sun Woo's embrace and picked up the phone that had fallen to the ground. The screen was a bit cracked, but it was still functioning normally. Calming my trembling hands, I called [Kim Ok-bun's Real Grandson] again. Sun Woo had his eyes on me, not even looking at his ringing phone.

"You're not going to answer?"

"Later. Right now, I need to take care of you first."

I raised my shaking hand and grabbed Sun Woo's. My hand, still not calm, was trembling badly. Sun Woo placed his hand over my shaking one and held it tightly, trying to steady it.

"Sun Woo. Can you drive for me?"

Sun Woo nodded. Even though he didn't know where I wanted to go.

As I got into the passenger seat, Sun Woo naturally went to the driver's seat. When he closed the door and looked at me, his face had darkened.

"What's going on?"

Sun Woo asked carefully. He seemed to want me to answer, but he wasn't pressing me for it. I couldn't even mention Grandma to him. I tried to find another plausible excuse, but my mind was blank, and nothing came to mind.

In the end, I chose silence.

Since I had no answer, Sun Woo also maintained the silence with me. After staying like that for a while, Sun Woo carefully called out to me.

“Ha Jin.”

At his affectionate call, my eyes welled up with tears again.

“You can cry if you want to.”

Sun Woo had a very calm and mature demeanor. Seeing him appear more emotionally mature than me, I bit my lower lip hard.

A hand reached out and lightly rubbed my bitten lower lip.

“If you don’t want to tell me the reason you’re crying, I won’t ask anymore.”

Sun Woo, slowly closing the distance and approaching me, muttered in a barely audible voice.

“So only cry in front of me.”

Sun Woo’s lips touched mine and then pulled away.

#037

Somewhat calmed by Sun Woo’s kiss, I checked the time. Over an hour had easily passed since the time I was supposed to meet him.

‘Oh no, Grandma must be waiting without even a call.’

I now looked at Sun Woo with a composed face. Sun Woo, who had been solely focused on my condition, smiled faintly as if relieved. That smile seemed to soothe my heart, making me feel even calmer.

“Where should I go?”

“To Grandma’s house.”

“Grandma’s house was here?”

I shook my head and swallowed the tears welling up again. Thinking of Grandma automatically triggered a physical reaction.

‘Let’s not think about it. Ah, please stop crying.’



As I was tearing up again, Sun Woo reached out his arm, grabbed my shoulder, and pulled me towards him. Then he brought his face close to mine and once again kissed me.

“It’s the best way to comfort a crying child.”

“.....”

The tears disappeared as soon as he kissed me.

It’s indeed effective on a crying child, as Sun Woo said. But why is he using that on grown-up me?

“Do you want to put in the address? Or guide me as we go?”

“You probably know the way.”

“Me?”

“Since it’s Kim Ok-bun’s house.”

At my words, Sun Woo first looked like he didn’t understand, then soon looked at me with a surprised face.

“You?”

I just gave Sun Woo a weak smile.

Grandmother’s house with a spacious yard felt familiar, even though it was my first time coming. Come to think of it, it was the house Sun Woo had fled to in the webtoon to avoid Ha Jin. Damn this webtoon.

Grandmother, who must have been waiting for us, warmly greeted us in the yard. As if she might disappear, I immediately got out of the car, ran to her, and hugged her. Even though a large man bowed and embraced her, that embrace felt comfortable and cozy.

Unlike my worry that I might burst into tears again upon seeing Grandmother’s face, I was able to smile brightly.

“Oh, Jin-i. It must have been hard coming all the way here.”

“It wasn’t hard at all. I was happy the whole way here.”

“You’re still the same. Our Jin-i. Did you greet our grandson? He has a kind heart, but he can be a bit blunt.”

“Not at all. He was really nice. He even drove for me when I said I was tired.”

“You two already became close?”

When I nodded, Grandmother looked extremely happy and pinched my cheeks like rice cakes. As Sun Woo, who had gotten out of the car at some point, approached us, I put my arm around his shoulder as if to show off how close we were. Sun Woo, who I thought would naturally reciprocate the shoulder hug, wrapped his long arm around my waist instead. It was an ambiguous action, almost like an embrace. Standing side by side and looking at Grandmother, she was smiling proudly with joy.

“Oh my, you two look great together. You got that close already? Grandma was worrying for nothing. Well, with our Jin-i’s affable personality, you’d be friends with the whole world. Right?”

“Right? What can I do? I’m just worried he might fall for me too deeply.”

There’s no way that would happen. Sun Woo falling for Ha Jin would be this webtoon going off the rails. Perhaps finding my nonsensical words unpleasant, Sun Woo’s expression distorted. See, I knew it. Seeing Sun Woo’s reaction like that, it felt strange that he kept kissing me. I wondered if it was his way of punishing me for saying I wanted to taste men.

“Our Jin-i must be hungry. Go leave your luggage in the room. Grandma will make you something delicious.”

“I’ll help you.”

“No, it’s all ready. I just need to set the table. Darling, show Jin-i to the room.”

“Bring your luggage and follow me.”

Sun Woo showed me to the room. The small room only had a closet and a low table. A blanket was neatly folded on one side. I quickly put down my luggage and went outside. Seeing them setting the table on the wooden bench in the middle of the yard, I also carried side dishes out.

The table was so full there were no empty spots. I wondered when she prepared so much food.

“I finally get to feed our Jin-i. I’m not sure if this country meal will suit your taste.”

“It looks really delicious.”

“Eat a lot.”

“Thank you for the food.”

I spoke energetically and started eating. The side dishes that weren't too salty and the seasonal greens were incredibly delicious. Wrapping perilla leaves with steamed pumpkin leaves and strong doenjang with freshwater snails in them, it was a taste you couldn't buy even with money.

Grandmother was pleased to see me eating well, calling me blessed, and Sun Woo also stopped eating and looked at me. I felt his gaze constantly directed towards my eyes.

“Oh my, how is Jin-i so pretty even when eating?”

“The food is really delicious.”

“Grandma feels full just watching Jin-i eat.”

I wrapped a small perilla leaf wrap and held it out to Grandmother.

“Please have this.”

“Oh my, I'm being treated like royalty.”

“It's good, right?”

“Of course, who made it for me?”

While eating, I kept feeling a gaze on me. Sun Woo, who had been intently looking at my eyes, now had his gaze fixed on my rice bowl.

When I mouthed “Why?” to him, he pointed to his mouth with his finger.

So is he telling me to make a wrap for him too now? Why? As I was puzzled by his behavior, he pointed to the pumpkin leaves with his eyes. Sitting upright without even eating.

I felt conflicted because I wanted to slap him hard somewhere, but I couldn't do that in front of Grandmother. Then, remembering how he had comforted me when I was crying today, I decided to make him a wrap, thinking ‘Fine, this is payback’.

A very big one.

I made it so big it would be hard to eat in one bite and brought it to Sun Woo's mouth, but he just looked at it.

“Our Sun Woo, eat up.”

When I spoke cheerfully in a 'sol' tone, Sun Woo smiled brightly and gobbled up the wrap. The way he chewed and ate felt too straightforward...

'Wow, Sun Woo is also quite crazy.'

It wasn't so big that he couldn't eat it. But still, he could have split it or taken some out himself before eating. He just ate it as it was given. Clicking my tongue at Sun Woo, I was about to continue eating when a wrap as big as the one I just made was held out in front of me.

"Sun Woo..."

"Ha Jin. Eat."

You crazy bastard. When did I ask you to make me a wrap? Is his motto to pay back what he receives? Is he someone who can't stand losing, doing exactly what I did? Pouting my lips, I also ate the wrap he offered. As if I would lose to this.

"Kids, your mouths are going to rip."

Grandmother looked worried but also laughed as if she was having fun.

"Sun Woo, should I make you another one?"

"Sure, go ahead."

He retorted nonchalantly. Instead of making another big wrap, I decided to fill it with a lot of peppers. Giggling, I held out a small wrap filled with peppers. Sun Woo, who had been watching what I was doing, ate it even though he knew it was full of peppers. Perhaps because Ha Jin couldn't handle spicy food, his brows automatically furrowed.

"Isn't it spicy?"

I asked worriedly instead. It looked extremely painful.

"It's bearable."

"Really?"

Well, that's a relief then.

Then, before I knew it, Sun Woo had made a wrap and held out one the size of a baby's fist to me. I broke out in a cold sweat.

"I can't eat spicy food."

"I know."

"You know? You're sure you know?"

I ate the wrap while being very wary of Sun Woo's words. Fortunately, Sun Woo didn't do the same cowardly thing as me. Feeling sorry for no reason, I made him a proper wrap again.

'.....?'

This strange wrap-making exchange continued for a while. The more our rice bowls emptied, the more I wondered why we were doing this, but I couldn't stop. Because Grandmother was watching us with the happiest face in the world.

"You two are a match made in heaven."

A match, you say. Ha Jin is just someone who adds misfortune to Sun Woo's life.

The completely emptied rice bowls seemed to represent the fierce wrap-making battle.

With the long summer days, smoke was rising from various places in the still brightly lit rural village. After finishing the meal, the two men had taken over the kitchen, saying they would do the dishes, making the small space feel cramped.

The space was too narrow for two people to stand, so in the end, I was chased out by Sun Woo's eviction order. Leaving the cleanup to Sun Woo, I took a light stroll around the village with Grandmother. Walking along the unpaved road barely wide enough for one car to pass, we saw the village hall and an ancient village well that had been there for a very long time. Grandmother didn't forget to introduce me as her grandson's friend from Seoul to the elderly villagers we met along the way.

After finishing the light walk and returning while holding Grandmother's hand affectionately, Sun Woo was waiting for us obediently in the yard. My heart fluttered seeing his handsome face waiting patiently. To think such a good-looking protagonist was waiting for me. It was enough to be moved. Perhaps trying to hide those feelings, playful words unknowingly came out of my mouth.

"Did you guard the house well?"

Calling out to him like a mutt, Sun Woo looked at me with cold eyes. Grandmother approached him and slapped his back.

"What's with those eyes towards your friend?"

"Hit him more. Sun Woo always glares at me like that."

“Oh my? Really? This kid! How dare you do that to Grandma’s pretty grandson!”

Grandmother beat her own grandson mercilessly for my sake. Sun Woo didn’t take his sharp gaze off me even while being hit. When I laughed out loud at that, he also chuckled, perhaps finding the situation funny.

Grandmother had me sit next to Sun Woo and brought out a tray full of Korean melons. Sitting on the wooden bench and eating the melon Grandmother peeled and fed me, Sun Woo picked one with a fork and held it out to me.

“You eat it.”

“But I don’t have hands.”

When I playfully hid my hands behind my back and said that, Sun Woo shoved the melon on the fork into my mouth.

“Hmph, Sun Woo is bullying me.”

“Oh dear. Darling, why do you keep bothering our Jin-i?”

Grandmother immediately took my side and held the melon in my mouth to make it easier for me to eat. After taking a bite, I rested my head on Grandmother’s shoulder.

“It tastes good because of your touch. Right?”

Grandmother laughed warmly and put the melon I had bitten into my mouth again. As I chewed openly as if to show off to Sun Woo, he wiggled his eyebrows. As if he was sulking that I had stolen his grandmother.

#038

“It’s this time already?”

“Why? Do you have something to do?”

“It’s time for the daily drama. Look at me. I forgot while playing with you kids.”

“Forget that and play with me instead.”

“Jin-i. Grandma can’t give in on that one.”

Grandmother hurriedly went into the room, leaving only me and Sun Woo on the wooden bench in the yard.

“Grandmother abandoned me...”

How fun is that drama for her to leave so readily like that? Her cool behavior made me act gloomy, and Sun Woo snorted.

“Go inside and watch it together.”

I shook my head, indicating it was fine since I didn’t enjoy watching TV much.

“I like being with you too, Sun Woo.”

I thought I had said something unnecessary, but Sun Woo didn’t seem to mind much.

The sky that had darkened at some point was densely studded with stars. Seeing countless stars I had never seen in Seoul, I looked up for a while, then just lay down.

As I lay there, I heard Sun Woo moving and gradually getting closer to me. Soon, the back of my head was lifted, and Sun Woo’s thigh went under it. In other words, I was now lying with my head on Sun Woo’s lap. His thighs were firm with just the right amount of muscle. I moved my head little by little on his thighs, which had no soft spots, finding the optimal position. Perhaps my actions stimulated Sun Woo, as he flinched.

‘Is it ticklish?’

I settled into position and looked at the sky. Lying down definitely made the stars more visible. As I was silently counting the stars, Sun Woo’s face suddenly appeared in the dark night sky. His cool, well-defined features shone brighter than the stars in the night sky.

Even at an angle that would be humiliating for others, his perfect face was simply handsome. That guy is really good-looking, befitting a protagonist.

“I didn’t know you were Grandma’s grandson.”

At my words, Sun Woo lowered his gaze. He examined me carefully as if studying me, then showed a faint smile. His smile made me foolishly smile back.

“I didn’t know you were that person either. So the ‘Jin-i’ Grandma called was the ‘Jin’ in ‘Ha Jin’.”

“I came here expecting Grandma’s grandson to be a pretty girl.”

“...You did what?”

A chilling air that didn’t suit the summer day lingered around Sun Woo like a mirage. I slapped his thigh that he had offered me with a loud smack.

“Grandma said she was pretty, so I was expecting it. She definitely said prettier than me, but how could that be you? It should have been a girl. Grandma’s grandson... should have been a girl.”

That way, our Ok-bun wouldn’t have an expiration date.

Whose fault is this, really?

“Sorry for not being a girl.”

“Yeah. You should apologize to me.”

I raised my hand and fiddled with his cheek, sarcastically responding to him. Then, suddenly feeling resentful that he was Grandma’s grandson, I pinched him hard. Even though I was pinching him, Sun Woo didn’t react at all and just stayed still like that for me.

I pinched his soft cheek, then stroked it with my hand. The velvety texture of his skin felt nice. I touched it for a long time, addicted to the subtle sensation, until my arm ached and I lowered it. How long did I touch him for my arm to hurt like that? Anyways, Sun Woo had a strange power to draw people in, even without being coated in honey. No wonder that dung fly Ha Jin got caught too.

“Sun Woo. If we had known each other, we would have become close much sooner. Why didn’t we even exchange phone numbers?”

“Your cell phone is just for decoration.”

“It’s not on silent anymore.”

There were few people who knew my number, so calls were extremely rare. Kim Shin kept sending me his daily life like a diary even though I didn’t ask, which was annoying. Thinking of Secretary Kim, who would just come to my house worried that he couldn’t reach me, I thought I shouldn’t do that.

“You’re not even holding your phone now.”

“You’re right. I guess it became a habit.”

“Are you going to ignore my calls like that too?”

“You’re going to call me?”

“Now that I know your number, there will probably be at least one occasion to contact you.”



'Sun Woo contacting Ha Jin first. Wow, this webtoon is getting more and more interesting.'

"I'll always answer your calls."

Lying still, it wasn't particularly hot, but Sun Woo was already holding a fan and fanning various parts of my body. His long arms moved largely and slowly, stirring up a breeze all over my body. The well-defined arm muscles moving just to fan me seemed trivial and cute, making me laugh automatically.

"You look just like a grandfather right now."

"I'm chasing away the mosquitoes."

Whether I teased him or not, Sun Woo diligently continued fanning. His thoughtfulness in taking care of me was really lovely. Being friends with Sun Woo, I get to enjoy such privileges too.

Then, when it got completely dark, Sun Woo showed me where to wash up, and after a quick shower, I said goodnight to Grandmother and went into the room.

A thick blanket was spread out on the floor of the room, filling it up completely. In the space with no more room, I collapsed from fatigue and lay down.

"Why are there two pillows?"

I thought it was strange and was sniffing the scent of the sun-dried blanket, which I liked, when the door opened. Seeing Sun Woo entering through the open door, I sat up.

"Are we sleeping together?"

"There are only two rooms."

"Oh, really?"

At his words, my throat seemed to stiffen awkwardly.

I lay back down clumsily, and Sun Woo roughly shook his head and walked over to the spread-out blanket.

"There's no air conditioning in the room. Is that okay?"

"I don't get hot easily."

"You do seem like that."

When I looked at him as if asking what he meant, Sun Woo turned off the light and sat next to me. The LED clock on the wall illuminated the room with a soft light, just enough to distinguish objects.

“You always cover yourself tightly with the blanket when sleeping. I thought you’d be like that.”

“Really?”

He observed me closely. Sun Woo lay down beside me and snuggled up close to me.

“Wh-why?”

When I asked, startled for no reason, a smile spread across Sun Woo’s face.

“I’m glad you don’t get hot easily.”

“Why?”

“Because I’ll be sticking close to you.”

“Why?”

I was repeating “why” like someone who only knew that word.

I mean, really, why? Why is Sun Woo sticking close to Ha Jin?

“It’s my sleeping habit.”

I was at a loss for words at Sun Woo’s answer.

It doesn’t make sense. I know from reading the webtoon that Sun Woo is sensitive when sleeping, so he has a hard time falling asleep if someone is around. He’s been like that since he was young, and I’m sure there was a line where Sun Woo himself said that. And he’s saying he sleeps all snuggled up? It doesn’t add up.

Did I remember wrong? That can’t be.

While I was thinking it was strange, Sun Woo’s arm pulled my waist tightly. As his head came close to the nape of my neck, I could feel his breath, making me flinch involuntarily. When I showed that flinching reaction, Sun Woo seemed to find it amusing and laughed, pulling me even closer with more force.

“Ha Jin.”

Sun Woo took a deep breath and called my name in a low voice. His voice, which felt like a beast's growl, made my hair stand on end.

"Not going to cry anymore?"

Why is he suddenly bringing up my tears?

Sun Woo, who had his gaze fixed on my clear eyes, showed a slightly disappointed expression.

"You're pretty when you cry."

Hey, Sun Woo? What kind of statement is that?

Sun Woo's eyes curved beautifully as he looked at my dumbfounded expression. Mesmerized, I looked at his face and slightly parted my lips.

Then, Sun Woo lightly rubbed my lips with his finger. Gradually, he applied more force, distorting my lips.

"I'm going to kiss you now."

"Huh?"

"It'd be even better if you cry."

Unlike his gentle words, Sun Woo's eyes were persistently looking at me as if to devour me.

While my mind was hazy from Sun Woo's words, a question arose from somewhere distant.

Hey, author? I think Sun Woo is a bit strange.

I spoke firmly to Sun Woo, who was making a bizarre request.

"I won't cry."

Why would I cry? It seemed clear he was teasing me about crying in front of him earlier. No, before that, didn't he also mention a kiss?

I glanced sideways and saw Sun Woo smiling so widely his mouth drooped. Feeling goosebumps, I quickly turned my eyes back to the front. At that moment, Sun Woo's breath was deeply exhaled near my ear. As I trembled finely at that ticklish sensation, his low, resonant voice faintly enveloped my ear.

“I can make you cry.”

I tried to ask what he meant, but I couldn't get the words out because his lips overlapped mine. Sun Woo, who had lifted his body and removed his lips, was already on top of me, pressing down. Everything happened in an instant.

His overwhelming aura made me crazily thirsty. Desire boiled to the point I could understand Ha Jin going wild. As I stared at his lustful face with dazed eyes, that handsome face slowly descended and nibbled on my earlobe.

“Can you stay quiet?”

An unfamiliar sensation brushed down my lower back. Before I could feel disappointed that the dizzying sensation had disappeared, Sun Woo licked my ear again, causing a tingling current to run along my back.

Excessively lewd sounds were flowing out of my mouth, too obscene for a quiet room in a rural village. As I kept flinching and moaning, Sun Woo let out a soft laugh.

“It'll be troublesome if you keep making noise.”

“Then don't do it.”

“Don't do it?”

I finally came to my senses and answered seriously, but Sun Woo asked back with a relaxed expression instead.

‘What the hell is going on now?’

We had kissed before, getting caught up in the mood, but this felt different. A loud alarm went off in my head.

“Don't do it.”

I spoke seriously again.

“It wasn't long ago that you asked me to kiss you first. Now you're telling me not to? You seduced me first. Are you playing with me?”

Sun Woo interlaced his fingers with mine, brought them to the side of my face, and held them up. I tried to pull my hands out, but I couldn't move as if I had been tied up.

Worried that noise would be heard in the quiet surroundings, I struggled passively under him, but I kept feeling something poking my stomach. What was it? I could feel that

thing touching my stomach gradually hardening. At the same time, Sun Woo, who had been watching my struggle with a relaxed smile, suddenly stiffened his expression.

As if holding something back, his frowning face came closer and soon warned in a low voice.

“Ha Jin. Keep it down.”

#039

Sun Woo pressed his lips against mine again. Unlike earlier, his lips were rough and intense as they ravaged me, not gentle at all.

He finally pried open my closed mouth and entered, thickly and stickily exploring inside me.

The tingling sensation that had already brushed down my back made my body flinch again.

Sun Woo’s kiss was incomparably deeper and heavier than ever before. As I surrendered my body to his lips digging into me as if to suck in even the breaths I exhaled, my reason gradually blurred.

“Mmph.”

In the gap he allowed, my moan slipped out once more. Sun Woo found the parted gap and pounced again. His soft, warm tongue explored everywhere and attacked hotly. My excited breaths barely escaped, and perhaps because no amount of inhaling was enough, the corners of my eyes reddened.

In the end, only after a line of tears flowed did Sun Woo remove his lips from me.

“Haa...”

Moans kept spilling out between my panting breaths. I wanted to cover my mouth, but I couldn’t close it due to my shortness of breath.

“You really are pretty when you cry. But it’s still too early to cry.”

Sun Woo untangled his clasped right hand and fiddled with the corners of my eyes. I could feel the wetness on my face transferring and sticking to his hand.

“Call my name.”

At Sun Woo’s words, I shook my head while gasping for breath.

As if I'd be in my right mind to lie under you and call your name.

"It'll be more comfortable for you if you listen well."

He lightly flicked the tip of my nose with his finger. When I glared at him with defiant eyes, Sun Woo smiled and roughly draped himself over me. The faint string of reason snapped off due to Sun Woo deeply kissing me again.

My body, which had vowed to never submit to Sun Woo, at some point indulged in pleasure and thrust my left hand into his hair, pulling hard. Our lips pressed together without any gaps, busy exploring each other.

It was as if the desire inside me had exploded, impossible to control. I couldn't restrain myself.

I liked Sun Woo's boiling body temperature and the faint scent of soap wafting from him. Most of all, I liked his face visible through my slightly opened eyes. His closed eyes occasionally twitched, and each time, my lower abdomen tingled. I only realized after seeing Sun Woo how weak I was to faces.

Sun Woo made a pained expression as if holding something back, but when our eyes met, he smiled prettily with curved eyes.

If the word "enchantment" were to be expressed as a human, it would undoubtedly be Sun Woo.

Tears welled up again at his mouth suffocating me and making me unable to breathe. I was so out of breath and in pain that I tried to turn my head to avoid him, but he followed so quickly that I was captured and devoured by his lips again.

Overwhelmed, I put strength into the hand among his hair. When I roughly pulled, Sun Woo immediately bit my lip in retaliation. As if surrendering, I loosened the grip on his hair, and Sun Woo, seeming satisfied, slowly lifted his head.

"Be good now."

He coaxed me gently as if training a dog.

'Damn it, Sun Woo. My lips hurt so much.'

I struggled to hold on to the string of reason I had barely grasped. But as if mocking me, Sun Woo blew away my reason again. His face approached closely, smiling as if to seduce me. His tongue licked my lips. As if apologizing for biting me.

'This is really driving me crazy.'

Then he kissed me again from various angles. Still not allowing any gaps. Pleasure and pain were all mixed together, leaving only animalistic gestures rather than human ones to explore him.

When I was so out of it that I couldn't tell if this was a kiss or us devouring each other, Sun Woo's hand crept under my t-shirt. His hot hand, as if flames were rising from it, rubbed my abdomen heavily. After groping my well-defined abs, his hand was gradually moving towards my side and back.

I cursed through clenched teeth at his burning touch.

"Crazy..."

Along with intense arousal, my strayed reason returned slightly. I was startled by my own extremely strange gestures. I could feel Sun Woo's touch gradually climbing up my back. In an instant, embarrassment rushed to me like a wave, coming with reason.

'What are we doing?!'

I screamed inwardly.

Why were we doing here what Ha Jin and Sun Woo did in the webtoon? Moreover, why was Sun Woo on top doing this? In my memory, the one going crazy on top was clearly Ha Jin.

"Aaah!"

With a startled cry, I kicked Sun Woo, who was straddling me, with all my might.

With a thudding noise, Sun Woo flew to the door. My body, still not over its excitement, released loud heartbeats and rough breaths. I quickly sat up and pulled down my t-shirt.

'This is crazy. Really crazy!'

Even if I lost my reason from arousal, I really blasted it off to space.

"Ha Jin."

Sun Woo sat up with intensely sunken eyes. We remained at a standstill for a while. The room was filled with hot air as if a fierce battle had taken place.

Then there was a knock, and soon the door opened, and Grandmother came in with drowsy eyes.

"Oh my, you two aren't fighting, are you? Huh? Grandma was startled awake."

My heart pounded as if it would burst at Grandmother's appearance.

Since Sun Woo and I were far apart, it seemed plausible that we had fought. Yes, it's better to be misunderstood as fighting. No, then would it hurt Ok-bun's heart?

I quickly opened my mouth.

"No, it's not that. A mosquito! Sun Woo fell while catching a mosquito."

"There are mosquitoes? We should light a mosquito coil."

"It's okay. We just caught it."

Pointing to Sun Woo's hand, pretending there was a mosquito where there wasn't, I acted as if the mosquito had comfortably gone to the afterlife in his palm.

"Don't make a ruckus in the middle of the night. There are only sensitive elderly people here. They all have sharp hearing, so they'll be startled awake. The whole village must be up now."

"Yes, yes. We'll be quiet."

Grandmother smiled at us with drowsy eyes, telling us to sleep well, and left the room. As soon as the sound of the door closing was heard, I let out a deep sigh. And I called out to Sun Woo, who still hadn't budged from the spot he had flown to.

"Sun Woo, are you okay?"

"..."

Sun Woo's eyes were still intensely sunken. I was dumbfounded by his gaze that seemed to show a hint of bloodthirst. The one who dealt it is the one who gets angry. He was the one who climbed on top of me and caused a ruckus. I don't know why he's looking at me like that as if blaming me.

"Come here."

When I gently coaxed him, he came to my side with a displeased face.

How could I be doing this with Sun Woo? As if Ha Jin's evil spirit had possessed me.

I struggled to spit out the words that wouldn't come out.

"Sun Woo. Let's not do this here."

Even the words "not here" were absurd. Then what, it's okay to do it somewhere else?



Anyway, doing this kind of thing in this space was a bit much.

No, if you had normal thinking, would you do this when Grandmother was clearly in the next room?! This is insane, completely insane. I'm sure he wasn't a strange guy from the beginning. Strangely, ever since coming here, he's been saying weird things like cry in front of him, show him crying, really.

At my words, Sun Woo narrowed his eyes and looked at me. It was clearly a displeased gaze. I didn't even want to know what he was displeased about. Not wanting to argue with him further, I calmly persuaded him.

"Grandmother. She said she has sharp hearing..."

"Those words about it not being okay here."

"Oh, don't think too deeply about it. It just came out. Anyway, let's just sleep quietly here."

'As if it would be okay elsewhere?' I swallowed the words I couldn't say in the end. I don't know how he understood my words, but Sun Woo relaxed his expression.

I let out an empty laugh at his appearance, as if the beast that had gone wild had turned docile.

"I got it for now."

Sun Woo lay down and spread his arms. Arms that only close when I enter them. As Sun Woo, who had been murderous, was obediently spreading his arms, I felt strange but thought it was better than earlier when he looked like he would kill me, and with that bizarre logic, I meekly lay in his arms.

"You look really scary when you're angry."

"Really? Then I hope Ha Jin will behave well so I don't get angry."

"Okay... Huh?"

Are you saying something strange?

Still, I couldn't push away Sun Woo, who held me in his arms and kept touching me. In the end, in a half-surrendered state, I had to feel Sun Woo's breath stuck to me without any gaps while being held in his arms.

Come to think of it, something heavy and firm keeps touching my butt.

You're still hard?

My mind goes blank because of the male lead, who has clearly gone completely crazy.

“Why are your lips so swollen?”

“Mosquitoes! I got bitten by mosquitoes.”

Grandmother looked at my lips with concern and said she would light a mosquito coil tonight. I wish she could just get rid of Sun Woo instead of the mosquitoes.

Since there are only two rooms, at this rate, I might have to sleep with Sun Woo the whole summer break.

With a slight hope, I fiddled with my swollen lips and asked Sun Woo how about me sleeping with Grandmother, but he flatly rejected my suggestion, saying Grandmother can't sleep well if she sleeps with someone.

#040

Grandma tended to a small field, and on market days, she said she harvested various things and sold them. One day, she asked me to go see the pepper field together, and as I got up from my seat, Sun Woo called out to me and stopped me. He gave me a pair of work pants and a long-sleeved t-shirt and told me to put them on.

When I came out wearing the clothes, he even tied a handkerchief around my neck and put a hat with a curtain-like cloth attached to it on my head. With a gentle touch that made it hard to believe he was the same beast who nibbled, sucked, and ravished me every night.

“You're fully armed.”

“The sun is strong.”

It was funny seeing Sun Woo standing in the same outfit. With his long legs, his ankles were sticking out of the pants, and he had a basket tucked under his arm.

At Sun Woo's words about the strong sunlight, I took out sunglasses from the car and put them on.

“How do I look? Cool?”

I leaned against the car and posed like a model, but Sun Woo ignored me and passed by.

At night, he's so persistent, but during the day...

Clicking my tongue, I caught up with him and swiftly passed by him as well. Then, I linked arms with Grandma, who was walking ahead, and tattled on Sun Woo's behavior.

"I think Sun Woo doesn't like me. He's totally ignoring what I say."

"Oh no, that's not it. He's just not talkative, but he's a deeply caring child."

"And he called me ugly. I asked if I was pretty, and he glared at me like this."

"Where are you ugly when you're this pretty? Darling! Treat our Jin-i a bit better."

Sun Woo walked towards Grandma, who turned around and scolded him, with large strides. A hint of playfulness flickered across his face before disappearing. Feeling a bit uncomfortable, I watched him warily, and his face suddenly came close and stood in front of Grandma, looking at me with honey-dripping affectionate eyes as if to show off.

As I grinned back at that gaze, Sun Woo laughed.

"Ha Jin. I think I told you every night that you're pretty. Maybe you have a bad memory?"

"Oh my, yes, yes, don't you two look great together?"

Sun Woo walked ahead with a refreshed smile on his face.

Flustered by Sun Woo, who brought up what happened at night without any shame, I took off my sunglasses and put them on Grandma.

"Look at him smiling like a devil. Ok-bun, just look at the good things."

"Huh? I like it though?"

Grandma laughed happily and walked with me, following behind Sun Woo.

The pepper field we arrived at was small in scale. I picked the moderately grown peppers as Sun Woo instructed me and put them in the basket. Sun Woo even brought gloves, worried that I might find the peppers spicy while picking them. If it weren't for last night's events, I would have praised the protagonist, but I had suffered too much for that.

I didn't forget to glare at Sun Woo, who acted nonchalant as if nothing had happened. As if he found my behavior amusing, Sun Woo responded with a relaxed smile.

While picking peppers, I suddenly remembered that firm thing pressing against my butt. I had seen it in the webtoon, but actually feeling it was a huge shock to me. Is the main lead's thing supposed to be that big?

“Ugh...”

I let out a groan involuntarily, and Sun Woo, who was harvesting a little distance away, approached me.

“Is it spicy?”

With a worried face, he took the pepper from my hand.

“Yeah. Very.”

An unnecessary complaint slipped out. There’s no way it would be spicy when I picked them leaving the stems and even wore gloves. At my answer, Sun Woo moved my body away from the pepper plants.

“Go out and rest.”

“It’s bearable.”

“Isn’t it uncomfortable?”

“It’s fine.”

Seeing Sun Woo meticulously checking if I was in pain, a sense of betrayal suddenly arose. Where did the person who pushed forward every night despite me telling him not to go? And now he’s making such a caring face that makes people doubtful. As if he’s a different person day and night.

As I started picking peppers again, Sun Woo, who had stayed by my side for a while, returned to his spot.

The pepper field was small, so it didn’t take long to harvest. The work that would have taken Grandma half a day alone, we finished in an hour with the three of us. We filled the two baskets we brought with peppers and put them out by the roadside. Moving clumsily at this unfamiliar task, my lower back ached dully.

Rubbing my back, I sat in front of the baskets we put down and fiddled with the peppers.

“There’s so much... Are we going to eat all of this?”

“Oh my, how can we eat all of this? I’m going to sell them at the market tomorrow.”

“Is tomorrow a market day?”

“Yes. Grandma will sell everything tomorrow and buy you something delicious.”

“Then buy me some country-style fried chicken!”

“If Jin-i wants to eat it, I have to buy it for you.”

Grandma promised to buy it for me with a happy face and told us to go home first.

“I’m going to hang out with my friends here for a bit, so you two go ahead and have lunch.”

The way she left wearing sunglasses was extraordinarily hip.

We went home, put the peppers in a cool place, and took off our hats. Sun Woo made cool ice water and handed it to me. I hope Sun Woo continues to maintain this bright appearance. His kind personality is charming.

Thinking that, I suddenly thought of Sin Yeo-un, the male lead who ends up with him in the webtoon. The Mercedes boy who can’t even be compared to that dog Ha Jin. He would be able to make Sun Woo happy...

I sat still on the wooden bench and drank what he gave me, and it felt like heaven.

My back, which had been bent the whole time in the field, hurt, so I lay down on the bench, and Sun Woo spread his hand to create shade for my face.

“It’s fine.”

I mumbled with my eyes closed. Still, Sun Woo didn’t remove the shade he made with his hand.

“You should lie down too. It’s really nice. Warm.”

“Ha Jin, you really don’t get hot easily. It’s not warm, it’s hot.”

“Do you get hot easily?”

“I do.”

Then what’s with sticking close to me every night? Tightly attached without any gaps, it must have been hot with our body heat.

I opened my closed eyes and looked at him, and Sun Woo had beads of sweat on his forehead. Even though he was sweating like that, he was quietly holding up his hand to create shade for me.

He’s really different from the Sun Woo in the webtoon. Grandma’s death must have been that shocking. As that thought reached me, my heart calmed down.

Feeling sorry for Sun Woo, I sat up.

“Should we go to the shade?”

I got up, brushed myself off, grabbed Sun Woo’s arm, and headed towards the wooden floor where the eaves extended to create shade.

I turned on the fan on the floor and made it face Sun Woo.

As if he didn’t know there was sweat on his forehead, he just stayed still, so I directly wiped his forehead with my hand.

“You must have been really hot.”

As I touched his face like I was caressing it up close, he grabbed my wrist. Thinking I had done something unnecessary, I looked at Sun Woo. My face was reflected in his pupils. The moment I thought how clear it was in those pupils where my appearance was distinctly visible, that gaze quickly turned murky.

Startled by the suddenly changed gaze, I was simultaneously pulled by my grabbed arm and ended up in Sun Woo’s embrace. Sun Woo, who was sitting upright, held me, who had fallen diagonally, in his arms and lowered his head to kiss me.

Surprised by the lips that descended with hot breath, I first checked the surroundings.

That crazy bastard, on the wide-open floor.

Unless someone opened the gate and came in, there was no way we would be seen, but my startled heart pounded loudly. As I pushed him away and stood there, forgetting even my words in bewilderment, he reached out to me again.

“Why are you looking around like that?”

“I’m surprised because you did it so suddenly. What if someone sees?”

“So what if they see? We were just affectionately kissing.”

“What?”

“You seemed to want to show off how close we are. I just did that for you.”

“What does being close have to do with kissing?”

Sun Woo was smiling as if he was in a good mood. It was clear he was enjoying my flustered appearance. I sat far away from Sun Woo, and he stretched his arms back, leaned his body back with his hands on the floor, and closed his eyes.

His hair fluttered in the fan's breeze, and his lips were curved in a pretty arc as if he was in a good mood. It was like a scene from a refreshing commercial.

"Ha Jin."

"What?"

When I spat out sharp words, Sun Woo chuckled and opened his eyes to look at me. His hair was fluttering as if it were a special effect to highlight the protagonist's appearance.

After calling my name and staying silent for a while, Sun Woo spread his arms wide.

"Come here."

"..."

He's crazy, completely crazy.

When I looked at him with a rotten expression, Sun Woo said "ah" and changed his words.

"Hug me."

"Why would I hug you?"

"Can't you hug me?"

Sun Woo asked me one more time. As I approached him, pretending to give in to his pitiful expression, he wrapped his arms around me and hugged me tightly.

His hand patted my back, tapping it.

"Pat me too."

"Okay, okay."

As I patted him back, Sun Woo deeply buried his face in the nape of my neck and took a deep breath. And the breath he exhaled was very hot and ticklish, so I slightly pulled away, but he came close again without any gaps.

After staying like that for a long time without saying anything, Sun Woo, still with his face buried in my neck, threw a question.

"Do you know that even breakups need preparation?"

“ ... ”

My hand, which had been playfully hitting his back, faltered. A chill ran down my spine at the words that came out of his mouth.

“You told Grandma. That even for goodbyes, you need time to prepare.”

“That... Why?”

When I asked, stammering, Sun Woo pulled me even closer into his arms. His heartbeat was transmitted to me from his chest pressed against mine. My heart was beating even more violently than his. Perhaps because of the tension, my heart pounded loudly in my ears as if it was right next to them.

“I’m doing that right now. With Grandma and me. Preparing for goodbye.”

“ ... ”

As I stayed silent, Sun Woo lifted his face from my neck and looked at me.

“Say something.”

“How do you know if you’ll break up or not?”

“...I went to the hospital.”

“When?”

“Right after the break started and I heard from Grandma.”

I spoke to him calmly.

“Let’s go... to the biggest hospital together.”

At my words, Sun Woo nodded as if it was difficult.

“Yeah. Let’s do that.”

I hope a miracle happens. Mumbling that, Sun Woo buried his head in me again, and I stroked him as affectionately as I could. So that my touch could provide him with even a little comfort.