

I Became a Villainous Character with a Limited Lifespan - Episode 101 - 110

Episode 101

“...This secretary definitely acts according to Director Han’s intentions.”

Seung-hyun could differentiate between “Director Han Seung-hyun” and the current Seung-hyun, and so could Seok-hyung. So these words would sound different to the two of them, but to everyone else except them, they would be seen as the same person.

It wasn’t that Seung-hyun said those words hoping Jae-young would understand that subtle difference. He just wanted to make it clear, at least to himself, that he and Jae-young were different people.

“...So this matter too, that’s what you mean.”

“.....”

Sometimes silence can also be an answer. Jae-young ruminated on that answer for a long time and smirked slightly.

He knew that Seung-hyun was quite afraid of something. He didn’t know what he was so afraid of, but it was painful for Jae-young to see Seung-hyun deliberately saying harsh words and pushing him away, so he didn’t ask and let it go.

Because his feelings for him were strong, he thought that if he stayed by his side, Seung-hyun would be able to find stability with him.

It would take time, but he thought they could do it if they had feelings and trust for each other. He thought that someday he would be able to hear about that unknown fear, and by then, their trust and love for each other would have deepened, so he thought he could understand whatever that fear was.

Jae-young had observed Seung-hyun closely and carefully more than anyone else. That’s why he could notice the trembling eyes and the anxiously twitching fingertips, even though Seung-hyun was pretending to be calm.

“...I’m sorry to you, Jae-young. You must have expected me to be a better person.”

“

“What can we do? Han Seung-hyun is originally that kind of person.”

Seung-hyun turned away, unable to meet Jae-young's gaze. Yes, didn't he know this would come up sooner or later?

Let's end this properly now. Even if it means saying things he doesn't mean. Even if it makes Jae-young think badly of him as a result.

‘Coming this far was a mistake in the first place.’

He knew it was his fault for not being able to draw a proper line. But even if he went back to the past, he wasn't sure he could completely cut Jae-young out.

The memories filled with time more precious and happier than spending money meaninglessly were all engraved by Jae-young.

‘Still... the moments we were together were always fun.’

It was clearly his greed that kept extending the end of the relationship even though he knew it would end someday. But now it was really time to end it. The thread of a forcefully extended relationship was bound to break when stretched to its limit.

“Since you found out everything, we can't even play pretend anymore.”

“

“It was fun in its own way, but you and I were originally in different places, so let's just think of it as going back to where we belong.”

“Pretend.”

Jae-young, who had been silently looking at Seung-hyun, broke the long silence and opened his mouth. He clearly knew that what Seung-hyun was saying now was not all sincere.

Anyone else might not see it, but Jae-young could.

“...There's no need to attach great meaning to it. I just needed a suitable distraction... and you also had a satisfactory time.”

Seung-hyun took a small deep breath. Jae-young seemed sufficiently shaken by these words alone, but he needed to be a bit more harsh for a complete end.

What would be good to say? What should he say to make Jae-young hate the sight of him? He wanted to say more hateful things, but nothing came out.

“I have never thought that we... were in a relationship that only met for each other’s benefit. I thought we were in a relationship where we could understand each other just by being next to each other.”

He didn’t want anything. He was just happy being by Seung-hyun’s side, and the time spent together was blissful. Except for the one thing he wanted to say the most but couldn’t.

He thought that if he just didn’t name his feelings for Seung-hyun or define their relationship, he could stay by his side.

“But now I really don’t know.”

He disliked the people who only talked about the rumored Seung-hyun. He thought it was pathetic how they could gossip so lightly without actually experiencing him, but inwardly he thought of himself as special.

Because the Seung-hyun he knew seemed to be his alone. He was glad that only he knew Seung-hyun, who seemed to be overly sharp or disinterested in anything, and had many cute aspects.

But now, to the point of feeling foolish, he couldn’t even guess Seung-hyun’s intentions, thinking he knew what kind of person he was.

Where does the truth begin and end? No, is there even any truth in what I know? Even though he could see the wavering eyes and trembling fingertips, he couldn’t be sure.

“I really don’t understand what you need, what you’re thinking, to cause this kind of trouble and say these things.”

“There’s no need to understand. Just... think of it as getting involved with the wrong person.”

Why did he enter that particular bar out of so many? If it weren't for that coincidence, he wouldn't have met Jae-young. Then he wouldn't have gradually been drawn to Jae-young, and he wouldn't have come to consider him special.

'Then I wouldn't have had to feel like this.'

It felt like someone was tearing his heart out. It was a painful feeling he didn't want to experience, more agonizing than the attacks he had suffered a few times.

He had to say hurtful words, turn away after saying something that anyone would curse him for, but it was harder than he thought. It was as if someone was tightly holding his lips, and he couldn't open his mouth.

"...If there's a reason, please tell me. I don't know much about companies or politics... but maybe I can understand a little. No, even if I can't understand, just say something..."

Jae-young continued to speak instead of Seung-hyun. It was a lovely thing to say, stupidly wanting to believe in Seung-hyun even in this situation.

It would have been easier if he had gotten angry, asking if Seung-hyun had been deceiving him all this time, or what he wanted to do such a thing. Kindness could be this painful too. Seung-hyun chuckled softly.

"You were more of a fool than I thought, Jae-young."

"....."

"I only want one thing. For you to no longer get involved with me and live quietly."

What's so good about wanting to believe in me? The memories with Jae-young were mostly happy moments, but that was entirely thanks to Jae-young.

It was always Jae-young who came to him first, made plans for the day, and said things that would make the other person happy. Seung-hyun just shared that time without rejecting it.

Even in his own opinion, he didn't think he was such a good person. What part of him did Jae-young like, what was so good about being with him that he looked at Seung-hyun so earnestly with eyes wanting to believe?

"...Forget it ever happened and live on."

"I can't do that without even hearing the reason. Were the times we spent together just something so light that you can forget with a single word, Han Seung-hyun? So easily..."

"Is there a reason I can't do that?"

Seung-hyun said something he didn't even mean. He wouldn't be able to forget the memories they shared or this moment until he took his last breath.

Unlike Jae-young, who had to live longer than he had lived so far, Seung-hyun didn't have many days left, so he could probably endure it somehow.

"...No matter what you say, you have no intention of explaining at all."

Jae-young said, biting his lower lip slightly and letting go. This wasn't the first time he didn't get a clear answer from Seung-hyun. Each time, he waited, thinking that Seung-hyun would answer someday if he waited.

He thought that when Seung-hyun became a little more comfortable with him, he would be able to define their current relationship and know what he was afraid of, but in the end, it seemed Seung-hyun was determined to push him away without saying anything.

Waiting wasn't a difficult thing. If an answer came out by waiting, he could wait forever.

But now, there was nothing he could be sure of. The more his feelings grew, the more pain he felt. Jae-young released the strength from his hand that he had clenched into a fist so tightly that his nails dug into his palm.

"...I'm a bit tired."

How long did he have to repeat this meaningless question and answer? Jae-young let out a small sigh. The moment was approaching when he had to admit that there were things that couldn't be solved just with feelings of love.

If he turned away like this, it would be over. Then there was something he had to ask before that, something he had to say. Jae-young grabbed the wrist of Seung-hyun, who had turned away, and turned him around.

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“Ah!”

The moment his wrist was grabbed, Seung-hyun groaned. Jae-young wasn't gripping it that hard, so he let go right away in surprise and examined Seung-hyun's wrist.

“...What is this?”

Jae-young frowned upon seeing the wrist with a clear handprint. There was no such mark until just yesterday.

“Did this secretary... do this?”

If so, there was only one person who could leave such a mark on Seung-hyun's wrist. But why Yiseok-hyung? If it was for Seung-hyun's sake, he would rather get hurt himself.

“No need to worry about it.”

“How can I not worry about it? The bruise...”

“What are we for you to worry about it? It's nothing. Just...”

“Did this secretary force you to do something?”

Seung-hyun smirked at the desperate words.

‘He really wants to believe in me. If I say it's not true, even without any evidence, he would probably just believe it without questioning anything.’

Even though he knew this situation was strange, even though it was clear that he was frustrated and angry, he wanted to believe in Seung-hyun until the end.

To the point that even when he was about to get angry, the moment he saw Seung-hyun's injury, he forgot everything and worried first. Seeing Jae-young like that, Seung-hyun became greedy again.

Should he ask Jae-young to pretend nothing happened, like last time? And should he pretend too?

As if he doesn't know how many days he has left, no. As if today is the last day and it doesn't matter, should he just enjoy the remaining time?

If he pretends not to know and lies, Seung-hyun could spend a decent time until he closes his eyes. If he only focuses on spending time with Jae-young without thinking about what will happen tomorrow, a week later, or a month later.

No matter what happens outside, Jae-young would believe in Seung-hyun, and Seung-hyun wouldn't care how he is seen by others except Jae-young, so they could live in their own peace to some extent.

Seung-hyun thought that everything would end when he dies. The saying that death is not the end is just a story for those left behind, and it had nothing to do with the person himself.

So he had lived without thinking about what would happen after his death, but problems arose after he met Jae-young and he became precious to him.

He was more concerned about the feelings of the person who would be left behind than his own end. Even now, it seems a bit late, but the more happy memories there are, the deeper the pain will be.

"You're not that much of a fool. I understand you want to believe, but at this point, it's almost pitiful."

"....."

"I needed someone to meet casually, not a lover. You knew that from the beginning."

He didn't want to say harsh words, but seeing Jae-young wanting to believe in him to the point of being pitiful, he could make up his mind that he had to make it clear.

Even if it's painful now, Jae-young has a lot of time left, so if the immediate wound can reduce the long time of pain even a little, it was right to do so.

"I don't know how much great trust you had in a relationship that started as a one-night stand, but don't give your heart to just anyone so easily from now on."

"Just anyone..."

"What if you fall in love with a prostitute next time by mistake? Even if you're a son who's not interested in management rights, Madam Ju would be greatly distressed."

Jae-young's eyes widened slightly at the sarcastic tone. It seemed to hurt his heart a little to see that face, but he also felt relieved to have finally said harsh words properly.

"You must have wanted to find a new love since you liked one person for a long time and that person got married. Well, since that person is Executive Han Tae-sung... even my existence could have made Executive Han feel bad."

"....."

"But how can you give your heart so easily like that? It's a good thing I have nothing to take from you."

It was true that he was worried that Jae-young, who was so blindly in love to the point of being foolish, might be deceived in his next love. Seung-hyun conveyed that concern in a sharp and aggressive manner.

"No, on the contrary, it would have been more convenient for me if you were someone who knew a bit more. If you're this naive, I could have easily found out a secret or two about the company."

"...Does saying that make you feel better?"

He thought Jae-young would get angry or turn away, feeling so tired that he wouldn't even be angry. However, the answer that came back was a bit different from what he expected.

"If Han Seung-hyun, if you knew about me as much as I know about you, no. If you knew a little more about me, you wouldn't have said that."

If Seung-hyun knew what kind of person Jae-young was, he wouldn't have been able to say that, at least.

It wasn't that he needed just anyone he could love. He wouldn't have had such feelings for anyone else.

It was because it was Seung-hyun he met that day that he was curious about him, found him interesting, and even gave his heart. It wasn't that there was no sense of loss due to Seon-hu's marriage, but while being with Seung-hyun, that feeling faded surprisingly quickly.

The time spent together was so enjoyable that he had no time to care about the existence of Seon-hu or Tae-sung. He thought Seung-hyun also knew that about him.

Even though he thought Seung-hyun was saying it to push him away, it was bitter. He hated Seung-hyun for saying that everything he knew was a lie.

"I don't know what you're so afraid of that you're saying those things. Does it make you feel better to say that?"

If only he could hate him comfortably, but seeing that it ended with just a feeling of dislike, Jae-young clearly still liked Seung-hyun. But he was also human.

Even though he thought Seung-hyun's words weren't his true feelings, he was hurt by the words coming out of his mouth and was a bit tired of this situation.

Seung-hyun must have the same feelings as him, so why does it get so hard the more the feelings of love grow? It was frustrating and tiring to be in this situation again.

"Just tell me. What are you so afraid of? What are you so scared of that you can't wait to make people miserable with those words?"

"It's just as I said. I understand you want to think there's another meaning, but this is reality."

Seung-hyun continued to lie persistently. He didn't care if Jae-young didn't believe him. If he kept insisting without telling him until the end, wouldn't even Jae-young get frustrated and give up? No, he had to make it that way.

"I don't know when this meaningless conversation will end, but it's the same no matter how many times you ask. I'm just tired of it now."

"Then, are you saying you'll return to the company?"

"There are plenty of things I can do without returning to the company. It's more fun to destroy than to build."

The corners of Jae-young's stiff mouth twitched slightly at Seung-hyun's words. It was an awkward thing to say, but perhaps because he had heard it repeated several times. It even started to feel like Seung-hyun's true feelings.

"I think we've finished all the talking we need to do. I'm tired, so I'd like you to leave now. What's the point of standing here and repeating the same thing..."

"I like you."

Seung-hyun, who was turning around, froze at the words he heard behind his back. The words that should never be exchanged between the two, the words he desperately asked him not to say out loud, came to Seung-hyun at an unexpected timing.

"....."

Didn't he ask him not to say those words? Seung-hyun looked at Jae-young with eyes that clearly showed what he was thinking. His uncontrollably shaking eyes showed how surprised Seung-hyun was.

"You do everything as you please, Han Seung-hyun, so can't I do the same?"

Jae-young said, raising one corner of his mouth. A strange smiling face. Even though they were the words he wanted to convey so much, he didn't feel refreshed or happy.

He was just so frustrated that Seung-hyun was only avoiding him and the situation. Seeing him pushing him away, saying he can't ask or say anything, was so frustrating.

There were days when he hoped Seung-hyun would say these words first. He thought it was a problem that time would solve, but time wasn't as infinite as Jae-young thought.

It was a relationship that would end if either of them let go, so why did he naively think that everything would be solved just by waiting?

"I like you. That's why I want to believe in you, and I want to hear why you're saying these things, what you're so afraid of that you're trying to push me away even by telling obvious lies."

"....."

"Is that not a good enough reason? Who would give up on the person they love with just a word, saying 'Yes, I understand'? At least I can't do that. So... I can't go back like this. Not until I hear a clear answer, whatever it may be."

Jae-young said, taking a step closer to Seung-hyun. At a distance that had become closer than before, making his previous step back seem meaningless, Seung-hyun couldn't run away and slowly raised his head to meet Jae-young's eyes.

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The eyes that were always curved mischievously had an unfamiliar shape. Jae-young's eyes, longing for a clear answer, were in contrast with his own that couldn't meet his gaze like a guilty person.

"I said I don't like you, is the reason that important?"

Seung-hyun didn't like those eyes of Jae-young. He might have felt an inferiority complex at Jae-young's eyes that desperately longed for something, his eyes that he couldn't have.

It wasn't that Seung-hyun didn't wish for the same future as Jae-young. If he could, he also wanted to tell Jae-young that Seok-hyung's actions had nothing to do with his intentions and to believe in him.

He wanted to spend leisurely time with someone who believed in him regardless of what others said. He wanted to express his love, albeit a bit embarrassingly, and be happy at the other person's words.

'Not knowing why I can't say anything.'

If he didn't like him, if his selfishness to feel comfortable was greater than his feelings of love, he would have bet everything on his current happiness regardless of what happened in the future.

He wasn't saying anything because he wanted to reduce the pain Jae-young would receive even a little, with the thought of making him suffer for a shorter time.

"...You don't think I didn't know that, do you? Don't you think there's a reason why I told you not to say it?"

"You want me to keep my mouth shut without even telling me the reason? Jae-young and I..."

"You want to date, right? That's why I've been hanging out with you, haven't I?"

He knew from the beginning that if he spoke sweet sincerity, the relationship would crumble. But the moment of collapse was more painful and miserable than he thought.

"Didn't I tell you everything? That I just needed a light relationship. Yes, honestly, being with you was more fun than I thought."

To the point of getting soaked without knowing moderation, the time spent with Jae-young was enjoyable and happy. Seung-hyun tried not to recall that time and continued speaking.

"But now I'm sick of it. Both you and I have enjoyed it enough, so it's time to end it."

"I thought Han Seung-hyun also had the same feelings as me, even though I didn't hear it directly. No, I'm still convinced of that."

"It's a misunderstanding."

"If you're going to lie, do it with more sincerity."

Jae-young grabbed Seung-hyun's chin and fixed his gaze on him. Jae-young scoffed, looking at the eyes that couldn't meet his gaze and were trembling terribly at the same time.

"Saying it's a misunderstanding while telling such an obvious lie."

“.....”

Seung-hyun pressed his lips tightly. He was determined to pretend not to know until the end, even if it was obvious that he was lying. No matter how convinced Jae-young was, if Seung-hyun didn't say it out loud, they would just go around in circles.

“Since I've said everything I wanted to say, there's really nothing left to talk about. Unfortunately, it would be better for you to find someone else to accept your feelings. I hope next time, you meet a more decent, normal person in a proper place.”

“No. I...”

“How many times do I have to say I don't like it for you to understand?”

So he could just turn around and leave, but it was frustrating that Jae-young kept holding onto him. The more he held onto him, the more Seung-hyun wanted to throw away the resolution he had barely made.

Not knowing with what kind of feelings Seung-hyun was keeping his mouth shut, and if Jae-young would just forget him as time passed, why couldn't he do that easy thing and torment Seung-hyun like this when his heart was already complicated?

Seung-hyun didn't even know who he was angry at properly and shook off Jae-young's hand. His voice, which had risen higher than a moment ago, resounded in the quiet house.

“From the first time we met until now, there was nothing I did because I wanted to. I just followed what you wanted to do because I was too lazy to refuse.”

It was clear that Jae-young was the one who led the actions, but Seung-hyun was also deeply immersed in their relationship. However, Seung-hyun lied as if he had reluctantly participated in Jae-young's actions.

“It was fun to some extent... but if I had known you would cling to me to this annoying degree, I wouldn't have started it in the first place.”

“Do you regret it?”

“...What did you say?”

“I asked if you regret meeting me.”

He could feel the strength in Jae-young's clenched fist. Jae-young's gaze on Seung-hyun seemed somewhat desperate.

Unlike the numerous lies he had heard so far, the words that he wouldn't have started it in the first place felt sincere.

‘There's no way.’

Although he hadn't known Seung-hyun for a long time, he was confident that he knew a lot about him.

That was also the reason he was doing something he usually despised, clinging to someone who said they didn't like him. It wasn't just because he couldn't easily let go of Seung-hyun, but how could he end it like this when it was obvious that Seung-hyun was pushing him away with lies?

He thought so, but he felt sincerity in the words he heard a moment ago. Weariness, irritation, contempt, and regret.

He felt emotions that he thought couldn't exist in their relationship at the same time.

“.....”

Seung-hyun pondered his own words for a moment. Did he regret meeting Jae-young?

‘...Maybe I do.’

The moment he faced Jae-young in his right mind for the first time, he definitely regretted his reckless actions. However, as the time spent together increased, regret melted away as if it had never existed, and now the fact that he had felt such an emotion was faint.

The time spent with Jae-young was definitely nothing but happiness. Ironically, that's why he thought it would have been better if they hadn't met.

For a reason he never imagined, Seung-hyun came to regret that day again.

“Yes. I regret it. Both going to that place that day and thoughtlessly accepting your actions.”

“.....”

“If I could go back to that time, I wouldn’t be so indecisive and get dragged around. We should have never gotten involved with each other from the beginning.”

Then there would have been no happy memories, but there would have been no pain like now either.

‘When did I ever live exchanging great emotions with people, when did I ever have a friend to open up to that I was greedy for that?’

With the thought that it might be nice to have at least one decent friend, he didn’t refuse Jae-young approaching him. But the problem was that it didn’t end as just a decent friendship.

The more precious something is, the greater the desire not to lose it. The more enjoyable and happy the time spent with Jae-young was, the fact that there wasn’t much time left heavily weighed on a corner of his heart.

If he hadn’t known Jae-young, if he hadn’t become precious to him, if he had only built a friendship where they met occasionally and had meaningless conversations.

So if Jae-young could have shed a tear or two after Seung-hyun left but completely forgotten him and returned to his daily life within a week, Seung-hyun wouldn’t have had any reason to feel uncomfortable either.

But the two had become special to each other. When feelings are the same, they usually have a happy ending, but there are exceptions to every situation.

‘At first, I thought it was rather nice to have become Han Seung-hyun. I was dead anyway, and even if I had lived, it was better to die than to burden my family with that enormous hospital bill. So I thought I would just enjoy the given bonus time and that would be the end when I left.’

Maybe it would have been a better path to just die right there without knowing anything. In a state where there was nothing precious, living each day to the

fullest without the leisure to imagine the future, but at least there were no lingering feelings.

“If I hadn’t met you, there wouldn’t be a situation like now.”

“.....”

“I wouldn’t have felt so stupid, and I wouldn’t have had to regret the past.”

I wouldn’t have known how painful it is to imagine a happy future, and I wouldn’t have known that not everything can be solved with just love.

“That’s right. It would have been better if we had never met from the beginning.”

Seung-hyun said that with a small laugh. To be able to bear less pain, he had to erase all the happy memories. It was a truly ironic situation.

“We... it would have been much better if we had never met. For both me and you...”

“...You’re right.”

Jae-young nodded. He wanted to tell Seung-hyun not to determine his feelings as he pleased, but his thoughts changed as he watched Seung-hyun mumbling, forgetting to even get angry.

If they hadn’t met, there would have been no need to feel pain like now. For a moment, the two had the same thought. The happy memories were making each other more painful.

“.....”

Jae-young staggered with a slightly shocked face. Until a moment ago, he had the momentum to not leave until he got an answer, but now he had a face that had lost all motivation.

“...Meet a better person. Don’t cling to a relationship that has ended.”

Seung-hyun, who had difficulty spitting out words that were half sincere and half lies, passed by Jae-young. Until Seung-hyun’s bedroom door closed after passing through the corridor, Jae-young just stood there without any movement.

Episode 104

“Tell Director Han I’m grateful. Ah, if possible, I’d like to work with Director Han on the next project.”

At Jeong Hyeokjae’s words, Seok-hyung, who had returned after a short vacation, quietly looked at him. After confirming his name was officially engraved on the business proposal he had been competing for, Hyeokjae looked noticeably in a good mood.

“He’s not going to take a break from work forever, right? Director Han isn’t the type to enjoy working under someone... He’ll probably start his own company separately. Since he received help, I’m thinking of him as a business partner from now on...”

“I submitted my letter of resignation to Secretary Yoo. I hope you process it as quickly as possible.”

“Ah, how boring.”

Hyeokjae glanced at Seok-hyung at his words and threw himself on the chair. Sitting with his legs crossed, he asked Seok-hyung,

“What are you dissatisfied with? Things went as you wanted.”

“I have no complaints. It’s just that I have nothing more to expect from you, Director Jeong, so there’s no need for me to keep this position.”

“Ah... Well, when Director Han returns, you’ll have to go to his side.”

Hyeokjae clicked his tongue with a regretful face and tapped on the desk, then asked,

“Still, aren’t Director Han and I sort of business partners now? I’ve made up my mind to completely break away from Executive Han’s side and took this side.”

“.....”

“I hope you don’t throw me away like a dog after the hunt is over. The documents I showed you... It wouldn’t be good for Director Han to have many people who know, would it?”

“Do as you please.”

“What?”

This isn't right. Feeling something strange about Seok-hyung's attitude, Hyeokjae got up from his seat and approached Seok-hyung, who was packing his things. Having quickly packed his few belongings, Seok-hyung glanced at him.

“...I have no intention of getting involved in practical work for the time being.”

“Well, you'll be busy trying to start a new business... but still, don't forget about me.”

Jeong Hyeokjae said, waving a document folder. It was one of the materials he had shown to gain trust.

‘Well, I've shown quite a bit too... but since we've shared each other's secrets without hiding anything, we're really in the same boat now.’

He thought, showing a satisfied smile. Seok-hyung and Han Seung-hyun. Although they had separated from HJ, he felt at ease thinking he had gained colleagues who couldn't be ignored even without backup.

“I should see Director Han sometime soon. Last time, he was too cold to me. Although that's also part of Director Han's charm...”

“Then I'll be leaving now.”

Seok-hyung cut off Hyeokjae's words as he pretended to be close and left his office. Originally, he was planning to stay here a bit longer, but he put down practical work earlier than planned because he was worried about Seung-hyun's condition.

He knew that the current Seung-hyun was not the Seung-hyun he knew. If anyone knew that, it would be him.

‘But that doesn't mean I don't care what happens to Director now.’

He didn't blame the current Seung-hyun. He just couldn't tolerate him doing as he pleased with that body.

Even if someone else was inside, that body belonged to the person he could give his life for.

Even if the gaze, words, and the direction of his footsteps weren't his, those eyes, voice, and legs were that person's. Seok-hyung couldn't bear Seung-hyun not cherishing his own body.

For a very brief moment, he wondered if this feeling was what people usually called love, but he soon gave up. The name of the emotion wasn't important. What mattered was only what he could and should do.

Seok-hyung loaded his few belongings into the car and headed to Seung-hyun's house. He was worried because Seung-hyun wasn't answering the phone despite him calling several times.

'If he had blocked me, it wouldn't connect.'

Unlike the previous number that had already been blocked, only the call connection tone kept going. Did something happen? Seok-hyung called Seung-hyun again.

[The other party's phone is turned off...]

This time, the power was completely off. Even though he thought it was nothing serious, he had a bad feeling for some reason.

"Director."

The closer he got to Seung-hyun's house, the faster he unconsciously drove. Arriving at Seung-hyun's house a little earlier than the expected arrival time, Seok-hyung entered the house without even properly parking the car.

'Something...'

The moment he entered, he felt that the air inside the house was subtly different from the outside. He couldn't explain why, but the feeling of the air on his skin was definitely strange.

Thud. Seok-hyung, who was trying to enter hurriedly, dropped something on the table. Instinctively picking up the fallen object and checking its identity, he frowned.

"...What is this?"

It looked like a kit to check something. The kit, stained red, was clearly indicating something. Seok-hyung flipped the kit and put it back in its place after seeing the words 'Pheromone Detection Kit' written on it.

'The rut cycle...'

Although there was still quite a bit of time until the cycle, his body wasn't in good condition, so there was a possibility that the cycle had been pulled forward.

'Did the rut come a little early? No, before that, why is something like a pheromone kit here?'

As soon as he put down the object, the question flashed through his mind. And that question soon turned into anxiety that engulfed Seok-hyung.

"...Director."

Seok-hyung hurriedly moved his steps towards Seung-hyun's bedroom. The moment he opened the door, pheromones that Seok-hyung couldn't feel spread out of the corridor.

"...!"

At a glance, it looked like he was sleeping, but the pills that couldn't enter his mouth and spilled out, and his pale, sickly face indicated that something was wrong.

"The article has been dealt with, and the assemblyman has also stated his position, but it would be best to refrain from eye-catching activities for a while and focus on volunteer work."

"You're saying that because you have something prepared, right?"

"Yes. The welfare organization you were supporting has informed us that they will hold an event that Executive Han can attend."

Three weeks after the article was published, the media that had been talking about Tae-sung's affair found new prey. The public also turned their eyes to find new excitement.

Now, no one would notice the contents of the articles that had disappeared or been revised, so all that was left was to return to public events after an appropriate amount of time.

“...What is Han Seung-hyun doing?”

“He hasn’t shown any special movements since that incident. It’s so quiet that it’s rather worrying...”

Secretary Kang said, shrugging his shoulders. It was quiet for now, but no one who knew Seung-hyun would think this was the end.

“Seeing that Secretary Lee quit being Director Jeong’s secretary, it seems he went back to Director Han and is planning something else.”

“Probably.”

“But I thought he was someone who kept the line, is he planning to completely turn against the company? He was a cautious person, but this is almost like self-destruction...”

Secretary Kang clicked his tongue with a face that couldn’t understand. Tae-sung, who had been examining the documents for a moment, belatedly threw out a question.

“Does Director Han seem strange to Secretary Kang these days too?”

“Well... Yes. Wouldn’t anyone who knows Director Han think so?”

After a moment of surprise at the sudden question, Secretary Kang calmly continued.

“Because his behavior is too different from before. He was cautious and put quite a bit of effort into external underground work... This is just like he’s inflicting damage on himself as if there’s no tomorrow, isn’t it?”

“Does it seem like he’s become strange?”

“Well, from my perspective, he wasn’t a normal person to begin with...”

Secretary Kang slowly nodded. Indeed, even in Tae-sung’s opinion, this incident was too different from Seung-hyun’s usual method. Even if he gave

up the right to inherit the company, he knew better than anyone how important connections were.

“Assemblyman Park was quite angry. Probably... even if he returns, he won’t be able to expect help from people on A Party’s side. The other side... will also be the same since they’ll be mindful of Chairman Han.”

A way that seemed like he didn’t care what happened in the future. It seemed certain that there was a change in his state of mind. After pondering for a moment, Tae-sung told his secretary,

“...I’d like to meet with Director Han for a bit.”

“Pardon?”

“Contact Secretary Lee. Say there’s still something left to talk about.”

If they meet in person at least once, Seon-hu will also know for sure what kind of person he is. If he’s lucky, he might be able to get a clue about his recent strange behavior.

“Yes, yes. I’ll try to contact him. But I’m not sure if he’ll agree...”

“If he refuses... find out his whereabouts. I’ll go meet him in person.”

From childhood until now, Seung-hyun was always an incomprehensible person to Tae-sung, but recently, he was showing behavior that was so different from usual that it was impossible to even predict.

It would be better to properly face the bad relationship, not knowing when he would do something again. Tae-sung thought so as he recalled Seung-hyun’s face.

Episode 105

“We confirmed that he moved out of the house he originally lived in... but it seems he’s not living in that house recently either.”

Secretary Kang brought news about Seung-hyun a few days later. Contrary to the expectation that it wouldn’t be a difficult task, his whereabouts were abruptly cut off from a certain point.

“Since it almost coincides with the timing of the article, maybe he was afraid of the aftermath...”

“There’s no way.”

Tae-sung denied Secretary Kang’s words before he could even finish. If Seung-hyun was afraid of the aftermath, he wouldn’t have caused this mess in the first place. Seung-hyun wasn’t the type to run away from the mess he created.

“If it seems he’s not living in that house recently, does that mean he went abroad or something?”

“There’s no record of him leaving the country, so it doesn’t seem like he went abroad. But it’s a bit concerning that his whereabouts can’t be tracked at all. I’m a bit worried that he might be preparing for something else.”

Secretary Kang spoke in a cautious tone. Although they couldn’t search inside the house, Seung-hyun’s owned cars were parked as they were, and the garden that seemed to have been left unattended for a while gave off a strange atmosphere.

“We’re trying our best to track his movements...”

“If he’s in the country, his tail will be caught before long. He’s not the type to run away, so he may show up first.”

“If he shows up first... it probably won’t be for a good reason.”

“Since the workload has decreased, it would be good to prepare thoroughly this time.”

“Haah, in the end, my work doesn’t decrease.”

Secretary Kang sighed deeply and nodded. He was someone he had hoped he would never encounter in his lifetime, but now that he’s not seen, he becomes anxious. Anyway, he was someone he couldn’t like.

“I’ll report as soon as it’s confirmed.”

And they weren’t the only ones looking for Seung-hyun. Nearly a month after Seung-hyun disappeared, there was someone who lingered in front of his house several times.

After that day, for about a week, he really made up his mind to stop and tried not to think about Seung-hyun. After all, the time he spent with Seung-hyun wasn't that long, and he thought he could just return to his original daily life.

But it didn't go as he wanted. Even during that one week, it wasn't that he didn't think of Seung-hyun, but he had just forcibly suppressed the thoughts that came to him from time to time.

Even though they hadn't known each other for a long time, even a small coincidence reminded him of Seung-hyun.

He turned on the TV to try not to think of Seung-hyun, but the actor who appeared was an actor from a movie they had watched together. The food they ate together was shown. And one morning, when he opened the curtains, he was reminded of Seung-hyun, who had been as delighted as a child.

No matter how hard he tried to forget, the memories that came to him in a moment of inattention didn't easily let go of Jae-young. It was pathetic, but he couldn't help it.

On the day he walked a considerable distance under the pretext of taking a walk and arrived in front of Seung-hyun's house, how many times did he circle around the house with the lights off?

'He's been coming home strangely often these days.'

'You told him to come often before.'

'He said not to call him if there's no business, did he hide something at home?'

Ignoring his family's suspicions, he practically lived at the main house and went for long walks several times. But there wasn't a single day when the lights inside the house were on.

On the day he couldn't stand it and went inside the house, Jae-young was startled by the air in the house that lacked not only the presence of people but even traces.

'Did he go on a trip or something?'

Did he go on a trip somewhere like when they first met? Thinking that, he waited a few more days.

“Egmoney! Thief...”

“No, it’s not.”

Then one day, he encountered a housekeeper who was cleaning the house. Jae-young managed to calm her down as she thought he was a thief and tried to run away, and he asked,

“...Then, do you have contact with Madam...?”

“For me, it’s my job to get paid and manage the house. I got my salary, so I came. There’s hardly any need to contact each other.”

“.....”

“It seems it’s been a while since he came home, but the house still needs to be managed.”

The housekeeper answered with suspicion that hadn’t completely disappeared. Jae-young asked again, grasping at straws.

“Did you feel anything strange? Anything, even if it’s trivial...”

“I did call him once recently.”

The housekeeper clapped her hands as if she remembered something. Although she didn’t have a close relationship with the homeowner, she occasionally met him and had exchanged phone calls, so she knew his face and voice to some extent.

“Last week, I think, I called because I had something to ask, but someone else answered. It seemed to be a young man...”

“What did he say?”

“I can’t tell you the details of the conversation. Anyway, if I had to point out something different from usual, that was it. He said I don’t need to contact him and just keep managing the house consistently.”

The housekeeper said that and looked at Jae-young with eyes asking if he was going to stay. Jae-young bowed his head, apologizing, and left the house.

A young man who could answer Seung-hyun's phone and be involved in managing the house. It might not be, but one strong candidate came to mind.

'It must be... Secretary Lee.'

Is he really thinking of returning to the company? No, even if he doesn't return, he must be planning something.

'Was I completely mistaken about Han Seung-hyun?'

He thought he wasn't that kind of person. He scoffed at the words of his family and friends, saying that even if he was deceived, he was thoroughly deceived, and that a moment of realization would surely come someday, thinking it was foolish.

But now, he couldn't hide his bitter smile at the situation that had become not strange to be ridiculed or sympathized with by the people he had scoffed at.

He knew that waiting wouldn't bring an answer. But he didn't know how to act to get an answer or if there was even an answer to this situation.

Jae-young unconsciously opened Seung-hyun's contact in his phone and pondered whether to press the call button or not. If he called, would Seok-hyung answer this call? Or would Seung-hyun answer the phone with a tired voice, spew only harsh words, and hang up?

"....."

While he was contemplating, the phone screen turned off. Jae-young let out a long sigh and went back home.

"Do you have a secret lover hidden in this neighborhood or something?"

It seemed that Jae-young's family, who found his frequent visits to the main house and excessively long outings suspicious, had come to an absurd but somewhat plausible conclusion. His parents, older brother, sister who heard the rumor and came, and even his younger brother were all waiting for Jae-young with expectant faces.

"Indeed. He's at the right age for that now."

"No, it's a bit late. We had two kids at that age."

"Well, there's no need to marry off Jae-young quickly... But don't people usually get married around that age?"

"No, forget it. So, are you seeing someone? Is that why you're like this...?"

A month ago, could he have laughed off those words with ease? But now he was so sensitive that he couldn't even take his family's affectionate words lightly.

"If not, then it's not. Why are you being so serious?"

"Yeah. Don't embarrass Mom."

"No. We decided to leave your marriage up to your will anyway. More than that..."

It was certainly about time for that, but she already had several grandchildren, and she had no intention of burdening her youngest son with management or succession, so she didn't care about such things. She could wait anytime until he met a decent omega and dated.

What she wanted to ask her son was something else.

"Director Han hasn't been heard from since then, do you still keep in touch with him these days?"

"...No."

"Why? You seemed to be getting along well for a while."

"I heard about that long after too. How did you get close with Director Han? I tried talking to him a few times because I wanted to have some connection, but... he was completely unresponsive."

Jae-young's sister grumbled and leaned back completely on the sofa. How could she talk so easily about Seung-hyun without even knowing him well? After looking at his sister for a moment, Jae-young sighed.

"...Who knows? I thought I knew him to some extent... but I guess it was a misconception. Now I don't know either."

At Jae-young's strange mood, which was usually bright even when grumbling, his family belatedly realized that something had happened between the two.

'I told you he was originally that kind of person, is he shocked again? Well, Jae-young grew up without being interested in things like politics or management, so this must be the first time for him.'

"Director Han was originally that kind of person, so just forget him. It must have been a momentary whim. Well, you don't know much about Y Group... but I was worried that he might try to drop something on this side too, but it's fortunate that it ended without any issues..."

"How can you be so sure that you know him well?"

Jae-young's older brother, who tried to comfort him, flinched at the cold words that came back. Jae-young, seeing his surprised brother, sighed and went up to his room.

"If not, then it's not. Why is he being so sensitive again? He's not a twenty-year-old kid."

"Leave him be. He must be heartbroken in his own way. More than that, when did Dad say he's coming back?"

"I don't know exactly, but he won't return this month. Well, when was he ever at home quietly?"

His sister covered for him and changed the subject. The topic of the family moved on to something else, but inside the room, Jae-young mulled over those words all night.

'Without even knowing him well. But do I know him well either?'

The question that troubled Jae-young all night didn't leave his mind even after the sun rose the next day and even after several more days passed.

Episode 106

"....."

Unaware that quite a few people were thinking about him, Seung-hyun slowly blinked his eyes as he woke up from a long sleep.

What was he doing? After his relationship with Jae-young ended, he seemed to have just moved around blankly. So blankly that he couldn't remember how much time had passed or what he had done.

Then he recalled that he hadn't taken his meals or medicine when he felt so hot that his stomach hurt. He always kept the medicine in an easily accessible place, so he remembered reaching out for the medicine bottle even then...

'Did I collapse like that?'

Since he had no memory after that, it seemed he had collapsed without being able to grab the medicine. But he must have collapsed inside the house, and the place he slowly turned his gaze to check was not his house.

Someone must have found him and brought him to the hospital, as he couldn't have come here on his own. Seung-hyun blinked his eyes while lying still.

'Did the housekeeper find me? What day was it...?'

His first thought was that the housekeeper, who came to work according to the day of the week, might have found him and reported it. But soon, another thought with a tinge of expectation came to mind.

Could it be that Jae-young had returned to that house again? He felt a little pathetic for hoping that Jae-young would approach him again even though he knew he had to push him away, but he couldn't help it.

'If that were the case, it would lead to a bigger problem.'

Then he would have no choice but to talk about his situation. If Jae-young said he would stay by his side even after that... then he could use the excuse that it wasn't intentional and spend the remaining time with him.

He absolutely couldn't say it first, but if Jae-young found out by chance... unintentionally, wouldn't it be unavoidable? Although Seung-hyun had such thoughts, his imagination didn't last long.

"You're awake."

The person who entered the hospital room was Seok-hyung. It was a face that instantly brought Seung-hyun back to reality, making him feel embarrassed for being immersed in vain delusions even for a brief moment.

“...What happened?”

“As soon as I entered the house, I felt something was off, and they said your pheromone gland was completely messed up. Fortunately, I was the first to find you, and I’m a beta.”

Seung-hyun’s house, which Seok-hyung visited again because he was worried, had a strange feeling, and the pheromone gland had completely lost its function and was going berserk. Because it was in such a mess, as if it was going to spit out all the pheromones in his body, they had to forcibly put his body to sleep using strong sedatives.

However, even after the pheromones had calmed down, Seung-hyun couldn’t wake up. Although he was diagnosed that it would take time to recover due to his weakened body, he had been asleep for longer than expected.

“I just closed my eyes and opened them again, but nearly a month has passed.”

Seung-hyun let out a small dry laugh after checking the date. The time that wasn’t much left had passed in an instant.

‘No, does it matter...?’

But soon, he thought it didn’t matter. Now he had nothing he wanted to do and no one he wanted to meet, so there was nothing much to regret.

Jae-young might have looked for Seung-hyun until the next day or even the following week after that conversation, but now that he couldn’t be reached for a month, he must have completely given up.

“Did you want to die or something?”

Seok-hyung said, looking down at Seung-hyun. Emotionless eyes. But it could be seen that they contained anger.

Was it a warning not to carelessly use a body that wasn’t his own? Seung-hyun, who had been looking at the eyes filled with silent anger, turned his head.

“But it doesn’t seem to matter.”

“...!”

“That’s not it. If I had the courage to do that, I would have died long ago.”

Seok-hyung frowned at Seung-hyun’s words. After arriving at the hospital and finishing the emergency treatment, he felt relieved after roughly hearing about Seung-hyun’s condition from the doctor, but soon he got angry.

How fiercely Seung-hyun had lived. If he had that body, even if he couldn’t follow that life, he should have endured intensely.

‘As if he has given up.’

He knew it wasn’t the director he knew. But if he had his face, had his voice, if there was even a trace of that person left in him.

Shouldn’t he at least fulfill the minimum obligations?

No matter how little time was left, no matter how few things he could do, he had to live the remaining life. Meaningfully, even if Director’s consciousness had disappeared, at least to the extent that the remaining traces of him could be satisfied.

“Don’t say such things even as a joke.”

“.....”

“...I’ll call the doctor.”

There was no answer. Seok-hyung, who had been looking down at Seung-hyun for a moment, soon left the hospital room to call Professor Kim. They weren’t close enough to have a long conversation, so there was no need to hold him back and talk.

“Are you alright?”

Professor Kim, who came after being called, checked Seung-hyun’s condition. He had been steadily checking his condition, but now that he had regained consciousness, he said additional tests would be necessary and asked Seung-hyun.

“Your condition has deteriorated drastically. It wasn’t this bad even at the last checkup... Not only did the pheromones go out of control, but the numbers have dropped significantly even excluding that. I was aware of the problem

with the pheromone gland, but if it's to this extent even after taking suppressants..."

Professor Kim stopped mid-sentence and glanced at Seung-hyun. If he had properly taken the prescribed medication, it wouldn't have gotten this bad. But it was the wrong person to nag at, so he only looked around.

"I know you dislike feeling suffocated... but hospitalization seems inevitable for the time being. Secretary Lee is also very worried. Anyway, this is a private space... so there will be fewer things to stress about."

Professor Kim also knew about the recent trends of the HJ Group. Although he wasn't in a position to intervene, he knew that if it became known where Seung-hyun was after such a noisy incident, it would not help him rest at all.

"I'll make sure they keep their mouths shut, so you don't have to worry."

"I don't really want to do that. I don't want to spend the short time I have left being confined."

"It's not being confined... It's just taking a short rest until people forget about you."

Professor Kim explained, sweating profusely. Seung-hyun looked at him for a moment and nodded roughly.

"Alright. Anyway... I have nothing to do outside."

Now he had nothing he wanted to do and no one he wanted to meet, so it didn't matter. Since he didn't care what happened to him, it would be better to accommodate the person who desperately wished for this body to be even a little healthier.

At least one person's heart could be a little more at ease.

"How long do I have to stay here?"

"Until your condition stabilizes a bit, at least until we can control the situation to some extent with medication, it would be best for you to stay."

Professor Kim didn't bother to say that he didn't know how long that period would be, and after informing Seung-hyun about the additional tests, he got up from his seat.

“It will take some time to prepare, so please rest for a bit. Then I’ll be leaving now.”

After he left, Seung-hyun looked at the door, thinking that Seok-hyung might come back. As expected, before long, Seok-hyung, who had been waiting outside, came in.

“Don’t think about anything else and focus on recovering. Fortunately, if you’re here, you’ll be taken care of even if it’s forced.”

“.....”

He looked like he wouldn’t do anything if left alone, but on the other hand, he also looked like he didn’t have the strength to refuse anything. Although it had been like that until now, Seok-hyung, who had made up his mind to practically live in the hospital for the time being, let out a small sigh and said,

“I’ll be back after picking up some things. Don’t skip meals, don’t think about anything else, and rest comfortably.”

“...I envy you.”

Seok-hyung, who was about to leave the hospital room, stopped at Seung-hyun’s small voice. He felt strange at that voice, which was familiar enough to distinguish at once even if mixed with hundreds of voices, but strangely unfamiliar.

The words and tone that “Han Seung-hyun” wouldn’t have used. Seok-hyung’s brow furrowed slightly at the voice that made him certain that this person was really not the one he had devoted his everything to.

“What do you envy?”

Putting that fact aside, it was a somewhat meaningful thing to say, so Seok-hyung turned around to look at Seung-hyun again. Seung-hyun thought about something for a moment, then shook his head without answering.

“Nevermind. It’s just... a meaningless thing to say, so don’t mind it.”

He envied “Han Seung-hyun”. Seok-hyung might find it a bit absurd if he heard it, or he might even get angry, but right now, Seung-hyun was sincerely envious of him.

He didn't know that having even one person who genuinely looked into him, loved him, and cared for him would be something to envy like this.

In this world, there was no one who truly knew him or loved him. No, there was someone who loved him, but he had pushed that person away himself, so now he was truly alone.

'I wish I hadn't known this feeling. Then I wouldn't have wanted it...'

The moment he had touched happiness was regrettable. Happiness that he couldn't grasp no matter how much he wished for it seemed to be becoming a little hateful now.

Episode 107

How each day passed, what time it was now, what he had to do today. None of that mattered to Seung-hyun.

He only thought "Time has already passed like this" when meals came out and when Seok-hyung drew the curtains, but soon forgot about it.

"He has definitely improved a lot compared to before...."

"....."

"But it's still not at a stage to feel relieved."

Professor Kim said while watching Seok-hyung's reaction. Although improved, it only changed from the worst to the second worst.

Until his condition worsened, he could live a normal daily life to the extent of not overexerting himself as he had been doing well without staying at the hospital, but still, the best would be to stay at the hospital and receive care.

Whatever unexpected situation occurs, he could receive quick treatment, and even forcibly maintain an ideal living pattern.

'If we discharge him in this state, it seems like he will come back in for the same reason...'

"I understand."

Seung-hyun just nodded without saying anything in particular. Professor Kim scribbled something on the chart and said,

“Now that the weather will gradually get warmer soon, it’s okay to take short walks. Staying still too much is not good for your health.”

“.....”

“Well then, I’ll leave it to you.”

Professor Kim said to Seok-hyung on behalf of Seung-hyun who didn’t respond, and left the hospital room. Is it already time for the weather to get warmer? Seung-hyun checked the date.

As he said, it was already almost March. Time has already passed like this.

“It’s still quite cold, but you should be able to take a short walk from tomorrow as the professor said. I’ll bring outerwear, so it would be good to do that starting tomorrow.”

That meant it had already been well over a month since Seung-hyun continued this strange encounter with Seok-hyung. However, there was not much conversation or interaction between the two.

As if taking care of a character in a game, Seok-hyung did set tasks and tried to keep Seung-hyun’s stamina from dropping, but he didn’t talk to him or act friendly. Maybe that’s why, even though Seung-hyun had been with Seok-hyung all along, he felt like he had been alone.

“Do as you please.”

He felt a little bitter. But that was brief, and Seung-hyun soon returned to reality. The next day, as he said, Seok-hyung returned with outerwear, and for the first time since coming to the hospital, Seung-hyun went outside the building.

The temperature that had just entered above zero felt so cold that Seung-hyun, who had only stayed indoors, thought he would freeze.

But because he was too lazy to even say it, Seung-hyun just sat still in the wheelchair that Seok-hyung was pulling.

Even though he wasn't unable to walk, Seok-hyung recommended the wheelchair, so he thought it might be a little embarrassing to ride it out, but fortunately, because this was a hospital, there were many people in similar situations as Seung-hyun, so it wasn't very embarrassing.

"We'll take a light walk around and go back inside. Since they recommended gradually increasing activity, once you get used to coming outside, you can come out on your own."

Seok-hyung said as he pulled the wheelchair. There were quite a few patients walking around on the walking path inside the hospital.

"There are quite a lot of people."

Seung-hyun, who had only faced Seok-hyung, Professor Kim, and nurses at most, found it difficult to adapt to crowded places. Clearly, until not long ago, he was in a place crowded with people to the point of bumping into them, but it felt as faint as if it had been years ago.

"If you're uncomfortable with many people, next time at a quieter time..."

"No, that's not what I meant. Just... because it's awkward."

With those words, a long silence lingered between the two again. Some patients glanced at the two, who looked awkward with both the person pushing the wheelchair and the person riding not opening their mouths.

"Shall we go back in now?"

After walking for a long time like that, Seok-hyung suddenly lowered his head and discovered Seung-hyun's ears that had turned red. Looking closer, his cheeks were flushed from the cold.

"Yeah."

It must have been quite cold. Seok-hyung thought he should bring a scarf tomorrow and turned the direction.

"More than anything, health comes first. Don't just say it's okay, please tell me if you're even a little uncomfortable."

Although he was taking care of him as much as possible, there were parts he couldn't know without Seung-hyun telling him, so Seok-hyung couldn't help

but feel anxious. After urging him a few more times, only after confirming that Seung-hyun, who had returned to the hospital room, was okay did he go outside.

He must have really not moved much. Even though he didn't walk and only got some fresh air outside for a bit, he felt tired.

'It's bothersome...'

Seung-hyun closed his eyes and accepted the sleepiness that washed over him. Thinking 'Every day, today, tomorrow, and in the future, these boring days will continue,' he fell asleep without knowing at all what repercussions today's short outing would bring about.

There was one more person living a boring daily life like Seung-hyun. The only difference was, unlike Seung-hyun who lived according to a set routine in a designated place, this person was living an excessively busy life every single day.

"You haven't been wandering around as if you were hiding a lover for a while, but these days you come out every day."

"I have nothing to do. I have to play while I can."

Jae-young answered while sipping a glass full of alcohol. He had circled in front of Seung-hyun's house and went inside a few times, but as if he had really disappeared, he couldn't see a single strand of Seung-hyun's hair again.

Now there really is no one here. He has become a person I can't meet again. After thinking that, he did nothing for several days.

And a few days later, thinking that he really had to forget now, he made an excessive amount of appointments and left the house every day. He ended up spending such a long time outside that he would collapse from exhaustion as soon as he returned home.

So that he wouldn't think of anything else. On days he couldn't make appointments, he even overworked his body by exercising.

“Did you secretly date someone and get dumped without us knowing?”

“.....”

“Say something that makes sense. What omega would dump someone like Ju Jae-young? He has a lot of money. He’s handsome. A dominant alpha with a lot of time.”

“If I were an omega, I would have asked to marry him right away.”

“Hey, if you’re going to say disgusting things, shut up and just drink.”

Jae-young laughed reflexively at his friends’ laughter and downed his drink. Perhaps because he had been drinking excessively whenever thoughts came to his mind, as well as frequent meetings with friends, his stomach felt a little bitter.

A friend who noticed Jae-young slightly frowning worried about him.

“Hey, drink slowly. Who’s going to take it away?”

“Didn’t you say Park Wonho is coming today? Since he’s a doctor, he’ll provide emergency treatment if anything happens.”

“Do you think I’m some kind of emergency medicine?”

Wonho lightly hit his friend’s head and sat in the empty seat. The friend who was lightly hit on the head shook his head and said,

“People who don’t show up often have gathered all at once. What’s the occasion today?”

“This guy has been coming out every day these days.”

“You seemed busy for a while, do you have a lot of free time these days?”

“Well, just because.”

Jae-young answered roughly and tilted his glass again. Seeing that, Wonho took Jae-young’s glass and put it down on the table.

“Isn’t this high in alcohol content? You’re not living just for today, what are you drinking so much for.”

“What’s it to you.”

Jae-young frowned and took the glass back from Wonho’s hand. Once he gets drunk and his head gets fuzzy... Then he won’t be able to think of Seung-hyun. When he was sober, whatever he did reminded him of Seung-hyun.

Still, the frequency was decreasing little by little, so maybe he would be able to forget someday. Jae-young let out a small sigh thinking that.

“Come to think of it, there’s been no word about what I asked last time?”

“What did I ask you?”

“Before, you called and asked about types of medication.”

Come to think of it, that’s right. He had forgotten about that too while trying not to think of Seung-hyun.

“Ha...”

“Ah, did I... say something insensitive?”

Wonho looked at Jae-young’s expression. He thought Jae-young was worrying about the health of someone he was dating or getting along well with, but it seemed like it didn’t work out well.

“Well... No, I just remembered.”

“Never mind. It was nothing.”

Has his health gotten a little better? He didn’t hear properly, but it was clear that his health was not good. No, was that a lie too?

‘...That wouldn’t be it. In the first place, I asked because of him taking medication.’

“Shall we make a toast? Well, you won’t die from drinking. If your hangover is severe, come visit our hospital sometime. I’ll take a proper look at you.”

Wonho poured alcohol into Jae-young’s glass and clinked glasses in the slightly awkward atmosphere. Jae-young, who downed the alcohol in the glass all at once, let out a long sigh. The drunkenness he wanted was coming.

Although he didn't have a very low alcohol tolerance, his body was starting to struggle as he had downed quite a large amount for several days in a row. Jae-young's eyes became hazy from the rapidly rising drunkenness.

Translator Notes:

We have now our own discord server as a celebration I will released 1 additional chapters today be sure to join my discord server for updates let's socialize my beloved readers! >3

Discord: <https://discord.gg/KUuMWNWNK6>

Episode 108

As the alcohol entered his system, his senses that had been on edge loosened. Jae-young, who had been spending time roughly answering his friends' questions and occasionally laughing at their silly jokes, was waving his hand without even realizing that he was completely drunk.

However, if there was one thing he was mistaken about, it was that although he thought he was no longer thinking of Seung-hyun, in reality, as his tension was released, he was unconsciously voicing the thoughts inside his heart.

"...I hope he's not in pain. He didn't even tell me properly."

"What is?"

"Ah, the thing I asked about last time."

Wonho, who was also in a state of relaxed tension due to the alcohol, unknowingly leaked information. His friends, not missing that moment, swarmed the two like a group of bees.

"What did you ask about last time? Ah, he looked a bit suspicious earlier. Does this guy really not have a lover?"

"I don't have a lover."

"Then someone you're flirting with?"

"I don't."

"How boring."

One friend who had rushed over first soon lost interest and returned to his seat. However, there were also some who persistently asked.

“Then someone you used to flirt with?”

“Why are you asking things like that?”

“.....”

Wonho tried to mediate in his own way, but it was the same for everyone who had alcohol. Those who were looking at Jae-young in anticipation of an answer and Jae-young who was only fiddling with his glass without answering became good drinking companions.

“It definitely seems like something happened.”

“Try saying it. If it’s something that’s already over, you should talk about it and shake it off.”

Normally, he would have ignored it and lightly changed the subject, but his throbbing head, lowered guard, and the recent situation where he was so confused that he wanted to seek advice from anyone made him hesitate.

“.....”

His friends who thought that if they pleaded a little more, he would tell them, encouraged Jae-young. After hesitating for a long time, Jae-young shook his head, thinking that this was not right no matter what.

“What would I say to loose-lipped guys like you?”

“There’s no trust. No trust.”

“Isn’t that too much?”

His friends grumbled but didn’t deny it and shook their heads. They were not young enough to not know how easily a story told at a drinking party spreads.

“Yeah. I’ll stop bothering you before you run away.”

Wonho, who was relatively more gentlemanly, calmed his friends down. Although he was curious, if Jae-young didn’t want to say it, he didn’t want to hear it to the point of forcing him.

“If you don’t want to talk about it, don’t. We’re not little kids anymore, and we’re past the age of being obsessed with these things.”

But it’s human psychology to not want to say it when told to say it, and to want to say it when told you don’t have to. Moreover, unlike the other guys, Wonho didn’t seem like the type to spread rumors lightly.

“.....”

There was no need to talk about it deeply, but couldn’t he ask a few more things following last time? After thinking for a while, Jae-young started fiddling with his cell phone. Hoping that it would help somehow, he found the photos he had taken and stared at them intently.

This much should be okay, right? Rather than leaving doubts unresolved until the end... Asking about it shouldn’t be much of a problem.

As he thought that, he stared at the photos for a long time. Seeing Jae-young unable to take his eyes off his phone, Wonho was the first to take an interest in him.

“What are you looking at so intently?”

“...Do you know what this is?”

Jae-young handed the photo to Wonho. It was a picture of the kits placed around the house.

“It’s a pheromone detection kit. It’s a common item used in places where betas and ferals are together. Betas can’t detect pheromones, but it would be troublesome to let an omega into a place filled with alpha pheromones.”

“...In the case of using it at home?”

“Well, similarly, it’s often used when there are both ferals and non-ferals among family members. We rarely see it.”

Whether dominant or recessive, if you were a feral, you could feel pheromones, so it was an item Jae-young had no chance to come across. But even after learning the identity of the object, his doubts did not disappear.

‘Han Seung-hyun... is an alpha.’

He was definitely an alpha, even if he was recessive. Is it necessary to have something like this even though he has no housemates, even if poor health affects pheromones?

“Then in the case of using it in a house without betas?”

“What?”

“If this is scattered in a house where an alpha lives alone, how should I interpret that situation?”

Jae-young asked with a serious face. Wonho, who had also become serious, fell into thought. In a house where an alpha lives alone, arranged to the extent that it can be described as scattered...

“First of all, it means it’s a situation where you can’t detect pheromones, and it’s a situation where it’s difficult to control it yourself.”

Usually, alphas or omegas, even if they are recessive, can properly detect their own condition and pheromones. That was instinctive.

Although they could be released unconsciously, if that time was prolonged, even if they couldn’t feel the pheromones, they would notice the changes in their body.

However, there were definitely cases where even that instinctive ability was lost to the extent that the pheromone glands were broken. There could be several reasons, but one thing was certain: it was not a very good sign.

“And since the pheromones can’t be properly controlled and might run rampant, they would have placed them in various places to detect and treat them as quickly as possible.”

“.....”

“Or well, there are also cases where pheromone detection is temporarily lost due to minor illnesses... It could have been prepared just in case.”

The last case was a low-probability one, but seeing Jae-young’s face that had become such a mess, he felt like he had to say something positive. Wonho was thinking about what to say when he unconsciously swiped the photo to the side and discovered something, freezing on the spot.

“This is...”

Wonho enlarged the photo and examined the shape of the pills closely. No matter how many times he looked, it didn't change.

Jae-young, who confirmed that Wonho's expression was unusual, felt anxious and asked,

“Why. What is this?”

“Well...”

“For what sickness do you take this?”

“No, this is just a painkiller. So I can't know exactly what the problem is, but...”

However, there was also a fact that could be confirmed with only limited information. A body so messed up that it couldn't detect its own pheromones, strong painkillers kept readily available around the house, considering these two, it was clear that it wouldn't be a hopeful condition.

It was a drug that focused on reducing the immediate pain even considering the side effects that could occur with long-term use.

Jae-young, feeling anxious at the unanswered question, urged Wonho. After thinking for a moment, Wonho answered,

“...It's quite a strong one among painkillers... It's a drug that's not usually prescribed.”

“.....”

“Mainly for patients who have had a major accident, or for those receiving hospice care...”

Jae-young got up from his seat before Wonho could finish his words. As Jae-young suddenly got up, his surprised friends' gazes were momentarily drawn to him.

“What is it?”

“What were you talking about that you're so surprised?”

“It’s nothing. Don’t worry about it.”

“If it’s nothing, why does his face look like that?”

“He drank a lot, so that’s why. He must be drunk. I think we should send him back now.”

Wonho took care of the dazed Jae-young and came out. It didn’t seem like a topic to discuss lightly.

“Can I ask what your relationship is?”

Wonho, who had moved to a quiet place, carefully asked Jae-young, who was blankly lost in thought. Who was the owner of that medicine that he had such a dazed look on his face?

‘It doesn’t seem to be family... Since he said he’s an alpha, he probably isn’t a lover either.’

“...We don’t have any relationship.”

“It doesn’t look like the face of someone with no relationship.”

Jae-young thought for a moment and shook his head. He wanted to become someone special, but a relationship cannot be one-sided. If he could become someone special with his own words, he would have given that relationship a name several times already, but Seung-hyun always rejected that name.

If it was when he thought their hearts were the same, he might have given an answer that left room, but now he couldn’t do that. The way Seung-hyun made him want to have expectations while not giving him any expectations came to mind, making it difficult to answer easily.

“I wish we could be something, but I can’t force it if he says no even if it kills him.”

Jae-young ruffled his hair and frowned. In addition to his lingering feelings about the relationship, he also learned about Seung-hyun’s health. It only added to his confusion, considering he had come out to try to forget.

“I don’t know what kind of relationship it is... but it seems like you care a lot.”

He was curious why Jae-young had such a face when he said it wasn't an omega but an alpha, and that they couldn't be lovers or any kind of relationship, but he wasn't thoughtless enough to ask such a thing after seeing his friend's distressed appearance.

"It's easier to let go of a relationship that won't work out quickly. It's better for you, and since that person wants that, forgetting each other is the right thing to do for both of you. It's a bit awkward to say this, but... it's more fortunate that you're not in any special relationship. I don't really want to recommend being next to a sick person."

Wonho lightly patted Jae-young's back and said. They were words of comfort, but they didn't really resonate with Jae-young.

"Just forget it. Since you said it's already an ended relationship, it's even better."

More than his bitter stomach, more than his startled and messed up mind, he was worried about Seung-hyun's condition. Because he knew he couldn't escape from him at all.

Because he couldn't control himself wanting to run to him right away. Jae-young, who let the words he heard flow away, clenched his fists.

Episode 109

"Can you find someone for me?"

"Suddenly?"

The next day, Jae-young, who woke up a little late, immediately asked his eldest brother Jaeseong, without caring about his throbbing head and bitter stomach. Jaeseong, startled by Jae-young's serious face, sat up straight.

"Just tell me if you can find them or not."

"Well... if I try hard, it should be possible. No, even if it's not possible, I'll have to make it possible."

It wasn't common for Jae-young to ask for something, and his face looked too serious while saying those words, so he couldn't answer jokingly.

'There must definitely be something.'

Moreover, even when asked what was going on, he didn't answer properly, and recently, the number of times he came to the main house had plummeted. Is this finally a chance to hear what he has been going through? Jaeseong sat up straight.

"These days, finding one person isn't that difficult."

"....."

"But without any reason... I don't think I can help. Although it's not difficult, honestly, it's not a legal area. I also need to know what this is about to be able to help, don't you think?"

"....."

Jae-young fell into thought for a moment. Certainly, doing a background check wasn't a righteous thing, so Jaeseong's words made sense.

However, he didn't want to tell others about his story with Seung-hyun. But it's not like hiding it forever will solve anything. Jae-young hesitated.

'If I had known this would happen, I should have learned something.'

It would have been nice to have the ability to solve it without asking others. But it was meaningless to regret now.

"This is related to why you've been acting suspicious lately, right? Don't be so frustrating and try saying something. Did you do something wrong? Why are you hiding it like that?"

If he talked about it, it would just become bothersome. And until now, they weren't in a relationship that he could introduce to his family, so he didn't talk about it.

Now it was a situation where he needed help, so it would be right to endure the bothersome feeling, but he kept hesitating.

"Hiding it like that makes it even weirder. Did you get into an accident?"

At Jaeseong's words, Jae-young tightly clenched his fists. Maybe they were all just excuses. He also seemed to be afraid to tell his family that he had come to love an alpha, and not just any person, but Seung-hyun.

“...Han Seung-hyun.”

“Huh?”

When the name of an unexpected person came out, Jaeseong asked back in surprise. He knew that they had been close for a while, but didn't their relationship go sour and end?

‘No. Maybe something happened to him...’

Jae-young might have also been victimized by the notorious director Han. If that was the case, trying to solve it alone recklessly would only backfire.

“I still have things to say to him.”

“I knew it. But don't overdo it alone. He's not someone you can handle by yourself.”

“This is.....”

“I'll solve it for you, so don't even think about getting involved and just calm your heart. I had a feeling that the atmosphere wasn't normal lately.”

When Jae-young tried to correct Jaeseong, thinking he seemed to be misunderstanding something, Jaeseong didn't even give him a chance and just continued with what he had to say.

“I told you. Director Han is not an ordinary person. I knew that, but... I didn't know he would go this far.”

At Jaeseong's words, Jae-young's brows furrowed slightly. Jaeseong, not noticing, continued,

“I wasn't very interested, but I changed my mind. Someone like Director Han Seung-hyun causes harm just by being in this field. Even though the HJ succession structure has already been decided, it seems he has no intention of leaving this field.”

It was meant to comfort Jae-young and appeal that they were on the same side, but the more Jae-young heard, the more upset he felt.

“...It's something I have to solve.”

Because he doesn't know what happened between the two, he knows that it's something he's saying for his sake.

If he were to point out the cause, it would be his own fault for not answering persistent questions until the end, but he felt bad. While pondering what to answer, Jaeseong threw in another word.

"I should have stopped you from the beginning, there's nothing good about getting involved..."

"Stop it."

I'm not at a young age anymore, but did he treat me too much like a child? Jaeseong finally shut his mouth. But his thoughts didn't change.

"Tell me roughly what happened. You have to do that to somehow handle it, right? Well, you're not someone who will shrink forever, so finding him is just a matter of time..."

"I just... miss him."

Jaeseong, not understanding Jae-young's words, froze on the spot. What was I talking about? Jaeseong, briefly looking back, asked again,

"Who do you miss?"

Even looking back at the conversation so far, he couldn't guess. Who does he suddenly miss? What nonsense is he saying after talking about Seung-hyun?

"Who else? There's only one person we've been talking about."

Jae-young answered with a slight smile. Certainly, it's not something that will be solved just by hiding it.

He doesn't know how his relationship with Seung-hyun will end, and because of these words, he might be teased for several years, no, several decades, but it didn't matter.

Didn't he know best that there's no use in just hiding things, that it only makes you frustrated?

"I'm looking for him because I miss him, so don't say useless things."

“Uh, that...”

“I don’t like him hearing those things.”

Jaeseong stammered for a moment, not understanding. Is he saying he wants to see him once and get back at him for what he did? But then, didn’t he say that what he said about Seung-hyun was unpleasant?

‘It can’t be.’

Jaeseong shook his head, trying hard to ignore the answer that popped into his mind.

“I’m... a bit of a headache right now, so can you explain it simply? Somehow...”

“I like him. That person.”

But at the words that returned clearly to the point where he couldn’t even deny reality, Jaeseong shut his mouth again. What nonsense is this? He thought it might be a joke, but his face that was serious to the point of looking somewhat refreshed made it impossible to deny this situation any further.

“.....”

But he still couldn’t understand. He couldn’t even guess how Jae-young got involved with Seung-hyun of all people in the world, and of all things, got involved with that most tiring emotion that makes people fools.

“It’s a bit urgent for me to explain at length. Just... I still have things to say to him.”

“.....”

“There’s a limit to finding him alone. Rather than wasting time clumsily, I thought it would be better to ask someone who knows well.”

It would have been nice if he could solve it himself. Even though he had been living thinking he was a pretty decent person, ever since he got to know Seung-hyun, Jae-young was always realizing how lacking he was and how comfortably he had been living.

He wanted to become a better person, a more capable person. All his thoughts and wishes were revolving around Seung-hyun.

Even if he receives incomprehensible gazes countless times in the process, even if his family tells him he's gone crazy, it's fine. If he doesn't do his best now, he will surely regret it later.

"You, this... if Mother... No."

Jaeseong sighed deeply after stammering, not knowing what to say. There were so many things he wanted to ask that he didn't know where to start.

"...I won't tell Mother, so don't give it away."

However, one thing was certain: if Representative Ju found out about this, it wouldn't end with just the family being in an uproar, so Jaeseong first made Jae-young promise to keep his mouth shut and sighed deeply again.

"Ha..."

He couldn't ignore the request of his youngest brother, who hated the interference of his family, in several years. After worrying for a long time, Jaeseong nodded.

"...Okay. I'll... try my best to find him. But there's a condition. Whenever it is, after the situation is over, you'll have to properly explain what happened."

He felt like he needed to hear properly what had happened. He thought Jae-young, who he had raised well, didn't know the world was scary and was a bit out of his mind after hearing the news of his first love's marriage, but he might have his own circumstances.

'He's really not a kid anymore. Yeah, he won't have false hopes if he ends it properly.'

"I'll decide whether to tell Mother after that, so don't give it away. I'll also... quietly look for him."

Jaeseong, who reluctantly nodded, urged again. Jae-young nodded.

He felt that he would no longer hesitate because he cared about others' gazes or was worried about the future. Regardless of what anyone says, aren't Seung-hyun's heart and his own heart more important?

'I don't care if you call me foolish or tiresome, I need to hear it directly from you.'

The things he heard from Wonho made his mind complicated. Things like hospice care, until he hears it directly, he couldn't accept it. Until he hears it directly, it's just an assumption, isn't it?

So Jae-young started chasing Seung-hyun's traces again. However, contrary to expectations, finding Seung-hyun's whereabouts was not so easy.

Episode 110

Seung-hyun had completely disappeared without a trace, as if he had vanished into thin air. There were no records of his card usage or communication, and not a single person had seen him, so it really seemed like he had evaporated.

"So, you still haven't found him?"

"There are no records of him leaving the country, and I'm starting to think he might have smuggled himself out."

Jaeseong sighed at the situation that remained unchanged. Although it had been a long time since they started looking for Seung-hyun, the answer that came back was always the same.

'If I had known this would happen, I wouldn't have said I'd hear what happened after the situation was over.'

He was just frustrated because he had said it and couldn't call Jae-young without any results. He thought it wouldn't be such a difficult task.

"It seems there are others looking for him besides us, and their situation seems similar."

"Who?"

"I didn't look into it, but it would be the HJ side. They must have some unfinished business with him."

The man said, shrugging his shoulders. Since Seung-hyun had properly dealt a blow and disappeared, it was natural for Tae-sung to look for him.

“Usually, when there’s no answer to this extent, it means they smuggled themselves out, or they died and are buried somewhere... That’s the case.”

“Contact me again as soon as you hear any news.”

Jaeseong, who finished the fruitless conversation, waved his hand. He didn’t know it would take this long. Jaeseong, who was inwardly worried that he might have to struggle for a few more months at this rate, received news a few days later.

“It’s still a rumor, but there’s a sighting.”

“A sighting?”

The organization member who had left shaking his head as if it would be difficult contacted him first. Although he was the one who told them to tell him right away if there was even a small clue, it was a slightly unsatisfactory answer.

“You mean you haven’t directly confirmed it.”

“We’re in the process of confirming, so if it’s true, we should be able to find him soon. It’s just that the place is so unexpected that I was surprised, but it’s not a difficult place to enter.”

An unexpected place. Jaeseong stopped his hand and took his eyes off the document he had fixed them on. As their eyes met, the man spoke without hesitation.

“Someone said they saw Director Han at a university hospital walking trail.”

“Hospital walking trail? Did he go to visit someone? Who he was with is important. Who could it be? A politician? Or... did the J Construction chairman say he was hospitalized now?”

“It’s not that side.”

The man shook his head and looked around for a moment as if someone might hear. What is he being wary of in a private office? Jaeseong, getting impatient, frowned and urged him.

“Then what is it?”

“It seems he has been hospitalized all this time. We couldn’t find him because A University Hospital is thorough with personal information security, and we never thought he would be in such a place.”

A hospital. At the same time as thinking it was the perfect place to hide quietly, something felt suspicious.

“What do you think is the reason he hid in a hospital of all places?”

“Who knows? It could be a move to catch us off guard and he used his head to some extent... But it could be a simpler reason than we think.”

“Speak clearly.”

Jaeseong, who became even more frustrated at the cryptic words, urged for an answer. Only then did the man bring up the main point.

“The person who said they saw him said he didn’t look well. Although we couldn’t find out the exact illness or period of hospitalization because their security is so thorough... It seemed like he had been there for quite a while.”

“.....”

“We were going to report to you formally after confirming it again on our side... But I thought it would be better to tell you first.”

“Yeah. You were right to think that.”

Although it was certainly a surprising news that he didn’t expect, it was news he heard after struggling for nearly a month. Thinking it fortunate that he at least grasped a clue, Jaeseong told him to let him know as soon as there was new information and sent him back.

And Jaeseong wasn’t the only one who heard the news.

“Hospital?”

“Yes. Someone said they saw Director Han and Secretary Lee at A Hospital’s walking trail.”

“Is it reliable information? Is there a possibility that incorrect information was deliberately leaked?”

“Since we heard it from an employee who was hospitalized due to an accident... That possibility is low. They said they saw him by chance too. We plan to confirm it again.”

It was an unexpected place. Catching them off guard like this. Tae-sung frowned and said,

“He’s doing all sorts of things. It certainly seems to have helped, but... What on earth is he hiding that he’s going that far...”

“Excuse me, but.”

Tae-sung muttered in a tone that sounded like he couldn’t understand what Seung-hyun was planning that he was hiding himself that much. Secretary Kang gauged Tae-sung’s reaction.

“What?”

“Perhaps it might not be simply with the intention of hiding himself.”

“Then?”

“According to the witness, his face had become very gaunt... The atmosphere was so different that they recognized who it was by looking at Secretary Lee’s face, not Director Han’s.”

Since Seung-hyun’s actions were suspicious, he naturally thought he had chosen the place as a means of seclusion, but a hospital definitely had its original purpose.

A place you go when you’re sick or to prevent illness. Moreover, A Hospital was famous for being thorough with personal information security.

Isn’t that the same reason he himself goes there for regular checkups? Perhaps what Seung-hyun was trying to hide was not his whereabouts but his health condition. He understood it in his head, but inwardly thought there was no way that was the case.

‘Even if you stab him, not a single drop of blood would come out.’

Wasn’t he a lone wolf who seemed like he would avoid even illness? Tae-sung lightly shook his head and said,

“Now that we know his whereabouts, it won’t be difficult to meet him.”

“Are you planning to go see him?”

“Yes.”

Since it was finally the point where former president Han’s anger had subsided and work was slowly increasing, he thought it would be a waste of time, but it would definitely be better than having his ankles caught again by an unexpected event.

Secretary Kang nodded and said,

“Then I will prepare. Now that we know his location, it will be easy to create a coincidental meeting.”

Since Seung-hyun’s whereabouts were bound to spread soon, he wanted to end this tiresome thought as quickly as possible.

‘If I meet him, it will become clear. Thinking of the past for no reason... It seems I’ve forgotten how nasty of a guy Han Seung-hyun is because it’s been so long since I met him.’

“There’s no need to pretend it’s a coincidence. It’s not like we’ll have a long conversation. Just... I should have an excuse to tell Seon-hu, shouldn’t I?”

He had to tell Seon-hu that Seung-hyun is a hopeless person, that he’s someone who won’t even blink an eye at hurtful words and will do worse things.

In order to stop that overly kind Seon-hu from saying things like “But can’t people change?” and “The Seung-hyun I saw didn’t seem like that kind of person,” he could endure seeing an annoying face once or so.

“I will prepare so you can finish as quickly as possible. Even if the hospital doesn’t deliberately leak information, they won’t chase away someone who knows and comes to visit.”

If it’s A Hospital, it’s a place where most of Tae-sung’s family, including himself, get checkups. So they wouldn’t be able to recklessly refuse a VIP customer of Tae-sung’s level.

“I will let you know as soon as preparations are made.”

“Okay.”

The ill-fated relationship wouldn't be severed, but at least through this meeting, he could escape from the absurd thought that he didn't even try to get to know Seung-hyun.

Seon-hu's words were the trigger, but after recalling the past, there were days when the question of whether that was really the best thing to do came flying in.

‘Now I can completely escape from such nonsensical thoughts.’

Tae-sung leaned back in his chair and became lost in thought for a moment. His relationship with Seung-hyun that had gone even more astray because of his immaturity. There was no reason to feel guilty, but Seung-hyun's face that looked like he was about to cry, which he saw for the first and last time, kept invading his mind after coming to mind once.

“...It seems I was young.”

But it was only for a moment. Tae-sung finished his short reminiscence and returned to reality.

Seung-hyun, who had no way of knowing his whereabouts had been discovered, was still spending a day no different from yesterday. Since he was told that slowly increasing his walking time little by little would help with his recovery, Seok-hyung took Seung-hyun out to the walking trail again today.

If there was a difference from the day before, it was that Seung-hyun's attire was more serious today. His body and face were half covered by a thick outer garment, a blanket covering his knees, and a scarf wrapped around his neck to the point it was a little stuffy to breathe.

“.....”

“.....”

Unlike the gentle touch that had carefully wrapped the scarf, the air between the two was as cold as if they were strangers.

“If you're cold, please tell me right away. If you catch a cold for no reason...”

“It’s hot.”

Thanks to the suffocating clothes and cold-weather gear that covered his body, it wasn’t just that he wasn’t cold, but it felt hot enough to say so. At those words, Seok-hyung loosened Seung-hyun’s scarf a little and paused.