

Chapter 355:

During lunchtime on the day when there were two days left before the school trip, Kim Hye-hil suddenly grumbled while eating.

"I wish the math trip would pass quickly. Looking at the school atmosphere these days, it's like 'Math Trip Final.jpg', 'Math Trip This is the real Final.jpg', 'Math Trip This is the real, real Final.jpg'."

"Hahaha, what is that?" Kim Hye-hil continued to speak seriously to Yoon Jung-in, who burst into laughter next to her.

"I'm serious. If this keeps up, I'll lose all my energy before we even go on the school trip."

"Oh, really? Well, I've been a bit worried about that lately. Hey, but how can I stop my excitement? I can't just say, 'Stop getting excited and calm down!'"

"But that's true."

After finishing my conversation with Yoon Jeong-in, I just nodded as I watched Kim Hye-hil again lost in thought with a sullen expression.

Yeah, I'm already so exhausted before the school trip, but I'm worried that I'll lose all my energy when I actually get there. Or maybe the event won't be as fun as I thought.

Besides that problem, there was one more thing that was making the school chaotic. Kim Hye-woo poked Kim Hye-hil in the ribs as he saw a group of students from other grades swarming around the cafeteria looking for someone, a common sight these days.

"Look over there, are you looking for Yoo Chunyoung again?"

"I don't know, maybe so. Eat quickly and focus on your meal."

"Yes, yes. You're quite sensitive."

"The cafeteria was usually noisy, but it's even noisier these days."

After Kim Hye-hil's harsh answer, Kim Hye-woo started to busily eat his food. Having already finished eating, I rested my chin on my hand and glanced over their shoulders at the first-year students.

They were swarming around in groups of five or six, ignoring the harsh stares of those around them and finally approached Kwon Eun-hyung to speak. Eun-hyung, who had been listening to them silently, opened his mouth with an embarrassed expression.

"What should I do? Cheonyoung and I don't share all our schedules. I don't know. I'm sorry I can't be of any help."

"Oh, no! We are the ones who are sorry!"

The children who talked to them turned red and moved away, bowing their heads.

When my eyes met with Eun-hyung's, who was looking at their backs, he smiled and waved his hand. I also responded with an awkward smile and looked down again.

As I was walking to the store with my friends at the end of lunch, I ran into Eun-hyung again at the back door of the classroom. He called out to me as I was about to wave and walk away.

"Dan-ah, just a moment."

"Huh?"

I followed him gently out of the hallway even as I became anxious. Eun-hyung finally spoke when he reached the stairs where the crowd became smaller.

"Schools are a bit messy these days, aren't they?"

"Yeah, I mean, I'm so out of it that I can't even focus on anything. I guess I should just relax until the school trip is over. And don't make any grand plans."

As I said that, recalling the plan I had for this week that I hadn't even accomplished, Eun-hyung smiled again. Realizing that there was something wrong with that smile, I asked.

"Eun-hyung, are you okay?"

"Yeah? I'm always okay."

"Don't give me an answer that would make me want to tell my teacher."

Then Eun-hyung scratched his cheek as if embarrassed.

"Haha, this isn't going to get better."

"What the heck, what really happened?"

Eunhyung smiled slightly at what I said with wide eyes, then his eyes slightly darkened.

"It's not my job."

"Then Yoo Chunyoung?"

"Do you have any idea?"

I couldn't avoid seeing Eunhyung immediately responding and looking down at me.

When I still didn't answer, Eunhyung sighed deeply and nodded his head. He opened his mouth again.

"I see. How did someone who doesn't even know much about electronic devices end up with a cell phone? I don't think there's anyone else who would be waiting for their call."

"No, why not?"

"That's because we all called each other on the way home the day we met. Video chatting, noisily."

I immediately refuted him, but when I heard his next words, I nodded. So that means I was the last person Yoo Chunyoung called that day.

He had been talking to other kids all at once and had called me last, but I didn't pick up the phone. It was natural for Yoo Chunyoung to find it strange and try calling me a few more times. He probably wouldn't have thought I didn't pick up on purpose.

Ugh, thinking about it this way, I realize that what I did was something that could easily be misunderstood.

Eun-hyung asked me as I furrowed my brows.

"What happened with Chunyoung again? Like during the athletic competition."

"Huh? No, it's not like that at all."

"Really? I don't remember it, but it seems like it's been going on for quite some time. Hasn't it been over a week already?"

I lowered my head again as he spoke, folding my fingers one by one. I really have nothing to say.

Eun-hyung added.

"Moreover, it seems like he gets along with the other kids without any problems, and originally I was just going to watch, but this time, it seems like Chunyoung doesn't even understand why."

"Oh, that's it. It's really not like Yoo Chun-young did anything wrong....."

"Then why?"

"Um. No, that's it."

And then suddenly silence fell on the stairwell where we were standing.

I opened and closed my mouth, wondering what on earth to say about this.

My friends say that when Yoo Chun-young and I are together, we only see each other..... I held my head.

"All. Dan-ah?"

"Ugh. No, that's....."

"I'm sorry. I didn't have any signs, so I thought it wouldn't be a big deal, but you've been busy lately or something. But it was a very complicated problem, right?"

"No! That's not it! But I can't bring myself to say it....."

After groaning and groaning for a long time, I finally made up my mind and opened my mouth.

"Eun-hyung, do you think that Yoo-cheon-young and I look like that too?"

"What?"

Eunhyung's gray-green eyes were filled with confusion.

"Eun-hyung, I and Yoo Chun-young are a bit..... It seems like there's a possibility that... There's a suspicious air... It seems like we're not friends....."

I couldn't tell if my face was red because I hadn't been breathing the whole time I was talking, or if it was because I was embarrassed to even say such things.

Eun-hyung's eyes slowly widened as he listened to me.

He spat out in surprise.

"Was that the problem?"

"No, even though I tried not to care, I heard that kind of talk, so I can't completely not care."

"Hmm....."

"But I said everything I could say through text messages instead of phone calls. I said I supported his drama, and we talk every day. Of course, when it seems like he's going to call, I hang up right away."

Eun-hyung shook his head at me, who was always giving excuses that were almost like excuses. He held out his hand and said.

"No, Dan-ah. It's not that you did anything wrong. You're seeing someone right now, so it's only natural that you'd feel awkward hearing something like that."

"I understand why I haven't been able to contact him until now," I said, looking up at him as he nodded.

"Huh."

"Yeah?"

"T-Tha, shouldn't you say something else?"

He opened his eyes wide as he saw me asking again in confusion.

"Another word?"

"No, you know what? It's nonsense, don't worry, I honestly thought you'd say that, Eun-hyung, so I was at ease!"

After saying that, I grabbed my head again.

No, but if I don't hear that opinion from Eun-hyung or anyone else, I think I'll start to believe that there's some possibility to the ridiculous thing that Min-ah said. Then it'll be even harder to see Yoo Chunyoung than it is now.

I didn't want to lose a friend like that because I wasn't an axe-wielding person.

But Eun-hyung, who was listening to me, said in a low voice.

"No, Dan-ah."

"Huh?"

"Even though I've been a close friend of Chunyoung since we were young, I shouldn't be so sure about Chunyoung's feelings and talk nonsense about them."

"But that..."

As I stuttered and lowered my arm that was holding my head, Eunhyung spoke.

"If that's the case, then it's definitely not something I should be involved in. Then shall we go back to class together?"

"No, wait a minute."

As I said that, Eun-hyung took a step down the stairs and then looked at me again. The fluorescent light that stretched out from behind him was backlit.

"Eun-hyung, do you think that there's even a slight possibility in that ridiculous thing?"

"Where in the world is there such absurd things?"

In response to the reply, which came back in a lethargic voice, I glanced at his face instead of taking one step down the stairs.

"Why?"

"You were like Joo-in just now."

"Haha."

Even though I heard Eunhyung burst into laughter, I just touched my forehead without anyone knowing.

What that meant was that it sounded meaningful and that everything would come true.

It's not good to have two people like that.

.....

As soon as I got home, I checked the replies to the article I had posted on the Internet Knowledge Forum.

The title of the article was [Please help me with my boyfriend], and although I tried to avoid identifying the person as much as possible, it turned out to be an article that I didn't really want to believe.

Well, it's okay because this is an internet novel. Cyber men, lend me your strength.

And as soon as I saw the first answer, I was speechless.

[idh1xxxx: Don't write novels.]

"Oh."

After staring blankly for a while, I let out a deep sigh and banged my forehead on the desk.

I got up again, rubbing my burning forehead, and grumbled as I opened my workbook.

Cybermen, it was bad, what's wrong with living in the same situation and helping out? I've been seriously thinking for a while about posting to an intellectual that starts with, 'Do you know? Actually, this is a fictional world...'.

Finally, I shook my head again. Hey, let's stop. I don't want to be mistaken for a conspiracy theorist later on when it is revealed that I wrote something like that.

"Let's study."

These days, because of the school trip, it's so messy here and there that I can barely study at school. I took out my mechanical pencil lead, clicking it.

After solving the problem in silence for a while, I suddenly raised my head when I heard footsteps coming from the apartment hallway and checked the time. Oh, it's already 11:30.

"He must be Yeodan Oppa."

As I muttered that, I turned my head again.

Then, for a long time, I got up from my seat, sighing deeply as I realized what I was waiting for as I saw the eunuch line remained on my phone.

I took the battery out of my phone and threw it on the bed, saying.

"Oh, really."

I hate myself like this.....

.....

That day, even my dream was unusual.

I had a dream where I was wandering around a large bookstore in search of a novel called 'Haegarim' without any results. But when I woke up, I felt a sense of emptiness, and everything was fine.

This time, I had a dream about a closed school out of nowhere. Of course, there are more than two closed schools I've been to, and it was the very same closed school on the mountain behind my apartment where I went to test my courage.

Each time I opened the classroom door, a different time and a different situation greeted me.

It was something like this.

As soon as I entered the abandoned school, I started getting chased by a faceless man in a gray suit.

As I was running in a panic and turned the corner, I flung open the nearest classroom door, and the spring sunlight, so out of place in the situation that it seemed somewhat out of place, greeted me.

And there, wearing a dazzling white uniform, Ban Yeo-ryeong, who was definitely a first-year middle school student, was standing there waiting for me.

As she looked back at me and smiled brightly, her black hair fluttering, I couldn't even answer her, so I slammed the door and ran to another door.

Even though it wasn't a particularly scary scene at all, for some reason I desperately wanted to refuse to jump into it.

I opened another door again, and this time, I was greeted by an unexpected classroom scene. Judging by the colorful hair moving around, it was definitely a middle school classroom.

[Are you okay?]

When I turned my head because someone asked me that, I saw Eun-hyung, who was half-frozen, with his hand extended to me. He looked quite flustered by my unexpected and strong reaction.

In his eyes looking at me, I could sense his caution toward someone he was not yet close to. I could also read the sharp wariness hidden deeper inside, now that I had known Eun-hyung for a long time.

I said, taking a step back.

[Okay, okay.]

[Wait, what's that behind you?]

[What?]

The moment I looked back, I saw the figure of a gray man squeezing through the narrow door of the classroom. I barely managed to swallow the scream that was rising to my throat, and hurriedly pushed Eun-hyung away and started running again.

Every time I opened the door, there was a different scene. School trips in middle school, festivals, and short trips, and the most horrible scenes were those I saw in the last two classrooms.

As soon as I opened the door, the strong sunlight poured in and I immediately knew what time I had come in. Before I could even see Yoo Chunyoung sitting under the tree, I closed the door and ran away.

Before I turned around, Yoo Chunyoung's voice was heard through the crack in the door.

[Are you not going to listen to me anymore?]

I finally covered my ears, but the voice still sounded clear, as if it were being spoken right next to me.

[Have you ever thought to ask again what I mean?]

I had a lot to say in response to that.

How could I misunderstand what you meant? The situation you were in, the words you said, the timing of the words were all so clear, how could it be that it meant something different from what I took it to mean?

You've already made me ruminate on that for too long. That's enough.

Don't make me think about you anymore, about what you said.

I don't have time to think about other things, other people anymore.

I don't want to be hurt by you anymore.

With that in mind, I raised my hands and covered my ears.

[Oh, please.]

I turned my head and looked back, and what I suddenly encountered inside the door that I had opened again was a frowning gray sky.

I stared blankly down at the rain pouring down through the crack in the classroom door, soaking my socks.

Yoo Chunyoung, who was standing with his back turned and holding a blue umbrella, suddenly turned around.

He said, glaring at me with eyes as cold as an umbrella.

[You won't ask anything this time either? Not to me, nor to yourself.]

Chapter 356:

After waking up from the dream, I was out of my mind for a while. My whole body was soaked as if I had been running all night, and my heart was pounding like crazy.

Because of that, I couldn't go out without taking a shower, so I almost got late even though I didn't wake up particularly late.

"Sigh."

As soon as I opened the back door after arriving at the perfect time, I saw Yoon Jeong-in speaking with his hands on the desk.

"So how about watching episode 2 of <Black Rain> together tonight?"

Why is it that the scenery from a few days ago in my memory overlaps? I furrowed my brow. However, as the school trip got closer, there were more meetings with Yun Jeong-in during morning study time.

A friendly response came from the children.

"Agreed."

"Okay! This is going to be a total festival-themed atmosphere."

"Our class is having two festivals."

While everyone was excited, I was the only one who didn't know what was going on and was confused.

Kim Hye-hil whispered to me as I sat down with my bag hanging next to the desk with a bewildered expression.

"We decided to have a practice session tonight because we're going to show off our talents during our school trip."

"Ah."

"Since only the people who brag about their long-term stay, we won't be happy, so the people who have time stay together and order pizza and eat. Since <Black Rain> is airing right now, we'll watch that and break up at 10."

Ah, I see. Today, the day before the school trip, was also the day when the second episode of the drama <Black Rain> starring Yoo Chunyoung was broadcast.

After hearing the explanation, I asked.

"What are you going to do?"

Kim Hye-hil rolled her eyes again, resting her chin on her hand. Then, an indifferent voice flowed out.

"I don't go to school, and Kim Hye-woo wants to see the kids practice."

Even though they bicker, siblings are siblings. That's why they stay until night.

After thinking about it for a while, I quickly came to a conclusion.

Even if I stay at home, I can't concentrate because I'm constantly mindful of the sounds of people in the apartment hallway. It wouldn't be a bad idea to try changing the environment.

I readily replied, "Then shall I stay?"

"Okay."

Kim Hye-hil, who said that while covering the back of my hand with her hand, raised her arm and shouted, "Yoon Jeong-in!" Then her face suddenly turned pale and she covered my mouth with her hand.

But it was already too late.

"Yes, did the garden call you?"

"Oh, it really doesn't suit you. What kind of nature-friendly name is that?"

She grumbled with her eyebrows furrowed and handed Yoon Jung-in a hundred won. Looking at that scene, I felt a deep sense of guilt. Sorry, Hye-hil. I will definitely buy you something delicious at the store later.

Yoon Jeong-in, who was muttering and putting coins into a tin can, looked at me and asked back.

"Oh, you have some left over too?"

"Yeah. But I've been really busy with my studies lately, so can I just study somewhere quiet until dinner time?"

"Oh, what good would it do if we all watched the dance together? We're just using that as an excuse to hang out together. The chicken and drama are on air right now, so don't worry and just go study."

I nodded at Yoon Jeong-in's cheerful words. Then, as I yawned, he asked me as if he had suddenly remembered me.

"By the way, are you late?"

"Oh, I had some trouble sleeping....."

"Did you have a bad dream?"

I nodded. If someone asked me what I had dreamed about, I would have been embarrassed to explain it, but fortunately, the bell rang for class preparation and Yoon Jeong-in returned to his seat.

I watched him sitting with his arms linked next to Lee Min-ah and talking about something, then I rubbed my eyes again, sat down, and took out my textbook.

I muttered softly.

"Shouldn't I use a real talisman?"

The place is the place, why the dream of an abandoned school? Why on earth did that gray man appear?

As I raised my head again, I suddenly realized that it had already been a year since that incident. Yes, it was last summer. Even now, when I think about it, it seems like a dream.

"Is that school still there?"

As I muttered that, I glanced out the window. Across the sky that was as blue as if it had been painted with paint, a bunch of white clouds were floating around.

After the first period, I immediately checked on the next class.

Yoo Chunyoung didn't come to school today either.

Cellphones began to be distributed as soon as the class was over. I found Yeo-ryoung pacing the back door while I was walking back to my seat with my cell phone in my pocket.

"Yeo-ryoung!"

As I approached her shouting like that, Yeo-ryeong's eyes widened when she saw me.

I asked, bewildered.

"Why are you here?"

"Why are you here...? Oh, that's right."

She followed me with a bewildered expression, then quickly got scared and covered my mouth.

I laughed at the sight.

"I forgot that I said I was staying today."

"Yes..... Oh, I don't want to go alone."

"What about Eun Ji-ho and the others?"

She stuck out her lips and pouted.

"I'm busy preparing to show off my long-term skills."

Hmm, I asked, leaning my elbows on the door again.

"They're going to go out again this time? You?"

"I won at rock-paper-scissors, so I'm out!"

"Well, you didn't like being noticed." I nodded and thought for a moment before looking into the classroom and shouting.

"I'll just drop my friend off at the school gate and come back!"

"Oh, oh," someone answered indifferently, and I grabbed Yeo-ryeong's arm and pulled her. "Let's go, let's go."

After dropping off Yeo-ryeong and returning to the classroom, the classroom was quiet. What could be happening? I was puzzled and called Hye-hil. I got an unexpected answer.

[I heard that the kendo club is having a group competition today, so the kendo club room is empty. So our class decided to borrow it and practice. There's a full-length mirror there.]

"We had connections in the kendo club too?"

[There's Shin Seo-hyun, right?]

I nodded at the reply. Oh, right. There must be some interaction between students who are specializing in the same sports.

Kim Hye-hil's question is back again.

[What are you going to do? Do you want to study in the classroom?]

"Um. No, I....."

I looked around and thought for a moment.

It seemed as if looters had swept through the place and there were still people there, but I didn't like the desolate atmosphere of the classroom. Judging from the loud banging noises coming from the hallway, it seemed like quite a few classes were still practicing in the classroom.

After thinking it over, I simply said, "I'll be in the library. Our school library is open until 6 o'clock, right?"

[I know that. Then when I have nothing to do, I'll go there.]

"Yeah."

After finishing the call, I grabbed my workbook and headed straight to the library. I thought about taking my bag, but I just left it there. My phone and wallet were in my pockets, and the other kids left them there, so I figured it would be okay.

The library I found that way was quite unfamiliar. I was caught up in a strange feeling and observed the glass library door and the scenery beyond it.

Since the beginning of my freshman year, I haven't visited the library at all except for the occasional visit to return Shin Seo-hyun's mystery novels. If there's a book I want to read, I usually go to the public library.

After wandering around for a while, I finally opened the door and went inside. Strangely, there was no one at the counter.

Did I come in the wrong place? I tilted my head for a moment, but I figured it would be okay since the door wasn't locked anyway, so I went to where the desks were.

There were no people there at all, and only a thin layer of dust was fluttering like feathers. I thought there would be about 3rd year high school students there, but after tilting my head for a moment, I soon realized.

No, they all do it together in the classroom, so there's no need to do it here. And I finally take my seat.

Within minutes, I was beginning to regret my decision to study in the library. Should I just go back to classroom?

Studying alone in the empty school library, I felt like I was having a bad dream. Maybe I was still haunted by last night's dream and couldn't get over it.

I was pressing my forehead with the hand that wasn't holding the pencil when I suddenly heard a sound and raised my head.

"You really came....."

"It's like you really didn't want me to come."

"No way..... Aha, ha."

The voice of a girl who sounded mean and the voice of a boy who sounded a little bit mean flowed alternately.

I didn't hear any footsteps, so when on earth did he come in? I was thinking that, but then I realized the boy's identity and my face hardened. It was Woo Joo-in.

I heard you're definitely practicing for the math trip long-term bragging rights?

After thinking about it for a moment, I realized that Joo-in's athletic ability was not that great compared to the other Four Heavenly Kings.

Of course, he was much better than ordinary people, but compared to the other Four Heavenly Kings, he was not bad at fighting, and he was optimized for support because he was agile and had good reflexes.

So it wasn't strange that he was left out of the long-term bragging stage. Perhaps Ban Yeo-ryeong was only talking about Eun Ji-ho and Eun Hyung.

Then I should say hello, but somehow it was an awkward time to leave. The desk where I was sitting was surrounded by bookshelves and couldn't be seen from the counter.

I ended up hiding unintentionally. It was when I was hesitating and finally trying to get up from my seat.

"You can just talk to me by text or phone."

"Because there shouldn't be any traces left."

"What good would it do for me to leave a message like that? If I get caught talking about Cheon-gi or something like that, it won't be good for me either."

"Aha, so you know that what you're saying is nonsense?"

As I listened to the Joo-in's blunt words, my face hardened more and more.

I touched my lips and muttered.

What should I say, isn't that too mean to be treated as just a friendly junior? No, I felt a certain malice beyond meanness.

But Joo-in is not the kind of person who would do that to just anyone, and while I was hesitating, I missed my chance to leave again.

At that moment, Joo-in's voice suddenly flew into my ear and stuck in my ear.

"I know you don't want to see each other for too long, so tell me quickly. What will happen during the school trip?"

What happens on a school trip? What the hell is that? How can you know in advance?

I lowered my body. I was worried that they might hear the pounding of my heart, which was incomparably louder than before.

A grumbling voice was heard again.

"I don't know. As usual, Ban Yeo-ryeong... No, I guess Yeo-ryeong-sunbae-nim would have to make a public confession or something."

"I've been thinking about this for a while now, but your tone of voice is quite harsh."

"You were the one who said first that you didn't want to see each other for a long time."

"Last time, you praised me, saying that I had grown up to be a remarkably good person in our family."

"No, that's.....!"

The voice of the shocked schoolgirl was followed by the loud laughter of Joo-in. It was so unusual to hear such a cheerful laughter that I could not even suspect his identity.

I lowered my head again in shock.

What the hell is going on? Who is that girl, and what are they talking about?

Suddenly, a lightning-like realization flashed through my mind.

A suspicious girl has repeatedly disappeared like fog before my eyes. Two of those three times, I was with Joo-in.

As I realized that fact and became dazed, I heard Joo-in's voice again in my ear.

"Still no help. Okay, I'll go now."

"Goodbye....."

"No compliments today?"

"Ah!"

As the girl shouted in a childish voice, Joo-in quickly left the library.

I was sitting behind the bookshelf, and only then did I start to catch my breath.

Then I heard a voice.

"Who's there?"

Before I could even prepare myself mentally, I came face to face with a face that suddenly popped out from behind the bookshelf. It was the same face that had been half-submerged in the shadow of the hood the whole time.

Chapter 357:

After a moment of silence, a sharp scream tore through the air.

"AAAAAH!"

It wasn't a sound that came out of my mouth. Of course, I wanted to scream, but before I could, the girl who screamed first started running away.

No, where are you running away to! Only then did I come to my senses and quickly got up and ran after her.

Fortunately, the library only had one door. I blocked the door by blocking it. The female student hiccuped with her pale face and eventually turned around and went into a corner of the library.

Then you won't be able to live there forever. I squinted and flopped down at the door. Not long after, a female student crawled out from between the bookshelves and asked questions hesitantly.

"Excuse me."

"Who's going to eat it?"

When I raised my voice in frustration, she quickly turned pale and crawled back between the bookshelves. Then, she stuck her head out again and spoke cautiously.

"I found a workbook with the name 'Hamdan-i' written on it inside."

"So."

"If you throw this out the window, do you have any intention of going to pick it up?"....."

"No."

"Oh, yes....."

And then she disappeared back into the library, and for a while there was silence all around. It was a somewhat suspicious silence.

What on earth am I doing? I thought about it for a while, but eventually I couldn't hold back and took a step. Slowly and carefully, like chasing a rabbit, ready to run back to the door at any moment.

When I finally got back to where I was studying earlier, I screamed when I saw a female student struggling to squeeze her body out the window.

"What are you doing! This is the third floor!"

She turned pale at my shouting, stopped pushing herself out of the window, and began to struggle.

Oh, oh, oh, that's really dangerous. I ended up running over there and grabbed the female student who was trying to cross back into the city.

"Come carefully, carefully. Don't fall backwards."

"Yes, yes....."

And finally, we both stood safely on the ground.

After a while of holding each other and catching our breath, I suddenly realized. What on earth am I doing?

The schoolgirl seemed to have similar thoughts to me.

She hesitated for a moment, then slowly pulled her arm away from me, so I held her tightly.

The schoolgirl made a sound like a squeezed frog.

"Ouch."

"You're in trouble. This time, tell me everything."

"No, I....."

"What are you?"

That was the first thing that came out. There must be more than one or two things to question.

I continued to ask her questions when she didn't answer.

"First of all, Yoo Chun-young. No, no. Let's talk about that first. When Ban Yeo-ryeong suffered from amnesia."

Her face turned pale as if she had guessed what I was going to say next.

I looked straight into her eyes and snapped.

"You were trying to get Yeo-ryeong to touch the note back then. The note that said, 'Ban Yeo-ryeong regains her memory.'"

"....."

"And this time, when I went on a trip with Yeo-ryeong, she happened to touch that note. And do you know what happened? Yeo-ryeong's memories came back."

The girl still couldn't speak, her lips still pale. I tightened my grip on her arm and asked, "You knew that would happen if Yeo-ryeong touched your note, right?"

"....."

"At Yoo Chun-young's hospital, even if the two people had an accident at the same time, the extent of their injuries would have been different, so it doesn't make sense for them to wake up at the same time. And right after a suspicious person broke into their hospital room."

I continued my words firmly.

"And in the case of Ban Hwi-hyeol's brother. You did that, too, right?"

"....."

"What are you, really? And here's another weird thing. Why did Joo-in ask you what would happen during the math trip? As if you 'knew' what would happen then?"

The schoolgirl still didn't seem to have the presence of mind to answer.

Finally, after pouring out everything I wanted to say and taking a deep breath, I finally asked the one question I really wanted to ask.

"You're the one-"

"-Ariya! Noari!"

Just then, a voice shouting broke between us.

When I heard that name, I immediately lost my composure.

"Noari?"

I asked, grabbing the girl's shoulder. The girl frowned and made a pained expression.

I asked again, not having the luxury of caring about such things.

"Are you really Noari?"

Just then, someone finally came around the corner of the bookshelf and spotted us, shouting:

"Noari! Why are you here when you can't even guard the counter? Hey, you....."

I turned my head toward the direction the voice came from and was surprised to see his identity. The person who approached me, calling my familiar name without stopping, was none other than Mr. Noh Min Chan.

Not only Joo-in, but even our class teacher, Mr. Noh Min-chan, is connected to this kid?

While I was staring at him with my eyes wide open, he, who was also opening his eyes wide and about to call my name, suddenly remembered something and changed his words. I couldn't help but smile in vain at his next words.

"What was your name today?"

"Teacher, my name doesn't change."

"Oh, that's right."

I smiled slightly at his answer, then changed my expression again and glared at the other person. Now, only her face was faintly visible in the dimly lit library.

You are Noari, the author of this novel world called 'Haegarim' in which we live.

The teacher's question flew at me as I was mumbling to myself.

"What is Dan-i doing here?"

Only then did I turn my head and try to smile nonchalantly as if nothing had happened.

"I'm going to study here for a bit and then meet up with the kids after they finish practicing. I heard they practice in the kendo club room, but there aren't any desks there."

"Oh, that's right. You guys stayed and practiced today, right?"

"What about you, sir? Why are you here....."

Thinking so, I looked across Noari's face.

She was already hiding behind Professor Noh Min-chan. I honestly didn't feel sorry even though I saw the arm holding onto the teacher's back trembling. When I think about the damage you've done to my life, that level of urging seems weak.

Then, as expected, Professor Noh Min-chan's answer came back.

"I'm going to pick up my little sister. We'll ride together after work."

"Oh, yes. Sister...."

But why here... I was about to ask that, but then I stopped talking after comparing the last names of Professor Noh Min-chan and Noh Ari.

Aren't you stupid, me? 'Noh-ssi' isn't that common a surname, and given the current trend, it's only natural that the two are siblings.

As expected, Professor Noh Min-chan scratched the back of his head as if he was embarrassed and then started laughing.

"The age gap between us is quite large for siblings, right? But there are some good things about having a big age gap. When I was just old enough to become a teacher, she entered high school."

"Ah, yes...."

"Oh, don't misunderstand that I'm saying that we both got into difficult schools. We both took the exam and got in fairly."

"Yes...."

"Isn't that great? Of course, I'm talking about my sister, not me."

And teacher Noh Min-chan seemed very excited and bragged about his younger sister for a long time.

When she was in middle school, something strange happened to her for a few days. She would go around absentmindedly all day, start using honorifics toward me, and repeatedly go out far away after school without telling her family. She worried me like that, and then she suddenly came to her senses and started studying without sleeping, saying she would come to Sohyun High School.

As I heard those words, my conviction gradually grew stronger.

So, Noari didn't live here from the moment she was born, but was switched with this world's Noari at some point in the past.

After realizing that this world was the world of her novel, she must have studied so hard to come to 'Sohyun High School', the main setting of her novel.

I stared at Noari.

But despite all the effort she put into coming to Sohyun High School, she didn't do anything particularly noticeable.

The author of this novel knew everyone's past, personality, and even their tastes, so if she had wanted to become friends with the Four Heavenly Kings or Ban Yeo-ryeong, it wouldn't have been that difficult. No, would it be difficult? I furrowed my brows slightly as I recalled Joo-in's attitude toward her.

Anyway, I don't know where things went wrong in those two cases, but if she wanted to approach us, there would have been many ways.

However, she completely disappeared from us until Yoo Chun-young's father's car accident and Ban Yeo-ryeong's amnesia.

Then why did you want to come to Sohyun High School in the first place? If you weren't going to do anything, what other reason was there? Just to see your creation come to life right before your eyes? Just for that one reason?

Anyway, for me, who has never spent a single day in peace since I got involved in it, it was by no means a pleasant guess.

Mr. Noh Min-chan, who was immersed in bragging about his younger sister, asked me as he felt the air flowing between us was strange.

"By the way, Dan, did you know our Arirang?"

"Yes? Yes."

As it turned out, we were acquaintances. As I added in a low voice, Noari's face turned even paler.

Of course, it would be hard to find such bad luck anywhere. Professor Noh Min-chan asked me again as I thought with a cold face.

"Really? That's interesting. How long have you known?"

"Quite... a long time ago."

"Really? Ari, you should've told me that you know someone at school. Then your brother won't worry as much."

"No, I....."

As Noari was about to say something with a sad face, the phone suddenly rang loudly. I looked around to see who was calling, then looked down at my pocket and made a face.

It just so happened to be my cell phone.

I checked the time and it was already about six thirty. Sure enough, after dancing for two hours, it was time for the people to start getting hungry.

"Hello?"

As I asked into the phone, Yoon Jeong-in's voice came out from the other end.

[Oh, we ordered chicken! Come here quickly.]

"Where should I go? Kendo club? Classroom?"

[We can't go here because of the sweat. Let's meet in the classroom.]

I answered back with a voice mixed with laughter, said I understood, hung up the phone, and looked back at the Noh siblings.

When Noari pulled out a bag from under the counter, Mr. Noh Min-chan took it and put it on his back as if he was used to it. Noah tried to sneak away, but when our eyes met, she made a face that was hot again.

I was staring at her intently when I suddenly looked up.

"Teacher."

"Huh?"

"You and Ari live in the same house, right?"

Professor Noh Min-chan answered as if he was asking all sorts of questions.

"Yeah. My family home is in Jeonbuk, so we live separately. There's a school dormitory, but I think it's better to have someone to look after us. Why is that?"

I replied with the nicest smile I had ever made to my teacher.

"I hope Ari doesn't move in the future."

"Brother, I want to go to the dorm."

Her and my answers came out almost simultaneously.

When Noari grabbed Professor Noh Min-chan's sleeve and said with a pale face, Professor Noh Min-chan responded with a puzzled look.

"Why? You said group living was uncomfortable for you too."

"No, I suddenly wanted to go to a dorm."

I sneaked in between them and asked a question. "But it wouldn't be in school, right?"

Then Noari bit her lips again and looked at the floor with an extremely embarrassed expression.

I looked at the sight calmly and thought.

Somehow, I kind of understand why Joo-in pushed her so uncharacteristically... somehow I feel rewarded for all the trouble I've had.

Noari kept clinging to Professor Noh Min-chan's arm, glancing at me. Without knowing how she was feeling, Professor Noh Min-chan was overwhelmed with emotion.

"Why are you doing this to me....."

Well, I didn't know, but Professor Noh Min-chan is also a very clueless person.

Well, it seems like he was fine even though there were a few storms surrounding teacher Noh Min-chan in our class at the beginning of the semester.

I thought I was a mentally strong person, but it turns out I just didn't notice.

Then, when my eyes met Noari's, I pretended to pinch my eyes with my index and middle fingers, then pretended to pinch hers again.

I wonder if she understood what I meant when I came back from the school trip. Eventually, she let go of the arm she was holding on to teacher Noh Min-chan and ran away.

Looking at that appearance, I felt a little deflated. I muttered.

"Anyway, you're going to live in the same house as teacher Noh Min-chan?"

Then, unless you run away, you can come find me anytime, so what are you going to do by running away now?

Is it really true that that pathetic kid is the designer of me and this entire world?

And then I went back to my seat and grabbed my workbook.

Anyway, I felt much better now that I had confirmed the identity and whereabouts of the female student who had been a mystery until now. If I really wanted to, I could go and question her whenever I wanted.

"I wish today wasn't the day before the school trip."

I muttered with regret, but I couldn't help it. I'm already full just thinking about this. There will be plenty of opportunities in the future, so I shook my head and left the library.

As I walked down the stairs, I finally remembered something I didn't want to think about.

Joo-in knew of her existence. And maybe even her identity.

I saw him trying to ask her about a future that had not happened.

How on earth should I take that?

Chapter 358:

As I opened the closed classroom door, the smell of freshly fried chicken wafted in along with the heat.

I blinked for a moment at the sight before my eyes.

A few hours ago, when I came out, the classroom that had been empty as if looters had swept through was now bustling with lights and people.

All the windows were open, perhaps to relieve the heat. A slightly cool breeze was blowing in through the wide-open curtains. The sky outside was still a bright orange.

The children were sitting in groups of three or four, eating chicken. Kim Hye-hil and Kim Hye-woo noticed me and raised their chopstick-holding hands.

"Here, here!"

"Uh."

I approached her and nonchalantly picked up the chopsticks. But as if she had noticed something, Kim Hye-hil stared intently at the face next to me.

I asked, wiping one cheek in embarrassment.

"What's wrong?"

"Hmm, should I give you some digestive medicine?"

I furrowed one eyebrow at the sudden question.

"What?"

"You seem to be feeling a little queasy."

It's been two years since I've been here, so this is how I say, "I think something's wrong with you." I laughed in vain and shook my head, then reached out with my chopsticks and picked up a piece of chicken.

"I appreciate your feelings, but it's okay."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I just confirmed what I had vaguely guessed."

As I said that, I put a piece of chicken in my mouth and munched on it. Then, I immediately stuck my tongue out and started looking for the cup.

"Ah, cola, cola. Why is it so hot?"

At those words, Yoon Jeong-in, who was sitting a little distance away, turned to me and burst into laughter.

"Why did he drink chicken? Is there something else?"

Ignoring his words, I accepted the cola someone had offered me and gulped it down.

Ha, I guess I can live a little now. I wiped my chin and looked at him with a calm look in my eyes.

Let's be calm. There's nothing to panic about, right? In fact, we've just confirmed what we've been guessing all along.

Ever since I learned that the unidentified female student exercised her powers through nothing but 'sentences', I was half-convinced that her identity was Noari. Exerting one's powers through sentences is probably a magic that only a writer can use.

In fact, the goosebumps I felt when Professor Noh Min-chan's shout pierced the tense air in the reading room.

The sense that my guesses were right.

Maybe the goosebumps were felt because my guesses weren't often right.

When I think about it that way, I wonder what kind of feelings Joo-in has as he lives in this world. That's because he lives in a world where his reasoning is always right.

And then I put the cup down and sighed quietly.

"Haa."

At that moment, Kim Hye-woo, who had been watching me, intervened in a quiet voice.

"If you do something wrong, you'll get burped. Don't sigh like that after drinking cola."

"No, even if you say it."

I slapped him on the back and rested my chin on my hand, pouting. I was in the middle of serious thoughts when he suddenly struck me.

Okay, let's think about it again step by step.

It is not surprising that Joo-in noticed Noari's existence before I did. Joo-in had a very complicated expression on his face when he met Noari before.

Even back then, we vaguely realized that we had some things we couldn't tell each other, and we made a promise. We would tell each other about our relationship with the girl when we felt like it was time to talk.

But. I slowly clenched my fist under the desk.

Even so, he didn't expect to predict that Noari was a writer.

No. Then suddenly I changed my direction of thought. When Joo-in and Nori talked about what would happen in the future, they talked about 'weather'. So it was probably right to think that Noari had put up a curtain between herself and Joo-in with his absurd explanation.

But didn't Joo-in react cynically to the very expression 'weather'? At least he asked for a more sincere excuse.

Has he figured out the truth? If so, where and how far?

I covered my head with a "Ugh" sound. It was impossible for me to follow the rotation of my master's head, let alone predict the direction in which it was moving. Well, it seemed like Noari was having a hard time dealing with Joo-in earlier.

Thinking about it that way gave me some comfort, but somewhere in my heart, I felt a little bit of regret.

Why on earth would you put something like that in a novel, a creature that even the Creator can't handle? Of course, when you were writing the novel, you probably never imagined that you would ever meet him in person.

Someone shoved a piece of chicken into my mouth as I was lost in thought. Only then did I glance up.

It was darker outside than before, so Kim Hye-hil's face looked pale under the contrastingly bright fluorescent lights.

She said, pushing a box of chicken towards me.

"Eat quickly. It's almost all gone already."

"Oh, right. Thank you."

Only then did I come to my senses and begin to hurriedly swallow the three or four pieces of chicken that were left.

Although it is said to be a group of three, I had forgotten that if you have the appetite of a high school student, it would not be difficult to have one chicken per two people, or even one chicken per person.

In fact, Kim Hye-woo kept looking at the chicken box that I had taken away with regret. Anyway, even the inhumane Kim twins were actually human. With that thought in mind, I cleaned out the remaining chicken.

I roughly wiped the seasoning off my hands with a tissue and looked at my watch. It was already close to seven o'clock. There was still an hour left until <Black Rain> aired.

I was going to go practice again, but when I got full, it seemed like Yoon Jung-in and the other kids didn't have the courage to go the long way to the kendo hall again.

Kim Hye-hil stabbed Kim Hye-woo, who was sitting with his head down and his eyes wide open, staring blankly at the ceiling.

"Brother, there's not enough sheep."

"Uh. A little."

"What do you want to go buy and eat?"

"I wonder?"

Even as she said that, Kim Hye-woo had already started to slowly get up.

Kim Hye-hil said after briefly looking at her watch.

"What's wrong? There's still an hour left until the drama starts."

"Yeah. Where are you going?"

"Should I still be at the store? There are high school seniors."

"Oh, really?"

And Kim Hye-hil turned to me and asked, "Are you going too?" I quickly nodded because I had nothing else to do.

I needed time to think, but I didn't want to throw myself into silence. It was a really contradictory feeling.

As if there wasn't enough food in a group of three boys, voices were erupting from all over the place.

"Who wants to go to the store raid? No level requirement, no item requirement."

"Cash?"

"Cash is required."

After some idle chatter, they patted each other on the back and left the classroom. The Kim twins and I followed them at an appropriate distance.

The only sound we heard was the sound of our footsteps in the silent hallway, except for the light coming from the classroom.

Suddenly, one of the people walking ahead noticed us, turned around, and waved. Someone looked closely, and a golden hair was vaguely swaying in the purple darkness.

"Oh, Ruda."

When I waved, he smiled, put his arm around the shoulder of the boy next to him, and went down the stairs.

Anyway, I'm starting to doubt whether he's the same person who said something so extreme at the beginning of the semester like, "It's okay if all the students in the class come and get bullied."

I thought as I followed them with my hands in my pockets.

Come to think of it, Ruda has changed a lot.

How much of Joo-in is the same person as the person I knew?

As that cold thought suddenly crossed my mind, I couldn't help but stop walking for a moment.

The Kim twins, who were walking ahead, looked back at me with a puzzled look. Only then did I shake my head as if I was getting goosebumps and move on, continuing my earlier thoughts.

Can we really be sure that Joo-in hid the truth about Noari for my sake, for our sake?

It was dinner time for the third-year students, so the cafeteria was naturally crowded with third-year students. It was a bit awkward for us second-year students to join in, but after waiting in line, we were able to leave the checkout counter with a hot bar, cup ramen, pizza bread, and the like.

There was a snack bar right next to the store, with a microwave, tables, and a water heater so students could have a quick meal.

There weren't many seats there, so I was thinking about just going outside when some of my classmates raised their hands in the corner.

"Hey, Kim Hye-woo! Over here!"

"Uh."

"There are three seats here."

Indeed, there were eight seats at one table, so we were able to squeeze in and make up the total number of people. Kim Hye-hil and I said thank you to the guys we had never really talked to before.

I took a bite of the piping hot bar and snatched a bite of Hyewoo Kim's cup ramen, thinking, Hmm, this isn't so bad. Maybe it'll be fun to stay at school and do nothing from now on.

If you can't study, why don't you study at the school library until 6 o'clock? I'm talking about persuading kids like me who don't go to private academies.

While I was thinking about that, a voice suddenly came.

"Oh, that's right. Hamdan!"

"Huh?"

I looked up. A boy I wasn't particularly familiar with was sitting diagonally across from me, looking at me. Next to him, Lee Ruda had a somewhat troubled expression on his face.

"Are you close with Woo Joo-in in the next class?"

"Huh? Uh."

Why of all things. I swallowed my breath. As if he had read my thoughts... ..

And he asked again.

"Does Woo Joo-in have a girlfriend? No, I'm just curious. Because....."

Ruda chimed in from the side with a somewhat tired voice.

"Hey, come on. Why are you curious about that? Are you having a neighborhood food festival?"

But he accepted Lee Ruda's words with a look of no concern.

"Oh, why? I was curious. You must have asked where that cafe was after hearing what I said."

Only then did Ruda's face turn red with embarrassment. I stared intently at Ruda's face.

He growled with a blush on his face.

"Be quiet."

But the boy was already talking.

"No, I saw him alone with some girl at a cafe over the weekend. No matter how I looked at her, she didn't seem like a cousin. But he didn't seem to be dating either. Does he have a girlfriend? Or is he in a club or something?"

Only after hearing his words did I understand why Ruda had been trying so hard to change the subject all this time.

He knew before I did that Joo-in was in contact with someone suspicious.

I answered after gathering my thoughts.

"I don't know either."

He clung to my words with a tearful face.

"Oh, why. You know."

"I really don't know. Why do you think I know everything? You know all the club activities that your friends do and all that?"

I said that and then I felt like, "Oh no." My words somehow came out more harshly than usual.

Fortunately, it was just a common way of speaking among boys, so he didn't seem to mind at all. He rolled his eyes and looked up at the ceiling, and just said, "Oh, I see," and ended the conversation with that.

After we finished eating, we greeted them, cleaned up the mess, and left the store. Ruda followed us out.

"Look at me for a second."

He asked for the Kim twins' understanding with his eyes, and as soon as he received permission, he immediately took me and moved to a different place.

"You're not listening to Lee Sang Yoon seriously, are you?"

Ruda said as he brought me to a quiet place behind the store. I stared at his face hidden in the darkness and slowly opened my mouth.

"Um, today Sangyoon's name is..... Anyway, it wasn't Sangyoon, so 100 won....."

"Oh, don't do that."

When Ruda immediately started crying and begging, I finally smiled. I put my hands together and placed them on the back of my neck and answered leisurely.

"Well, I'm not your real mother, so there's no way I'd be upset about telling you that you have a girlfriend or not telling you. I'm not that kind of person."

"But...."

"More than anything, if even a real mother did that, it would be a big problem in this day and age. It would block her son's marriage."

Even though I was giggling and saying this, Ruda's expression didn't show any sign of relaxing.

He muttered with a dark face.

"But it was clear that he was concerned....."

"No, no."

However, the only thing I cared about was whether or not the 'girl' that Lee Sang-yoon saw at the cafe was Noari.

I stopped laughing and looked up at Ruda. I asked.

"You asked where the place was. Did you see that woman in person?" Ruda nodded after a brief moment of thought.

"Huh."

Before I could even ask when that was, Ruda ran a hand through his blonde hair as if he was so anxious about something, and then quickly continued speaking.

"I don't know why you care so much, but I can guarantee you that she's not his girlfriend."

I opened my eyes wide and looked up at him.

I want to say that I already guessed it, but for some reason Ruda's expression is so serious that I can't open my mouth.

Ruda continued speaking quickly.

"They called her 'the goose that laid the golden eggs' and 'the lizard that ran away after cutting off its tail'. They said it's better to cut open a goose's stomach last, and a lizard's tail can be regrowth-prone time and time again before catching it."

"Uh....."

"Yeah, so that means that very bad guy is taking advantage of someone else again, right?"

Even though Ruda grumbled and emphasized the word 'very', I couldn't find fault with that part at all.

I just muttered blankly. Joo-in is taking advantage of someone's weakness?

"Anyway, you should know that he's not as nice a guy as you think."

He grumbled as if he had been waiting for something, hesitated for a moment, and then added.

"Still."

I asked back.

"Still?"

"Anyway, I won't do anything bad to you. If you're up for something suspicious, just leave it alone."

I looked up at Ruda blankly as he spoke.

A gust of wind blew from somewhere and caressed our hair as it passed by. Ruda continued to speak with a somewhat embarrassed look on his face.

"Like a modern-day Sherlock Holmes, I guess he gets bored and can't stand it unless something happens."

"....."

"But he's very calculating, so unless someone harms him, he won't do anything bad, and he doesn't like things that leave a bad aftertaste, so he'll use them for a while and then let them go. So don't worry about it too much and just think of it as his habit."

Listening to him, I thought blankly.

So, in the end, is Ruda talking so hard to defend Joo-in? And with that expression on his face, he looks like he hates it to death.

".....You trust him more than me."

When I finally blurted out the words, Ruda was startled and asked back.

"What?"

"No, thank you for telling me. It helped me organize my thoughts."

I smiled faintly and replied.

Just a moment ago, I was so overwhelmed by the thought that the number of people I didn't know how to look at had increased from Yeo-dan Oppa and Yoo Chun-young to Joo-in.

It seemed like I could easily cross one person off that list.

Ruda looked like he didn't know what was going on, but he was satisfied that I looked refreshed anyway.

After we finished our conversation, we slowly started walking back to the classroom.

On the way up the stairs, I asked, "But how can you speak so confidently about Joo-in? I mean, you haven't been with Joo-in for a long time. It's just strange."

I, Eun-hyung, and even Eun Ji-ho, his childhood friend, can't guarantee that Joo-in knows everything.

At my addition, Ruda smiled bitterly and looked down. He muttered.

"Well, no matter what, I guess I'll have to accept that we're the same kind."

And he added, bowing his head deeply:

"I really, really hate to admit it, but."

I stared at him as he did so, then asked with a smile.

"Does that mean you're a very bad guy like him?"

"No, I swear to God I'm not that bad."

"Do you believe in God?"

When I asked him back with a surprised look on my face, he closed his mouth with a subtle expression. Right, I thought you wouldn't believe me.

We climbed the stairs in heavy silence for a while. Soon, my laughter began to break through the silence. Ruda turned his head to look at me and let out another sigh.

At that moment, a loud voice came flying from beyond the darkness.

"Mom!"

"Joo-in!"

He jumped up three steps at a time and landed right in front of me. He immediately held out both his palms to me, and I smiled and clapped them back.

Then Joo-in, who looked next to me, quickly turned to me and asked, looking pale.

"Mom, why are you and my brother alone?"

"What?"

"He's a person with a very dark inside."

I ended up laughing again because the words I had just heard were overlapped over the voice of Joo-in who said so.

"Hey, what do you want to say?"

Ruda, next to me, immediately crumpled his face and growled. I watched the two fight for a while, laughing in silence.

Chapter 359:

After parting ways with Joo-in a while later and returning to the classroom, the classroom had already entered theater mode, perhaps because we had spent a considerable amount of time in the store.

The desks were right next to the lockers at the back of the classroom, and the chairs were lined up in a row like in the auditorium.

When Yoon Jung-in and Lee Min-ah saw me come in, they spread their arms like event assistants and shouted.

"Voila. It's beautiful."

"Honey, it's a gift. I bought you a Lee Young flower crown."

Even Lee Min-ah threw some ridiculous jokes at me even though her boyfriend was right next to me.

I was giggling, but I burst out laughing even louder at what Shin Seo-hyun muttered with a calm expression next to her.

"That's right, we bought the movie theater. With our labor."

"Hey, what do you think I'll become if you say that?" "Hmm, Slave Supervisor?"

When Lee Min-ah slapped Shin Seo-hyun on the back, Shin Seo-hyun instinctively made a face of pain. Ah. Shin Seo-hyun wouldn't have made that kind of expression on purpose, so he really must be in pain. Somehow, I feel so sorry.

Eventually, we sat down on any of the remaining chairs and the second episode of <Black Rain> began.

As the drama began, and as the title suggested, a heavy black rain poured down, wetting the lenses, and our class became quiet as if it had never been noisy.

I glanced back. Ruda, who had said he didn't want to add even a small number to Yoo Chun-young's viewer ratings, was resting his chin on his hand and just staring at the screen.

<Black Rain> Episode 2 was something that anyone who watched Episode 1 could have predicted. Perhaps because it didn't have as much effort put into it as Episode 1, it didn't feel as absorbing as it did the first time I watched it.

But I was the only one who felt that way, and everyone else didn't take their eyes off the screen the entire time <Black Rain> was airing.

Jo Yeon-seo, who went undercover to investigate a new case, escapes a crisis with the help of an unidentified man, but becomes suspicious of his identity.

But the man had a familiar actor's face, so I could tell right away. He must be the male lead, right? I told myself that super-luxurious casting is bad. I muttered to myself.

And here's a scene of three college students preparing for a field trip and going to the market. That part alone gave off a light romantic comedy vibe in this otherwise heavy drama, making it seem like just another drama.

The sight of Yoo Chun-young laughing with the two people was very natural, but also unfamiliar. The one who felt natural was probably me as a viewer watching the drama, and the one who felt unfamiliar was probably me as a friend.

I glanced down at my silent cell phone all day.

Today is the first time that Yoo Chun-young hasn't contacted me at all. On top of that, it's on the day of the broadcast. I was prepared for the fact that he might call me today.

I stared blankly at Yu Cheon-yeong's face in the flickering television light. I felt like a goldfish looking at the world from a small fishbowl.

"Do you want me to bring you?"

"That's enough, that's enough."

As I said that to my friends, led by Lee Min-ah, I glanced at the class next door.

As I said that to my friends, led by Lee Min-ah, I glanced at the class next door.

Since I had met Joo-in around dinnertime, I thought they might stay late too, but the lights were off and the hallway was quiet.

It seemed like our class stayed the latest out of the second-years, but then again, everyone had to crawl home by eight o'clock to watch the hottest movie in town, <Black Rain>.

Besides, I have to be at school early the next morning, so there's no need to stay up late. It's not like our class is always in a festive mood. I scratched my cheek as I thought about that.

Then, Kim Hye-woo suddenly blurted out something, and everyone's eyes turned to him.

"Oh, right. Is that person coming to pick you up?"

Him? We were all puzzled by the overly formal address for a moment, but soon we realized who it was referring to.

"You know him, why?"

I answered quickly.

"No, he don't have time because he have to study late."

"Really? It hasn't even been ten minutes yet."

I turned my head and let out a sigh of relief. I was alive because Yoon Jeong-in let my careless words slide.

In fact, Yeodan Oppa didn't even know that I was coming home late today. I wasn't supposed to contact him in any way until he finished 'organizing his thoughts.'

Even if I had contacted him anyway, there was no reason or need for him to come pick me up like before. Moreover, it wasn't even 10 o'clock, let alone 11 o'clock when the school of his family ends.

More than that, it seems that they often forget because of what happened in the past, but on the way to our apartment, the only dark road was at most an alley that started from a convenience store and led to the apartment complex.

Even so, there are a lot of people and cars in the early hours, so it is not dangerous at all.

But they had no intention of giving up. Finally, Yoon Jeong-in called out to Ban Hui-hyeol, who was packing his shoes.

"Oh, that's right. Ban Hui-hyeol, do you live near Ham Dan's house?"

He glanced at us with his red, round eyes and answered hesitantly.

"That's... that's true."

"Then can you please take her there?"

"Hey, it's fine. I went to school by myself during vacation."

It was at that moment that I responded by waving my arms. Ban Hui-hyeol's face turned red with embarrassment.

Soon, a figure that had been hard to see due to the darkness of the hallway suddenly appeared behind him.

Jeong Se-yeon smiled awkwardly and waved her hand.

"Haha, hello."

"Why are you out there?"

I asked back with surprised eyes for a moment, but soon I realized one possibility and covered my mouth with my hand.

Of course, Jeong Se-yeon was the first person to show interest in the beauty hidden behind the half-rimmed glasses, and she was also the first person to ask about his well-being when I came back from the hospital.

Also, Ban-Hwi-Hyeol was someone I had been close with since he peacefully joined our class, and, wow, but this.

Ban Hui-hyeol, who couldn't even look us in the eye, spat out with difficulty.

"I have a prior engagement...so I'll take care of it then."

Ban Hui-hyeol, who had just come out of the classroom talking about Raid, stiffly turned around, saying something like a 19th century person.

At that moment, Yoon Jung-in interjected in a natural and innocent tone.

"Hey, by the way, Ban Hui-hyeol, don't you know the name of the kid next to you?"

"Are you crazy? Why are you asking that?"

Whether Lee Min-ah slapped Yoon Jung-in on the back or not, Ban Hui-hyeol, who had been frowning for a moment, confidently blurted out.

"Of course. Why don't I know Seon-yang's name?"

Then, silence flowed through the hallway.

After a while, I swallowed a small groan and touched my forehead.

"Hey....."

Still, since there was only one letter wrong, excluding the last name, it can be said that he put in a lot of effort for a person with a weak constitution.

While Jeong Se-yeon's face was covered in betrayal, Lee Min-ah began to repeatedly press the back of Yoon Jeong-in's head, saying that she was apologizing on behalf of this child.

Yoon Jeong-in nodded his head as if he were a robot who greeted her touch without resistance. Taking advantage of the gap, I poked Jeong Se-yeon in the side and whispered quietly.

"It took me more than half a year to memorize my name."

In fact, half a year after he first met me and said the famous line, "I remembered, Hamdan-i," the first thing he said was, "I said I would remember, hail," so in Jeong Se-yeon's case, it can be said that he did a good job.

I continued to whisper.

"Do you know what he called me the second time he saw me?"

"What did he call you?"

Behind Jeong Se-yeon, who was asking questions, others also turned their curious gazes toward me.

"Hammurabi."

The words I blurted out erupted in laughter everywhere. Even Shin Seo-hyun's lips curled up, showing the great impact of Hammurabi.

Soon, I crossed my arms in triumph as I watched Jeong Se-yeon leaving, keeping pace with Ban Hui-hyeol. Hmm, it seems like I saved a couple from danger.

Before leaving, Ban Hui-hyeol coldly spoke to Yoon Jeong-in.

"I will remember, Yoon Jeong-in."

"Please, if there's a spare seat after Se-yeon memorizes your name. Since you're a lady first."

We all looked at him in shock as he slyly kissed her hand. In my case, it included the feeling of being in the same boat. That's a dead flag, you.

After Ban Hui-hyeol and Jeong Se-yeon disappeared across the hallway, I finally opened my frozen mouth.

"It's not me who's dangerous at night anymore, is it you?"

"Hey. No, no. You don't have time to come to me because you have to bring Jeong Se-yeon back."

"You're ignoring the speed of the number one in the country. You."

Don't you know that the number one in the country is like a dragon in internet novels? As I muttered to myself, even Kim Hye-hil joined in.

"In my opinion, he's insensitive to safety."

"When your life is threatened by Shin Seo-hyun every day, why would you be upset if you have one more enemy?" Kim Hye-woo muttered in a cold voice, and Shin Seo-hyun frowned in response.

"You guys, please don't put me on the same level as the national number one in sports special talent."

"Oops, sorry."

That was the end of the light chatter, and we all started walking again.

As I passed through the front door and exited into the playground, my vision cleared up and I saw Ban Hui-hyeol and Jeong Se-yeon walking over there, chatting away.

Ban Hui-hyeol is not the type that is easy to talk to, so I wonder if it's okay. But the two of them seemed to be having a lot of fun anyway. As I watched them, I smiled slightly.

Anyway, it felt strange to see someone else's love beginning while my own was in danger.

Then, I suddenly had a thought and looked back at Lee Min-ah.

"Is she number 2?"

Lee Min-ah turned around with her eyes wide open at my sudden words.

"What?"

"Couple number 2 in our class."

"Hey, don't do that!"

Lee Min-ah laughed and waved her hand. Immediately after, she was at a loss as she was struck by Yoon Jung-in's sad face and the words, "Are you ashamed of me?"

They said as they arrived at the subway entrance where everyone was going in different directions.

"There are really a lot of people."

"Right, I said I can go alone. As long as there are no people like the number one person in the nation chasing me or the second generation of a conglomerate with a grudge."

"I understand the former, but what about the latter?"

The people who had asked turned around one by one, dumbfounded by my answer. I blankly watched them being sucked into the subway entrance, and then immediately changed direction.

As I walked alone through the crowd, I remembered the time I had spent the day alone at Ban Yeo-ryeong.

There was a reason I didn't want to go alone.

Me. I feel lonely all over again. Especially lately, someone always came out to pick me up.

I was scratching the back of my neck for no reason, and suddenly I looked ahead and stopped walking.

Before I knew it, I was standing right in front of the last crosswalk I had to cross to go home.

On the other side, I saw the bus stop that Yeo-ryeong and I always used to take when we went to Balhae Hospital. It was also the place I used to take when I went to school for a short time during winter break.

Most buses stop there. So there were many memories of meetings and partings there.

The figures of people getting on and off the bus were clearly visible through the transparent glass wall. Then, I suddenly noticed a person sitting motionless at the end of the seat and squinted my eyes.

Before I could confirm his identity, the traffic light changed and I started walking, swept up in the crowd. When I was almost across the crosswalk, he also got up from the bench at the bus stop and started walking up the same hill as me.

As I followed him, I realized that not only his school uniform but even his bag looked familiar, and my breath caught in my throat.

Should I call his name now?

No, but isn't the fact that he was walking silently without saying anything a kind of signal to me not to pretend to know?

As we climbed the hill, we kept a certain distance from each other, like a planet and its satellites.

I kept staring at Yeodan Oppa's back. I thought that maybe he would read my gaze and look back at me.

But that didn't happen until we reached the end of the alley and entered the apartment complex.

I'm starting to get a little confused now. Did Yeo-dan Oppa just happen to finish school early and leave early?

It's possible that someone was standing at the bus stop, saying their legs hurt or that they didn't want to go home, and then when they saw me coming, they got up and walked ahead of me because they were afraid that it would be awkward if we ran into each other.

As I thought about that, my steps began to slow down. If that was really what Yeodan Oppa had intended, it seemed like he would be in trouble if we were riding the same elevator.

After a long pause in the middle, I thought that he would have already gone home by now and started walking again, but to my dismay, I ran into him who was standing right in front of the elevator.

As I froze, holding onto my bag strap, he reached out and pressed the elevator button, then glanced at me. As if he had been waiting on the first floor the whole time, he stood in front of the open elevator door and nodded at me again.

"Uh..."

I rolled my eyes and thought about it, but I wasn't given enough time to think about it. Finally, I made up my mind and held out one hand and shouted, "Now, wait a minute!"

Yeo Dan-oppa, who was already in the elevator, silently lowered his hand and pressed a button somewhere. If the elevator door had closed right then, it would have been really embarrassing, but fortunately, the button he pressed seemed to be the 'open' button.

I jumped into the elevator, panting.

I said.

"Gasp, thank you."

I didn't expect to hear an answer, but the next thing he said surprised me.

"Why did you run like that?"

"Huh?"

When I raised my gaze, Yeo-dan Oppa was looking at me with a faint smile.

He spoke again.

"If you told me to wait, I would have waited."

"Oh, really? Haha... I really ran for nothing."

Feeling embarrassed, I just touched my hair that was messy from running for nothing.

Oh, the atmosphere is surprisingly not bad? I thought that as I glanced to the side. Then I asked again.

"Yeo-dan Oppa, you came early even though it's not even 10:30 yet."

Yeo-dan answered nonchalantly.

"Yeoryeong was worried that you would come alone."

I opened my mouth for a moment and then closed it without saying anything. Then, it means that you were sitting there waiting for me.

After hesitating for a while, I asked again.

"Ahh... did you get permission from the teacher to leave?"

When Yeo-dan Oppa heard that question, he smiled even brighter than before. Perhaps he was thinking of the conversation we had at the front door a few days ago.

Yes, even back then, I had said 'I woke up' so confidently. Only then, when I remembered that incident, could I laugh a little.

The elevator door opened and I stepped into the hallway and asked.

"How long have you been waiting?"

"I didn't wait long."

"Whenever you did that, it wasn't always that long."

At the words I said with a smile, Yeo-dan Oppa avoided my gaze and swallowed.

I spoke again.

"Let's just ask on the phone what time it ends. I've had it since five o'clock."

"I didn't have the courage to contact you."

The air suddenly cooled down at his sudden remark. I stared blankly at his side profile illuminated by the hallway lights. He continued speaking slowly.

"I felt like if I contacted you, I would have to admit that we were actually in a position where we could talk at any time."

He still had an unreadable expression on his face.

"Then... I guess I should ask the question I've been avoiding out of fear."

When he finished speaking calmly, I finally exhaled and asked back.

"What is that?"

"You asked me here."

As he said that, Yeo-dan stopped walking. It was none other than the railing of our house where we had had countless conversations.

Yeo-dan carefully placed one hand on the railing and looked back at me as he continued.

"Do you like me? Do you like me and did this? Or did you date me because you were pitiful?"

"....."

"I think I should ask the same thing this time."

When the gaze that had been wandering the floor finally turned to me, I swallowed hard.

And then a soft question followed.

"Do you like me?"

Chapter 360:

After he finished speaking, he looked at me with eyes as calm as his voice. Looking into his eyes, I recalled something that happened quite a while ago.

I finally regretted asking him that question.

Now that I'm in the position of being questioned, I understand. If I liked him, I would feel like I was being tested, and if I didn't, I would feel like I was being questioned.

I haven't made a decision yet, so I'm not one of those.

The silence continued. Unable to bear the silence, I finally took a deep breath and opened my mouth.

"Recently... I've been asking other people a lot. How do you express your feelings for someone?"

Yeo-dan looked at me with a silent gaze. I continued.

"Everyone told me that. It's a problem that I have to answer myself. Why are you asking someone else when only I can answer it?"

Yeodan oppa, who had been listening silently, opened his mouth at that point.

"So... did you find the answer?"

"There are things I don't know now. So I thought I'd go back in time and look at it from the beginning."

I raised one hand and wrapped it around his other arm.

"Go back to when I first liked you."

"....."

At my words, Yeo-dan made a surprised face for a moment.

I looked up at him with longing eyes and then turned around to look outside the railing.

Does Yeo-dan know? My connection with Yeo-dan in my memories started right here.

When I first ran into Yeo-dan in the apartment hallway, I was so surprised that I almost knelt down on the spot.

He greeted me calmly, saying, "Hello." When I didn't respond, he came over and touched my dry skin with his dry hands.

I was so shocked that I didn't even realize that the house he entered by pressing the password was the house where Yeo-ryeong lived. That day, I barely held back the urge to run into the house and shout, 'Mom, a really handsome guy just came into the house next door. Do you know who he is?' It was because I was afraid of receiving curious looks like I did with Ban Yeo-ryeong, like, 'You don't know that guy?'

The identity of the brother was revealed in vain without any consideration. One day, a few days later, when the family was eating out, Yeo-ryeong's parents brought Yeo-ryeong and even Yeo-dan.

The two people looked very similar, but their atmospheres were so different that it was hard to tell until I heard their names. That day, I couldn't tell whether the food was going into my nose or my mouth while I was eating.

'Daughter, I didn't know my daughter was an elephant and not a person. Hey.'

Since my father said that, I said everything.

For a while after that, just as I couldn't turn my attention away from Ban Yeo-ryeong, I couldn't turn my attention away from Yeo-dan either. For reasons that were clearly different from Ban Yeo-ryeong's.

One day, a few months after I reconciled with Ban Yeo-ryeong, I started wandering around the hallway as if someone had blown a different wind into my heart.

It was a time when there was nothing to do with the cell phone, so I would spend the whole day talking on the phone in the hallway. I hadn't gotten used to the Four Heavenly Kings and other absurd things at school yet, so there was always something to talk about for hours. When I had nothing to do, I would

take a book out and curl up in the corner of the hallway and read, sometimes getting curious looks from my neighbors.

I had those days too.

It was just a brief fever during my teenage years.

Even if the beginning of that feeling was a delusion that, unlike other boys, the heroine's older brother might like me as much as she did, the times I would stomp my feet and wait to see his face even for a moment, and the countless books and movies I would watch while putting myself in his shoes.

The days when I would lose sleep over the thought of how excited I would be if he came to me and spoke to me with a different face and voice than usual are not gone.

So I could say for sure.

"My first love was Yeo-dan Oppa."

".....I didn't know."

He blinked as if surprised and asked.

"When did it start?"

"Around my first year of middle school. Maybe in the fall? Winter?"

I raised one corner of my mouth and weakly raised and lowered my shoulder.

"By the time I realized that Yeodan Oppa and I would never develop that kind of relationship, the romance had disappeared and was replaced by something akin to friendship. So fortunately, our time together became much more comfortable. Before, I would be so nervous that I couldn't breathe. And I would become anxious to make a good impression."

He, who was impressed by my words, spoke slowly.

"I didn't know it had been that long."

"That's understandable. I did show it a lot, but it was just because I couldn't handle my feelings for you. It wasn't because I wanted you to know."

I suddenly smiled as I answered like that.

Moreover, even then and now, I wasn't the only one who acted like that towards Yeo-dan Oppa.

If I think about it that way, the reason why Yeo-dan didn't know even though I made it that obvious wasn't because he was oblivious or wanted to ignore me, but because of the environment he experienced while growing up.

To him, the behavior of people like me would have been completely normal.

Indeed, then Yeo-dan answered with a confused look on his face.

"At that time... I never thought that you might like me. I didn't think that I was the kind of person who would do that."

"No way."

I never thought I'd think such a ridiculous idea. Yeo-dan Oppa asked me again, laughing in disbelief.

"What do you mean by 'I didn't want you to know'? If I didn't want you to know, we wouldn't have started dating unless I confessed."

He added with a confused look on his face.

"That means, after all, you didn't want to date me."

"I thought the same thing as Yeo-dan Oppa. Whether I confess to Yeo-dan Oppa or not, nothing will change."

I shrugged my shoulders and said that, then laughed as if I was complaining.

"In other words, I thought that since Yeo-dan Oppa wouldn't like me, confessing would only make him uncomfortable. Plus, we hadn't even known each other for a year or two. I thought I should just ask. Think of it as a passing fever."

And then I paused for a moment and glanced up to check Yeo-dan Oppa's expression.

".....So when I heard you ask me out, can you imagine how I felt?"

He had been silently looking down at the floor, and then slowly shook his head.

"It felt like I was dreaming a dream from my childhood. A dream I hadn't told anyone about, a dream I couldn't tell anyone about."

I added with a faint smile on my face.

"It felt like it had happened after a time difference."

"After a time difference....."

Yeo-dan Oppa chewed over my words in a low voice.

At that point I realized he had vaguely realized what I was trying to say.

Slowly lowering my eyes, I spoke again.

"Actually, from the time when Yeo-dan Oppa grabbed my wrist and left the cafe until now, all the time I spent with Oppa feels like a dream."

The moment when you picked me up every time school ended, the moment when you dried my hair while sitting in the living room of our country house early one New Year's morning, the moment when we sat across from each other on the apartment veranda, wiggling our bare feet side by side and giggling.

Every moment felt like I was in an overly good dream.

A dream where nothing hurts me. A warm and affectionate dream where tears would flow for no reason when I woke up.

".....When oppa confessed to me, I thought I should accept it. It would be such an idiot to reject someone as good as oppa."

And then I slowly opened my eyes that I had closed. Oppa was looking at me with an expression that looked like he was about to cry.

I continued speaking with difficulty.

"I told myself that if I let you go, I would definitely regret it."

I narrowed my choices by thinking that no one would like me if not him.

"Okay....."

Yeo-dan answered with a pained expression. I couldn't bear to look at his face any longer, so I closed my eyes again.

"It doesn't mean I regret it. I loved every moment I spent with you. Spending time with someone I could love freely, someone I trusted would never hurt me. It was such a special experience and time. I want to remember every single moment without forgetting a single one."

I continued, my fists clenched.

"But isn't that too selfish of a thought? Because it means I want to remember all the moments that you might not want to remember."

A tear finally fell from my eye.

".....Because it means that we had different feelings."

Yeo-dan also took his gaze away from my face, which he had been staring at all this time. It seemed as if tears were streaming down his face as he turned his head away.

There was an agonizing silence for a while. In the midst of it, I quietly raised both hands to cover my face and catch my ragged breath.

I really need to get rid of this habit of crying at times like this. I thought.

If I cry here now, Yeo-dan Oppa won't be able to get angry.

He was considerate of me until the very end, so why am I taking away his last chance to be honest?

It was natural that Yeo-dan Oppa couldn't say anything harsh to someone who was crying like that.

Why on earth was I shameless until the very end?

As I bit my lip with self-loathing and anger, someone's hand came over and lightly swept my chin and lower lip with their thumb.

I looked up in surprise. Yeo-dan Oppa was looking at me with his wet eyelashes down. He said.

"You'll bleed."

Even his voice was hoarse as he spoke. I burst into tears again at his affection.

Even in the midst of all this, I still feel like I hurt such an affectionate person.

And because I thought that such an affectionate person could no longer be mine.

Just say you're sorry. I shook my head again at the whisper I heard somewhere in my head.

I have already hurt you beyond measure with my inconsiderate consideration and my unwillingness to let go of what you have already given me.

How much more horrible a person are you going to become? I let out a low sigh.

Then, Yeo-dan Oppa spoke again.

"Thank you for being honest with me."

"....."

For a while, I couldn't believe my ears.

Yeo-dan Oppa said 'thank you' to me. To me who hurt him without even knowing my own heart.

I blankly raised my head. Yeo-dan Oppa continued speaking with a more calm expression than before.

"I could have just asked you, 'Can you distance yourself from that friend?'"

"....."

"Then you probably would have said yes, and we could have continued dating."

And Yeo-dan Oppa added in a low voice, "It was good that you didn't do that."

"....."

"Actually, I also noticed that the problem wasn't there. But instead of listening to your honest feelings, I just wanted to do whatever I wanted with you....."

"Oppa...."

"I thought that maybe it was okay because you seemed happy next to me and kept smiling, and you didn't hate me."

He quietly wiped away a tear that had flowed down again and took my hand.

It was a surprisingly warm hand. I could feel the pulse coursing through my veins. It felt like the whole world was pounding.

He continued speaking as if shaking off a burden that was weighing on him.

"If I had kept cutting off the people you liked, kept narrowing your world, and kept giving you nowhere to go, I could have stayed with you. But I would have started to hate myself for doing that."

He finally finished speaking after exhaling quietly.

"I can't give myself, which I hate, to you."

“.....”

"You deserve to meet someone better than that. Someone who expands your world, not narrows it."

At that point, I couldn't stand it anymore and I intervened.

"Oppa, why are you saying that? You always said I was more than enough for you. The problem was with me."

"The only problem was that our hearts were different, and our times were different. That's all."

He said affectionately, rubbing my eyes with the hand that wasn't holding mine.

"And that's the problem, not the fault. So don't blame yourself."

"No, no....."

As I was saying that and shaking my head, I was finally able to close my mouth after hearing his next words.

"When you say sorry when breaking up, the person who hears it feels a little bit miserable."

“.....”

I almost said sorry about that again.

I was not qualified to make Yeo-dan Oppa miserable. No, in fact, I never even thought that I could hurt Yeo-dan Oppa in any way.

If I had known that earlier, I wouldn't have made such a complacent and irresponsible choice. I regret it.

But no one can turn back time.

Yeo-dan said, rubbing my eyes again.

"As you said, I can't always remember the time I spent with you with a smile. But I don't regret dating you. So don't worry."

“.....”

"Even if it was just borrowed time, I was happy. I was happy, and we both. Isn't that enough? Neither of us regretted it unilaterally."

I just cried and held onto his hand tightly. I held onto him tightly, interlocking my fingers as if I would never let him go.

Perhaps neither of us will regret our decision that day, but neither will we.

The days spent with Brother Yeo-dan will someday be like a pleasant dream, and someday like a dagger flying in and arranging flowers, and the same will be true for Yeo-dan.

Still, there were certainly new things to see as we stepped into each other's territory.

I lifted my blurred vision.

I have witnessed many times how the familiar spaces I visited every day changed into different colored clothes, as if I could remember them forever, because I was with Yeo-dan. And I will never regret that moment.

At least I hoped that what I gave to Yeo-dan Oppa wasn't just pain. I held Yeo-dan Oppa's hand a little tighter.

I hoped that Yeo-dan Oppa would see the same thing I did when I witnessed the miracle of everyday life. That alone would not be blurred by any regret or pain.

I hope we can start another love willingly.

But why is it that even though I'm mentally prepared for what happens after we break up, I'm so scared to death of letting go of his hand?

I held on to his hand tightly for a long time with my eyes closed. When his other hand finally reached out and grabbed my hand, and he pulled my fingers apart one by one, I felt an indescribable sense of loss.

"I don't want to....."

I muttered in a small voice without thinking, and I hoped he hadn't heard me. Fortunately, when I looked up, he looked fine, except for looking a little tired.

It was his words that made me stop taking steps that I would never take.

"Good night."

I stared blankly at him as he said that.

It was only when he looked at me with a puzzled look that I realized I was waiting for him to say, "See you tomorrow."

The feeling of emptiness came rushing back like a tidal wave. I tried to chew on the inside of my cheek and answered.

"You too, oppa."

"Take care."

I smiled weakly, realizing the existence of the math trip only after he spoke.

As I sat there like this, somehow it felt like I had gone back to the day I went on my graduation trip about a year and a half ago.

The greetings we exchanged while running errands, saying, "Take care on your way back," without thinking. And the nights when I couldn't sleep because my heart pounded just because he stroked my hair.

How much better it would have been if that had been the case? If only it had been today.

After staring blankly for a while, I barely managed to agree to that. I walked up to the front door with a trembling gait and entered the password.

I passed the living room where my mom and dad were sitting like a ghost and went into my room without saying a word.

The moment I put my bag down and closed the door, my legs gave out and I collapsed.

Leaning my back against the door, I crouched down and buried my face in my knees, mumbling incessantly.

"What should I do, what should I do..... Ugh, really, what should I do."

My first love was over.

