

In the silence of the hallway, Eun Ji-ho and Na Ye-ri, who crossed their arms and looked this way, were a perfect couple no matter where they looked.

Of course, this wasn't the first time they'd been together in front of my eyes.

When Na Ye-ri came to our school as an exchange student, the two of them spent a lot of time together.

Occasionally, referring to the two who were arguing under the guise of a conversation in the hallway, 'Are you engaged?' There were several people who asked.

Even strangers could see it that way, so of course I should have guessed what they would look like now that I'm gone.

In fact, since the story of Eun Ji-ho's fiancée came out, I had assumed that it would be Na Ye-ri.

Even so, when I saw the two people in front of me, I couldn't help but feel hopeless. There was one more fact that made me despair.

If I don't give up on Eun Ji-ho even after seeing this, if I succeed in taking him away at all. I will make Na Yeri cry again this time.

She has high self-esteem, but because she puts in that much effort without rest, she, like Eun Ji-ho, can never be hated.

Even after knowing that the man she had liked for a long time liked another woman, she had never uttered a harsh word, let alone cursed at her.

On the contrary, she yelled at Eun Ji-ho and told him to bring her quickly, saying, 'The person you like isn't me, so why am I angry with you?'

As I thought about it, it seemed that my complexion had turned pale before I knew it.

As she moved her steps, she kept glancing at me with her eyes as if she was contemplating whether to just pass by or not, but she finally stopped.

"Hey."

At her call, I turned my head.

The moment our eyes met eyes filled with concern, the tears that flowed without my knowledge fell and landed on the back of my hand.

"Ah."

After a short moan, I slowly raised my hand and covered my eyes. The only thing that kept coming out of my mouth was one word.

I can't, I can't do this In front of Na Yeri. And above all...

They might be suspicious of me for shedding tears as soon as I saw the two of them together, but Na Ye-ri seemed as dull as Ban Yeo-ryeong. Now, for the first time, I thought that she might not be the villain of <Sunset>, but another heroine.

In the meantime, Na Ye-ri, who came up to me, rummaged in the clutch and asked.

"Why are you crying all of a sudden? People nerves, oh I'm surprised... There must be wet wipes. Oh, but do wet wipes remove makeup?"

At that time, Eun Ji-ho, who had let go of Na Ye-ri's arm and watched from a step away like a bystander, suddenly intervened.

"It will be erased."

"Oh yeah? then... How much is your tie?"

Seeing Na Ye-ri start to covet Eun Ji-ho's necktie, I felt embarrassed inside. No, wait. Are you going to wipe away my tears by stealing a tie that looks ridiculously expensive? Really?

The conversation between Jiho Eun and Yeri Na continued to be heard.

"Well, it's fine because I didn't buy it. If it's from another brand, isn't it okay?"

"Then next time I go to the department store and buy one from the same brand. Let's hit it off."

"It's okay, I'm not a person who doesn't have enough to ask my fiancée to pay even one of these things. More than that, I'm really worried that she'll try to wipe her tears with my tie after hearing this."

Indeed, it was as it was said. When a 1 million won necktie was sacrificed just because I showed tears in front of a rich lady, my tears were already in my eyes. It was a common sense of crisis.

Dirty capitalist society... I can't even cry at all... Thinking that, Na Ye-ri raised her face to me as I roughly wiped away my tears.

"Why are you crying in a place like this? I'm not asking because I'm worried..."

Eun Ji-ho asked as if he had been waiting.

"Why are you talking like that?"

"I'm what?"

Raising her eyes sharply at him, Na Yeri looked back at me and said.

"What kind of... If a baby like a tax rang in the Joseon Dynasty with soybeans and rice, and if the baby is still at the party, I think I can touch it. Not really for you."

"What are you really doing?"

"Quiet."

Na Ye-ri, who gritted her teeth in response to Eun Ji-ho, who kept making fuss, was far from the way I saw her in the past. Having tried to blame it on my tears, I tried to regain my senses.

Now, let's think about it. What are the conditions of a bad boy or girl? It is to have skinship with people you are not interested in and to spread numerous rumors about it.

Then, what's the big deal that Eun Ji-ho showed up with Na Ye-ri arm in arm? I even received a kiss on the cheek from Yoo Chun-young and Lee Ruda.

Confession? Of course, Eun Ji-ho has confessed too many times to count. It was about 4 times a month, so if you add up all the confessions you received during the 6 years of middle school and high school, it would exceed 200 times. But didn't I receive enough confession that I didn't regret it? Even to two of the four great heavenly kings and the heroine's older brother.

Let's conclude by going through here. Is Eun Ji-ho a bad boy or am I a bad girl? Of course it is me.

Yes. It's the first identity I realized after 6 years of entering Internet novels, but I was actually a bad girl 0147.....

Through such an absurd thought process, I barely regained consciousness. In fact, considering what had just happened on the terrace, it really didn't make sense for me to shed tears when I saw them.

The tears that had only flowed down a drop or two had dried up without a trace.

I tried to smile calmly and said to Nayeri, who had been looking at me worriedly until then.

"Oh, no. I just remembered something sad for a moment... Don't waste your time and go inside."

"But..."

"Your companion is also waiting."

I pointed behind Na Yeri, who pursed her lips in displeasure. Indeed, Eun Ji-ho had been watching everything we were doing with a bored expression from the beginning.

Then, a low voice suddenly pierced my ears.

"Naye-ri, go in first. I'll stay outside for a while and then go."

"What? Why all of a sudden?"

"First of all, because it's someone I know. We are friends from the same school."

"Oh, yes? Did you invite her?"

"No, Yoo Chunyoung."

Then, Nayeri's forehead twisted significantly. Because of that, I could see that even in this world, Na Ye-ri still hated Yoo Chun-yeong.

I suddenly remembered Eun Ji-ho's threatening Yoo Chun-yeong, saying, 'Be quiet, as no one else says you open your mouth despite your appearance. Maybe that 'someone' was Na Ye-ri? It was a very probable inference.

Indeed, as soon as Na Ye-ri learned that the person I came with was Yoo Chun-yeong, she couldn't help but want to say something. Her lips, which spat out words like 'why' or 'who', eventually closed.

And Nayeri, who turned around, spoke.

"Okay, come before it's too late. I have to say hello to the president and Mrs."

"Yes."

When Na Ye-ri, who had been glaring at Eun Ji-ho who answered calmly, went into the hall, I turned around and left as if I had waited.

However, Eun Ji-ho was a bit faster.

"You said you don't like me?"

At the surprisingly direct question, I closed my eyes and let out a short sigh. Yes, from the time I shed tears when I saw him with Nayeri, this was a set procedure.

I opened my eyes again and tried to look straight at him and answered.

"I never said I didn't like you."

Then, as if he was reminiscing with his arms crossed, he nodded his head coolly.

"That's right. I didn't think of it."

Knowing that I liked him, he seemed unmoved, as if he had heard the weather forecast on TV in the morning.

I asked nervously to hide my miserable feeling.

"Okay, so what are you going to do? Are you thinking of going out with me again?"

But unexpectedly, the answer that came back exceeded expectations.

"No."

"What?"

He crossed his arms in front of me, speechless.

"You like me, but... But I don't know why you let Yoo Chun-young and Lee Ruda kiss you on the cheek, but you're withdrawing the offer anyway."

He spoke calmly.

"I misjudged you. About how close you could get to us."

"What are you talking about?"

"I thought that it must have been a whim that Ban Yeo-ryeong became close to you and that Yoo Chun-yeong was exceptionally kind to you. After graduating from high school and going to college, I thought that Ban Yeo-ryeong and you would cut off on their own, and Yoo Chun-yeong would forget you as if you never existed."

"However?"

"Somehow, judging from the way the two are doing now, it doesn't seem like a one-time relationship that will pass by like that."

I bit my lip. In spite of the fact that Eun Ji-ho proved our relationship, it was something I should be happy about, but I was filled with anxiety as if I saw dark clouds approaching from the distant horizon.

Then Eun Ji-ho spoke again.

"It's difficult to date briefly before graduation. Those two won't let you go."

"So?"

"I told you earlier. That offer was withdrawn."

Eun Ji-ho tilted his head slightly and chined the entrance of the venue where Na Ye-ri had just entered.

"The girl you saw earlier is my fiancé. It's just been fixed yet. Her name is Na Yeri."

I raised my head as I clenched my fist so tightly that my fingernails dug into my palm. I glared at him coldly and shot him.

"Did you make that offer to me even though there was someone you were supposed to be engaged to?"

"I don't think you're talking about someone who likes me with someone I'm destined to be engaged to."

I tried to say that I didn't know that the relationship between him and Nayeri had progressed so far in this world, but I shut my mouth again. Now that my heart has not changed even after knowing that fact, there is no point in saying such things.

But, but... Biting my lips and lowering my head, I kept hearing Eun Ji-ho's words.

"And one more thing, Nayeri and I are only in a business relationship. We've already agreed that we won't even want an emotional exchange with each other. Didn't you just see how she treated me? Do you think that's what you do to someone you like?"

"....."

I still looked away and just threw my head away. Then Eun Ji-ho spoke again.

"Okay. Rather, Na Ye-ri is excited about the idea of living freely with a husband who is not interested in her. What kind of love and romance do you expect from a marriage between conglomerates? If it was above all else, I wouldn't be suggesting it to you. How badly you look at people."

Eun Ji-ho continued to speak to me, who was still lowering my head.

"It's not me that's the problem right now, it's your situation. No matter how much it is, I can't go out with a girl who is Ban Yeo-ryeong's best friend and who Yoo Chun-yeong likes. I have to choose between being prepared to be cut off by the two of them, or ending my engagement to Na Ye-ri and continuing to date you."

Around that time, Eun Jiho, who brushed his hair, concluded his words.

"There is no reason for me to choose you over Na Yeri. Is there anything you have that can be compared to Na Ye-ri?"

"....."

I stopped breathing at that moment.

Even for a moment, it seemed as if time had stopped. A wall suddenly formed between Eun Ji-ho and me, blocking not only his voice but also the bright light from the chandelier. Hearing nothing and seeing nothing, I fell into bottomless darkness.

I followed the words in a daze. Is there a single thing I have that can be compared to Nayeri?

No, of course there wasn't even one. And it was the same compared to Ban Yeo-ryeong.

So when I came to this world, I believed that I would be nothing more than a friend to the main character. So I believed that no one could love me, so I tried not to love anyone, especially you.

The reason why I couldn't escape from this world and brought me to another world like this was because I was nothing better than Ban Yeo-ryeong. I was afraid that one day I would get jealous and hate her.

And what pushed me to the point where I thought I wanted to disappear from this world was none other than the comparison of other people. Parents, teachers, and friends.

The moment the skewed phrases written on the rolling paper passed in front of my eyes, I came to my senses and returned to reality.

'A friend of Yeoryeong who is good at anything!'

'Let Yeoryeong go.'

Still, only you.

You're the only one who shouldn't say things like that.

I raised my head and looked ahead. Eun Ji-ho, who had changed his expression to worry before he knew it, was bowing his head close to me and asking.

"Are you alright? Why suddenly..."

"I get it."

"What?"

I said, wiping away the tears with the back of my hand.

"Now I understand. It's not you that I liked. It's someone else. Someone you don't know at all."

You from the previous world you don't remember... I muttered in my mouth, but there was no way he could understand what I was saying.

Rather, he asked with a resentful expression when he was worried.

"What is that..."

He spoke in a low voice.

"Just a moment ago, you shed tears when you saw me with Na Ye-ri, but now you don't like me? Do not be ridiculous. Lie enough."

"If you're not going out with me anyway, what does it matter who I like?"

Eun Ji-ho put on an expression of bewilderment as he saw me steadfastly fighting back while shedding tears. I spoke to him again.

"I've said it before, but this time it's real. Don't talk to me again. Don't come close to me. I'll avoid you first, so you avoid me yourself."

"Why all of a sudden....."

After cutting off his bewildered words, I continued.

"And the study meeting at your house, I won't do that either. I'll make an appropriate excuse, so you don't have to worry about making excuses. And, and..."

Out of breath as if I was running out of oxygen, I suddenly turned around and ran away. I heard Eun Ji-ho say something from behind, but I thoroughly ignored it.

Fortunately, I managed to get into the elevator before he caught up with me.

Pushing the lobby floor button with trembling hands, I opened the clutch again and muttered like a madman. I should leave a message for Yoo Chun-young saying I'm going first...

However, my attempts were unsuccessful. The moment I saw my face reflected on the black screen of my phone, I couldn't help but twist my eyebrows and shed tears again.

It's as Eun Ji-ho said. Between Nayeri and me, who would choose me? What is better about me compared to Na Ye-ri? Even the appearance that can be seen right in the eyes.

"Ugh..."

Not being able to sob, I struggled to suppress the moans that leaked out of my mouth, and as soon as the elevator reached the first floor, I jumped out.

At the same time, several groups of customers I encountered looked at me curiously, but they had no time to care.

It wasn't until I got out of the hotel where luxury cars were still crowded and came out to the side of the road that I was able to breathe a little.

After twelve o'clock at night, I casually sat down on a chair at a taxi stand with no people.

Then the tears poured down like rain.

"Ugh, heuk..."

Emotions were so intense that I felt as if they were not mine. There was a coexistence of me, who was sobbing without being conscious of the surroundings, surrounded by sadness, and another me, who looked at me calmly.

Another me asked calmly.

"Why are you crying? It's just a novel."

That's right. I spit it out through crying.

"This is just a novel..."

And I tried to rebuild the wall that had protected my heart until now.

As if picking out the stones to build a wall by hand, I chanted again the spells I had memorized to regain my judgment and calm myself whenever I faced absurd events in this world.

"Article 1 of the Law of Internet Fiction..."

The heroine does not know that she is pretty.

At that moment, Ban Yeo-ryeong's face came to mind, and a smile spread across her lips, albeit for a moment.

Not caring that anyone would look at me strangely, I spit it out again, laughing with my tear-stained face.

"Article 2 of the Law of Internet Fiction..."

That was for a while, but I soon gave up on it all. I couldn't remember how far I had counted the rules of Internet novels.

Why is it? Why? As I tousled my hair and pondered the reason, I soon realized.

Because it's been too long since I accepted this world as reality.

I couldn't help but think since when was it? Since when did I stop thinking about it when I was with them?

But they kept knocking on the door I was closing first.

Because I kept asking to get rid of what stood between me and them, the very rules of Internet novels that I had just recited.

So that I can regard them as people... To be able to accept this world as reality.

The process was obviously not easy. In the process, they were hurt too, and I was also hurt. If I add the tears they and I have shed, it will be worth it. Everyone was hurt and worked hard and barely managed to achieve it, but this is the place we reached at best.

While everyone else couldn't remember what happened to us, I was the only one who remembered everything. Now I can't even regard this world as a novel anymore, I have no place

to run to, I'm in a position where I have to take all the wounds with my bare body without walls or armor.

After being in a daze for a while, I spat out.

"This is too much."

I covered my eyelids and spit out again.

"This is really, it's too much..."

It was then.

Even in the middle of my mind, I still feel the gaze, so I finally turned my head and met a pair of eyes looking at me.

Apparently, a girl was sitting in the seat next to me that had been empty until just now.

Short brown hair, a round face and brown eyes, a face with nothing special about it.

Like me, she was dressed for a party and stared at me without blinking for a long time.

After staring at her for a while, I finally spat out.

"Choi Yu-ri...?"