



견견하지 못한 관계
나의 그녀와 그녀의 그녀의

1

최지인 지음
REUM 일러스트

The Indecent Relationship Between Four Lovers 나와 그 녀와 그녀와 그녀의 건전하지 못한 관계

Volume 1

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Credits



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나와 그녀와 그녀의 관계

1

최지인 지음



나는 공부를 사랑한다. 하루 종일 공부만 하면서 살고 싶다.
여자친구? 공부에 방해되니까 필요 없어.

그렇게 공부만 하면서 살아오다가 교통사고로 기억을 잃은 내 앞에 나타난 동급생 유유유.
아르바이트 후배 한가련. 여동생 안연희.

“내, 내가 네 여자친구라고! 키, 키스뿐만 아니라 그 이상도 했던 말이야!”
“선배하고는 이미 약혼한 상태예요. 어차피 결혼할 사이니까 일치감치 할 건 다 했죠.”
“나는 오빠하고 피가 이어져 있지 않아. 우리는 선을 넘은 지 오래야.”

공부벌레인 나한테 애인이 세 명이나 있었다고?!
내가 여자랑 연애 같은 걸 했을 리가 없는데 무려 세다리?!

자신이 진짜 여자친구라는 것을 증명하기 위해 끝없는 애정공세를 해대는 그녀들에게서
진실을 밝히는, 사랑과 거짓말의 수라장 미스터리 하렘 러브코미디, 전격 출간!

2012. 08. 01 발행



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물이므로 불법 복제와 스캔 등을 이용한 온·오프라인에서의 무단전재 및
유포·공유시 법적 제재를 받습니다.

나와 그녀와 그녀의 관계 1

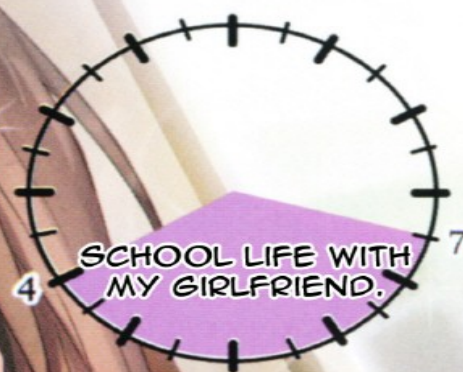
최지인 지음
REUM 일러스트







SCHOOL:
YU YUYU TIME



학교에 가는 오전 7시부터 오후 4시까지는 유유와 함께 보내는 시간이다. 유유는 내 동급생으로, 나하고 유유는 교내 커플이다. 매일 아침마다 함께 등교하고, 점심시간이 되면 다른 사람들은 모르는 둘만의 공간에서 오붓하게 같이 도시락을 먹는다.

CAFE:
HAN KA-RYEON TIME



알바를 하는 오후 4시부터 오후 9시까지는 가련과 함께 보내는 시간이다. 가련은 내 알바 후배이자 나와 장래를 약속한 약혼자다. 친언니인 점장님의 눈을 피해 나를 은밀히 놀려 대는 유혹적인 여자애이기도 하다.

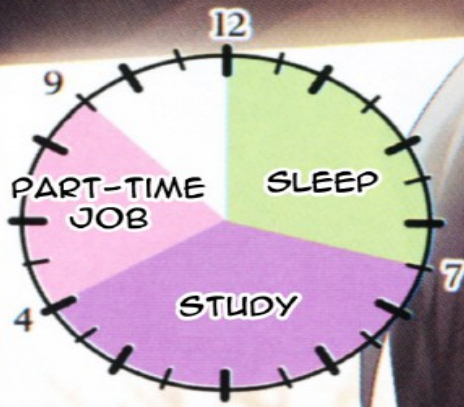


HOME:
AHN YEON-HEE TIME

RELAXATION
WITH MY LITTLE
SISTER.

집에 있는 오후 9시부터 다음 날 오전 7시까지 연희와 함께 보내는 시간이다. 연희는 내 여동생으로, 얼마 전에 나하고 피가 이어져 있지 않다는 사실이 밝혀졌다. 연희는 나에게 대한 마음을 고백했고, 그 이후 여러모로 어리광쟁이가 되어 버렸다.

AHN KYEONG-
HYUN'S DAILY LIFE



.....라는 것은 물론 사실이 아니다. 알바하는 시간을 제외하면 내 하루는 공부로 가득 차있다. 내가 가장 좋아하는 일이 공부이기 때문이다. 그런 내가 여자를 사귄 리 없다. 내가 세 다리를 걸쳤다니 결코 있을 수 없는 일이다. 진짜로.

Prologue – Cubic Equation

Have you ever listened to girls talking about their first time before?

Of course, the first time we're talking about here is not something like staying late after school to study, or drinking for the first time. No, it's meant as it is in a union of body and soul; that kind of first time.

"Y-You see... The first time we did th-that... It was in school..."

The one who spoke those words was the girl in a brown school uniform, sitting on a sofa. She had a round face, large brown eyes, and silky hair that flowed down over her shoulders. Although she had a petite frame, and an impression of a modest model student, her breasts, which made the top of her school uniform rise alluringly, were neither petite nor modest. Due to her slightly bent posture her breasts were compressed from both sides by her arms, and every time she moved, the contour of her blouse gently ruffled.

"It... It was in the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room, where we often meet up. Since it's now like a storage room that nobody uses anymore, we had been studying and talking together in there. And... You see... At that place..."

Her cheeks flushed pink as though she were embarrassed. Every time she rubbed her knees against each other restlessly, her short skirt began to ride up, exposing her soft, white thighs to a dangerous height.

"We were ki-ki-kissing, but then you suddenly held me tight in your arms. Even though I was surprised, I was a little excited, and before I knew it I was pressing my body against yours. S-So, I think I might have gotten you a-a-aroused."

For a normal high school boy, it would've been impossible to not react to those breasts pressing against him.

"I was taken aback, but I didn't d-dislike it, and I was a bit happy, so... I had told you it's okay to touch me if you wanted to, and then after that..."

The pink hue on her face even rose up to her ears.

"Ah, aah! I can't say any more than this! I'm ending it there!"

After saying that, she lowered her head to her chest. Perhaps embarrassed from her own recollection; the image of her quivering with her eyes closed shut reminded one of a small animal.

"Sunbae... The first time I was embraced by your warmth was at the café where we work together."

The next one to talk was a pure and elegant girl of a seemingly delicate constitution. As a beautiful girl who would certainly draw the attention of everyone if she were to walk down a street, her clear skin and her long, lightly coloured hair made her seem like a mystical foreigner from some other world. Dressed in a sky-blue uniform, her slim figure was impeccable, and her long, slender legs below her skirt were adorned in a pair of translucent, black stockings.

“That day, we were alone when there was a sudden power outage. Since we couldn't serve customers in the dark, we had closed the café, and were cleaning up... But halfway through, we had gotten into an argument with each other.”

Unlike the girl that had talked before her, she did not blush. She continued in a mellow voice with a mysterious smile on her lips.

“I ran off into the break room in anger, and you came chasing after me. When I asked you if you really liked me or not, you suddenly forced me against the wall and stole my lips.”

She gently touched her light pink lips.

The precocious allure of the girl, on top of her fragile appearance, created a strange ambiance around her.

“You probably couldn't control your actions because you were so angry with me, but I was still defiant, and that's when you got rougher with me.”

She closed her eyes, as though to recall her memories.

“In the end, while I was pinned against the wall, you... Ah! Any further description is dangerous, so I'll stop there. Anyway, that's what happened in my case.”

Brushing her hair behind her ears, she abruptly finished speaking. Even at the very end, she had not blushed even once.

“Oppa... The reason why you had laid your hands on me was because...”

The one to start her story after a few moments of still silence was a girl of small frame and a short, bobbed hairstyle. Although the two girls who spoke before weren't that big themselves, this girl was almost as small as a middle school— no, elementary school student. Her breasts were naturally flat, but she looked great in her black sailor suit school uniform that was quite a rarity in our country.

Even though she had an exceptionally beautiful appearance that provoked one's protective instinct, her expression was stern and her eyes were devoid of coquettishness; anybody could tell that she had a cold personality.

“You had caught me in a state of ecstasy, with my face buried in your underwear that I had just taken out of the washing machine.”

She said it expressionlessly as if it were nothing.

“Since you were always a clean person, they weren’t dirty and they didn’t smell bad, but... They still had your scent. That’s my secret hobby. Although it was a mistake getting caught by the actual person himself... Looking at the results, you could say that it turned out pretty well in the end.”

Saying those words, she nodded slowly. Swaying, her short black hair brushed delicately against her white cheeks.

“Unable to deal with the embarrassment, I’d made a commotion saying that I’d kill myself, and you frantically tried to calm me down. So I’d said, “Then let me see you in an embarrassing situation, too”.

As soon as those words had left her lips her white cheeks turned slightly pink.

“After I told you to drop your pants, I pushed you down on to the bed while you were helplessly confused, and then I...”

Although she was still expressionless and her voice monotonous, she couldn’t hide the slight shade of red on her face. Even so, she tried to continue the story, maintaining her composure.

“W-Wait a second!”

But at that moment someone shouted and stopped her from speaking— it was the girl in the brown uniform that had talked first.

“What do you want, Yu Yuyu?”

“Don’t call me that! A-And, you know... Don’t you think you’ve been reading too many weird comic books?!”

Having stood up from the sofa, she shouted at the short-haired girl sitting on the chair across the table.

“There’s no way that kind of p-p-perverted situation could happen in real life!”

“Perverted? Weren’t you the one who claimed that you did obscene acts in school? That’s a public place, you know? I think you’re the biggest pervert here. You’re number one in the World Pervert Ranking.”

“Number one?! N-No! This girl also said she did it in the café where she works! She should be number one, too!”



Pointing at the girl with long hair sitting beside her, she shouted.

“As the younger sister of the store owner, am I not free to use the place however I like?”

In response to the long-haired girl's rebuttal, the short-haired girl retorted coldly:

“Even so, the fact that you had done that in a place where it wasn't intended for such use is not something to brag about, Han Ka-ryeon. You should have done it at home like me.”

“I don't think that's something a little sister who has a hobby of rummaging through and getting off on her older brother's underwear should be saying. Especially when that little sister had so daringly threatened and assaulted her older brother when she was caught in the act.”

“We're not related by blood, so it's okay.”

“But you have no guarantee that is true. Isn't that right, Miss Yeon-hee?”

“Don't call me by that name without my permission. Are you suggesting that I'm lying?”

“It's an unrealistic story, no matter how you look at it.”

The short-haired girl frowned.

“No, the stories you two have told are unrealistic. It's unbelievable that you've done it at school, or at the store where you work.”

“It's true!”

“I've been thinking 'Wow, what a grand delusion for a virgin!' throughout this entire conversation.”

“It's not a d-delusion!”

The girl in the brown school uniform slammed on the table with her hands.

“We r-really did it! We did it even more times even after that!”

“Well, it seems we have a repeat offender; I should call the police right away.”

“We have decided on expulsion.”

“Ehh?!”

On the verge of tears, she looked around her surroundings, and then changed the focus to the long-haired girl.

“Y-You didn't even fight back when he was forcibly assaulting you like that? That's totally like r-rap...”

“He didn't forcibly assault me. It was just that he had an intense desire for me.”

“Th-That's just weird!”

“Isn't it one's personal freedom to date whomever one pleases? And since I'm his fiancée, I was prepared to accept him whenever and wherever he desired me.”

“Fiancée? What fiancée? You're still in your first year of high school.”

“It just means that we're that much more serious about our relationship than other people of our age.”

“Pretty words. In reality, isn't it just taking advantage of him sexually under the pretext of marrying him?”

“A-Anyway, they don't really bother me since I know that they're lies!”

It was when they were raising their voices:

“Look,”

Hearing the sudden voice, the girls closed their mouths.

Then they all turned around to the boy sitting on a chair that he had brought to the table.

“I've listened to your stories closely.”

The boy was wearing a pair of black horn-rimmed glasses. Partly because of his slightly wry face, he looked like he had a temperamental personality. Although he wasn't handsome, he had an intellectual appearance that was able to leave a favourable impression, depending on the person at least.

Looking still at the girls staring at him, he opened his mouth.

“Bigyeong High School, Second Year Class 6, Attendance Number 26, School Rank #2— Yu Yuyu. You said that you did it with your boyfriend at school...”

“Y-Yeah!”

“First year student at Eunyoung Girls High School, and a part-time employee at café “Saint”— Han Ka-ryeon. You said that you did it with your fiancée at your workplace...”

“That is correct.”

“First year student at an all-girls high school affiliated with the Jaran University College, who lives alone with her older brother— Ahn Yeon-hee. You said that you did it with your older brother, who you're not connected to by blood, at your home...”

“Yes.”

After taking a long look at the girls replying with nods, the boy hung his head low.

And then he slowly opened his mouth.

“You're all saying that boy in question is me?”

That voice sounded like a groan coming from beneath the depths of hell.

“Th-That's right, Glasses!¹ We're in the same class, remember? I'm the one who is your girlfriend!”

“Sunbae and I fell in love with each other while working together. We were so deeply in love that we promised to get married.”

“Oppa, we crossed that line after it was brought to light that we weren't connected by blood.”

Listening to the clamour of the girls, his hands and feet shook violently.

“So, as if it wasn't enough that was I three-timing, you're all saying that I'm the person that stole your innocence?”

As he muttered with a shaky voice, each of the girls raised their own voice.

“N-No! These other girls are lying! I'm your only girlfriend, and the only innocence that you stole was mine!”

“There's no way a person such as yourself would go around and chase other women unfaithfully. The only woman that you have embraced is me, your fiancée.”

“Don't worry, Oppa. I'm the one who took your virginity. I didn't hand it over to anyone else.”

Amidst their denials, the girls started glaring at one another to keep each other in check.

In an atmosphere where it felt like sparks would fly from the clash of their glances, the trembling boy sitting in his seat suddenly stood up.

“Don't joke with me...!”

Clenching his fists, the boy shouted.

“There's... There's...!”

Each with an expression of their own, the girls stared at the boy.

One with a frightened expression, the other with a composed expression, and the last with a puzzled expression.

“There is no way that I would've had a romantic relationship with a girl.”

He was right.

The three girls here knew that very well, too.

1 "Glasses" in Korean is "ahn kyeong (안경)", which is part of the main character's full name "Ahn Kyeong-hyun". In this case, I guess it's his nickname.

Normally, this boy wasn't someone who would do things such as going out with a girl. Of all the people the girls knew, there wasn't a single man who was as distanced from the idea of romantic relationships as this boy.

He had a task he must do, and there was no way that he'd do anything that would impede that task, such as dating. The girls were well-aware of that fact.

That was why the girls understood precisely how unbelievable the "memories" that they told him were until now.

"Because I.. I.."

Even while staring at the boy in front of their eyes, the girls continuously kept each other in check.

Each of the three girls were claiming that they had an intimate relationship with this boy. As long as the three of them were there, there was no way that any one of them would back off even one single step.

They couldn't afford to lose this boy.

"I must study...!"

Ahn Kyeong-hyun.

Bigyeong High School, Second Year Class 6, Attendance Number 3.

He was ranked number one in school on the first year's second semester's finals that were held last year.

Of course, before that he was ranked number one on the second semester's midterms and the first semester's midterms and finals as well. Even in middle school, he was ranked number one in school.

Officially approved by others as the swot of swots, he's a man whose greatest reward in life is obtaining high marks on tests.

When someone asked him, "Don't you want to get a girlfriend?" He's the one who responded, "I don't need one because she'll distract me from studying" with a disdainful look on his face.

But now, sitting before him are his three girlfriends.

The first girl is his classmate. A "school girlfriend" who claims that they are a "school couple".

The second girl is his junior at his part-time job. A “workplace girlfriend” who claims that she is his “fiancée”.

The third girl is his little sister. A “familial girlfriend” who claims that she is “not related to him by blood”.

Now begins the war of love between his three girlfriends, where surrender is not an option.

Chapter 1 - Girlfriend

A sunset in the sky.

An empty classroom.

A fresh breeze coming in through the window.

A girl standing still with her white dress fluttering in the wind.

“Personally, I find boys with poor grades disgusting, you know?”

And her cold voice.

In the midst of a suffocating sensation, I opened my eyes.

The piercing white fluorescent light and the white ceiling came into sight.

Before I could even ask myself where I was, I heard a voice beside me.

“Oppa!”

“Ugh...!”

My consciousness returned instantly with the sudden pressure to my chest.

As I looked down coughing, I saw a small figured girl burying her face in my chest, dishevelled her black bobbed hair. She wore a black school uniform that belonged to the nearby all-girls high school that was affiliated with the Jaran University College, which was known locally as Collegiate High.

She was someone I knew well.

“Yeon-hee...?”

Her name was Ahn Yeon-hee.

As my one and only little sister, she is the last remaining family member I have left.

“I... I really thought you were going to die! You weren't waking up at all...!”

“Ah... There, there.”

Although I didn't quite understand the current situation, I surmised something serious had happened from how Yeon-hee, one who normally had a cold personality, was in such a lachrymose state.

“So how did I end up like this?”

Looking around, I discerned that I was in a patient room inside a hospital, and that I was lying in a bed.

“Don't you remember, Oppa?”

Yeon-hee said, raising her head from my chest. I felt a little bad upon seeing how her pretty face had been smeared with tears.

“You were struck by a car... The doctor said you had no injuries or any abnormalities, but you have been asleep all this time... Unable to wake up.”

“Struck by a car?”

A traffic accident? I don't remember anything. Now that you mention it, it does kind of feel like my body is aching all over...

It didn't feel real, but I understood that Yeon-hee had been through a lot of heartache because of me.

“I'm sorry for making you worry.”

“It's okay. You've woken up safe and sound, and I'm happy with that fact alone.”

After saying those words, Yeon-hee once again buried her face in my chest. With a bitter smile, I patted her on the shoulder.

She really is the perfect little sister no matter how you look at her. Although I'm concerned about her slightly cold personality, she's an honest, well-behaved, and kindhearted girl who stays out of trouble. As her older brother, I'm happy that she has been worrying about me.

“By the way...”

Knitting my eyebrows, I turned my head to the side.

“Those two girls over here... Who are they?”

“Ehh?!”

“Oh my.”

These two girls have been standing beside the bed since you first got here.

One girl was wearing a brown school uniform from Bigyeong High School, the high school that I went to, and the other seemed like she was wearing a sky-blue uniform from Eunyoung Girls High School that was somewhere around this area.

“W-Wait! Glasses! Don't you recognize me?!”

The girl in the brown school uniform shouted in a pressing voice, but I had never heard that voice before, either.

“And who might you be...?”

“N-No way...”

Beside the girl who seemed shocked, the girl in the sky-blue uniform spoke in a serene voice:

“Maybe it's because he doesn't have his glasses on.”

It's just as she said. Right now, I'm not wearing my glasses that I usually have on me. Regrettably, since my eyesight is 0.1² on both sides, distinguishing people's faces without a visual aid is not an easy task.

She reached out her hand to the shelf atop of the bed, and then held her hand out in front of me.

“Here you go, Sunbae. Here's your actual body, here's your glasses.”

“What do you mean my 'actual body'?!”

“Oh my, I'm sorry... Your actual body is that king-sized Holy Sword Excalibur between your legs, right?”

“Who the heck are you?!”

Of all the people that I know, there's no one that would say such nonsensical stuff to me.

No, there is one person if I am being entirely honest... But since he's a boy, if that gentle voice I heard had come out of his mouth, that in itself would've been something quite surprising.

With those thoughts, I took my actual body—I mean my glasses... And put them on.

“Mm, okay.”

I felt on a much more steady footing now.

“As I thought, you feel stable now that you have re-combined with your actual body, right?”

“Yeah, being connected to my actual body definitely—wait a second, no! I haven't combined with anything!”

“I'm sorry, your actual body is that vicious Demonic Sword Stormbringer between your legs, right?”

“It's different from before?!”

To subdue my agitation, I looked at the two girls standing beside the bed.

2 0.1 is the decimal equivalent of 20/200 vision, which is classified as Severe Low Vision.

“So who are you...?”

Then I tilted my head sideways again.

“Wait, Oppa, weren't these people your acquaintances? One of the girls was the person who witnessed your accident and called for the ambulance.”

“No, this is my first time meeting them...”

“So, you have nothing to do with them?”

Yeon-hee raised herself up, and then stared intently at the two girls.

“Oppa, do you know what day it is today?”

“Huh?”

“It's Saturday, and it's 7 o'clock in the evening.”

I couldn't understand how that was of any importance, and continued to look at the three girls in front of me.

It was Saturday, yet they were wearing their school uniforms.

“Then why were they waiting for you to wake up, staying up all night without even thinking about returning to their homes? By the way, Oppa, you were struck by a car on a Friday afternoon, so that would be yesterday.”

I carefully looked at the two girls once again.

The girl from the same school as me seemed like she was of a gentle disposition. She wasn't wearing much make-up, but she didn't look dowdy or sloppy, either. The image of her looking this way with her flushed round face and anxiety-ridden eyes was adorable.

I looked down a little bit and, despite her petite frame, her considerably ample breasts came into sight, but they didn't have an ounce of uncomfortableness or vulgarity that was often associated with the term “huge boobs”. In every aspect, they were smooth curves that showed off her girlish charms.

The other girl beside her was of pure and elegant countenance with her lightly-coloured hair lying loose down her back. She had been smiling tenderly just moments ago, but now she was looking this way with an impassive look. Was it because of her composed nature? She had an overall ambiance of an adult, but her face itself was on the youthful side.

Due to her near pale white skin and slender body, she seemed to be of ill health at first glance. Even then, her pure, elegant, and tidy countenance made it feel as though it was part of her appeal. She was, so to speak, like a 'delicate maiden in convalescence' from old romance films.

"I'm sorry, but I honestly don't remember..."

It's not like they had such ordinary faces that one would easily forget, but I couldn't recognise them no matter how hard I tried.

"W-Wait!"

The girl from the same school as me raised her voice.

"It's me! Bigyeong High School, Second Year Class 6, Attendance Number 26, Yu... Yuyu!"

"Yuyu...?"

I was bothered how I stumbled over her name but, nevertheless I tilted my head sideways from how familiar her name sounded.

"Ah."

Yu Yuyu. I remembered.

I'd heard that name during the self-introductions in class at the start of second year, and it was a name I'd heard every day during attendance. To be honest, I still haven't memorized even half of my classmates' names, but I remembered her name because it was so unusual.

"Mm..."

However, her appearance was slightly different from what I remembered. Normally her fringe would have been concealing her face, but now that wasn't the case, and judging by my faint memory, I'm pretty sure her breasts weren't that conspicuous, either..

Could it be that she's using padded bras now?

"Wh-Why are you staring at my breasts like that?!"

Looking close to tears, Yu Yuyu crossed her arms across her breasts. Then the long-haired girl standing beside her spoke with a sigh:

"He was a person who remembered people by their breasts, after all..."

"I wasn't!"

"Even for men, you were remembering them by their breasts..."

"That's just going too far!"

I cleared my throat noticing Yeon-hee's glare from the side, then I turned to Yu Yuyu again.

"By the way... Have we spoken before?"

"Eh?"

She made a shocked face with eyes wide open, followed by one with mixed emotions. Then she lowered her head, nearly crying.

“A-Are you... Doing this on purpose...?”

“What?”

“D-Do you really dislike me that much...?”

I wondered what she was saying, but she closed her mouth after muttering those words. Unsure as to why she did so, I was about to open my mouth again when I heard a voice from beside her.

“Sunbae,”

She spoke with a serious expression.

“My name is Han Ka-ryeon. I'm a first year student at Eunyoung Girls High School. I currently work part-time at café 'Saint'. I'm your junior at your part-time job.”

“Saint?”

That certainly is the name of the café where I worked part-time, but only the manager and I worked there on weekdays with the manger's friends helping out on weekends. There wasn't any other part-timers...

“Han Chae-ryeon, the café manger, is my older sister.”

“Ah, come to think of it...”

I'd heard from the manager before that she had a younger sister. That she was going to have her help out in the shop once she graduates from high school...

“So you decided to work at the manager's shop from now on? By the way, have we met before?”

“...”

As I asked her, she looked at me with narrowed eyes.

Then she opened her small mouth and asked:

“Sunbae, what month and day is it now?”

“Pardon me?”

“Do you know what month and day it is today?”

I tilted my head sideways at the abrupt question.

“Let's see... The school's opening ceremony was last week, so if it's a Saturday now, probably it's March...”

As I was calculating inside my head, I heard Yeon-hee's voice beside me.

“Oppa, it's June right now.”

“What?”

At those unexpected words, I turned my head and looked at Yeon-hee's face.

“What are you saying? There's no way it could be June already... I mean, school only started a week—”

“Sunbae,”

I heard Han Ka-ryeon's voice speaking to me.

“It's the middle of June. School started back three months ago.”

“...?”

I couldn't comprehend what I was hearing.

“And it has also been three months since I started working at my sister's shop. You've taught me a lot of things during that time.”

Her cold voice continued to reach my ears.

“What the hell...”

“G-Glasses...”

At that moment, Yu Yuyu lifted her head and looked at me.

“I-Is that how it is, Glasses? Right now, you only have memories from around the time we started back at school?”

Yu Yuyu's eyes cast a forlorn gaze, reflecting her anxiety, disquiet, and despair from within.

Just with that look alone, I could tell our relationship was more than just mere 'strangers'.

“Then...”

I muttered in a shaky voice.

It was now June.

From the time between moving up to second year and now, three months' worth of my memory were completely gone.

"I have amnesia...?"

The plot device I'd seen in countless comic books and novels had actually happened to me.

I couldn't remember anything about how I had lived or what I had experienced until now. A sudden feeling of fear passed over me.

"Calm down, Oppa. It's fine, there's nothing else wrong with your body."

Hearing Yeon-hee's voice coming from beside me was the only thing saving me from falling into a state of panic right there.

"It's just the shock of not being able to remember certain things for the moment. We just have to ask the doctor to take a look at it later."

"Ah... Okay."

I was thankful of how Yeon-hee had talked so sedately to put me at ease, despite being surprised herself; what a sweet little sister I have.

After taking a deep breath to compose myself, I turned around to face Yu Yuyu.

"Sorry, um... Were we close?"

As I asked, she bit her lips and held her chest tightly.

"Don't you remember... Anything about me?"

"Sorry, all I remember is your name..."

"Even how I've always been chasing right after you as the eternal School Rank #2?"

"...Have you?"

I had no idea.

As I replied, her face became dejected with a great sadness.

"Even how we'd been eating lunch and studying together every day in the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room?"

"We have...?"

It was something I could hardly imagine. Leaving aside the lunch part, I'd studied together every day with another person?

"Th-Then..."

Speaking in a tremulous voice, she suddenly smiled. Unlike the expression of apprehension and discomposure she had before, it was a smile as lovely as to captivate my gaze subconsciously.

A lonesome tear trickled down her cheek.

“Even how we loved each other...?”

“...!”

My eyes opened wide at this sudden revelation.

What she was saying was different than before. Despite having no recollection of her, the earnest emotion within her voice penetrated deep into my heart.

Seeing I was dumbstruck with my mouth agape, she made a complicated expression for an instant.

Then smiling once more, she spoke as another tear fell.

“You don’t even remember the fact that... I’m your girlfriend?”

From the side, I heard the sound of Yeon-hee holding back a breath. As for me, I couldn't even manage to breathe.

'She's my girlfriend?!'

This girl who's crying before my very eyes right now... I was going out with her?

It's unbelievable. How did that happen? It'd make sense if it was somebody else, but me going out with a girl? There's no way...

“Then you probably won’t remember me, either.”

Paying no heed to the serious mood, Han Ka-ryeon daringly cut into the conversation.

“Sunbae,”

“Y-Yes?”

I replied without thinking. She looked at me and slowly sighed with an expressionless face.

Then staring at me motionlessly, she spoke without smiling nor crying:

“Sunbae and I have been going out.”

“...”

The patient room fell silent.

Before I could even understand the meaning of her words, she added in a serene voice.

“We promised our futures to each other... To put it plainly: I was your fiancée.”

Fiancée?

Fiancée... I've heard that word before... That's weird...

Yeon-hee, it seems like your older brother's had a bad head injury... The meaning of the word is confusing...

“W-Wait, wait! Just wait a second!”

Yu Yuyu, who's been listening to Han Ka-ryeon's story, raised her voice with a dazed look.

She hurriedly took out her handkerchief from her pocket and wiped away her tears in the blink of an eye, and then went at Han Ka-ryeon.

“Eh? Ehh? What kind of nonsense is that? You're saying you're his fiancée?!”

“Yes.”

“That's ridiculous! Getting married when you're still in high school?! You think your parents would approve of that?!”

“It doesn't mean that we'll get married while we're in high school... After all, it is an engagement in every respect.”

“That's not the problem...!”

“And I do not have any parents.”

“...!”

As though at a loss for words, Yu Yuyu stared at Han Ka-ryeon's face for a while, but then shook her head side to side and shouted again:

“An-Anyhow, it's just not possible! I don't believe it... Starting with how Glasses is even going out with a girl!”

“Oh my, didn't you also say you were going out with him, too?”

“Th-That's...!”

Unlike Yu Yuyu, who had a flustered look on her face, Han Ka-ryeon continuously maintained her calm attitude.

“In any case, it is true that Sunbae and I were in a relationship.”

“Bu-But Glasses has never mentioned this to me before...”

“Well, it is unusual to hear a man openly voicing that he's two-timing.”

While talking, Han Ka-ryeon turned her head.

“You see, I also hadn’t heard from Sunbae that he had a girlfriend at school, either.”

She said so with her eyes looking towards me. Following her, Yu Yuyu turned her gaze to me as well.

“Glasses...”

“Sunbae.”

The two girls stared at me expectantly awaiting a reply.

But I couldn't say anything to them.

“...”

Ah...

I'm sorry. Right now, I'm kind of having a mental collapse, so to speak...

At any rate, it's a situation where not a single word is able to come out of my mouth.

“Is she telling the truth? Were you really going out with her? Having gone as far as to get engaged?”

Yu Yuyu's tear-filled voice pierced my heart.

“Sunbae, were you really going out with this girl? Why didn’t you tell me?”

Han Ka-ryeon's scolding words shook my mind violently.

“Glasses!”

“Sunbae.”

Yeon-hee, press that button and call the nurse. I think I need to get my head examined.

Look, doctor, what do you mean I'm two-timing...?³

“I've had enough. I'm sick and tired of listening to your stories.”

What pulled me out of the morass of mental collapse was the cold voice coming from beside me.

“Oppa, just how long are you going to go along with this farce?”

It was Yeon-hee.

“Farce?”

“You actually believe what they're saying?”

3 An allusion to a 80s Korean drama series, Rustic Period. It's an over-used Korean meme.

Having got up off the bed, Yeon-hee seemed a little angry.

“Have you even forgotten who you are, Oppa?”

“What...?”

She told me, who was puzzled, right out:

“There's no way that a swot like Oppa would've had a romantic relationship with a girl.”

Afterwards, Yeon-hee directed her attention to Yu Yuyu and Han Ka-ryeon.

“Although I don't know how close you've been with my older brother, you would be aware of his personality if you'd spent time with him.”

Glaring at the two girls, there was a clear hostility within Yeon-hee's eyes.

“He never associates himself with anything that would impede his studies. Of course there's his part-time job, but that's something that can't be helped due to family circumstances, and he always makes plans for even the littlest of recreations or breaks. That's just how he is, but to say that he was romantically involved? Moreover... With two girls?”

In front of Yeon-hee, who was scoffing, the two girls couldn't say anything. They couldn't deny what Yeon-hee said.

'...That's right.'

It's nothing to brag about, but I, Ahn Kyeong-hyun, am a human being who loves studying the most.

I'm well aware that I'm a unique case, but it's just that I get the same pleasure from studying that other students get from games or sports.

To me, test scores and ranks are the same as experience points and levels inside a game. In most cases, players experience catharsis when they are able to defeat a powerful enemy that they were no match for. Similarly, I feel the same when I'm able to solve a problem that I couldn't previously solve.

I feel content when I perfectly memorise an English word and its meaning. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I solve an advanced applied question. For me, the greatest reward in life is getting high marks on tests.

That's why I put my heart and soul into studying every single day. Of course, it's not like I have my nose buried in a book all day nonstop, but my life is centred around studying in every respect.

I wouldn't do something so high-maintenance as romance. Sure, it might be different depending on how one dates, but there's no way socializing excessively with another person would help me with my studies.

And there's also that bad experience I had a long time ago... Anyway, I can't possibly imagine myself being romantically involved with anyone.

"Then... Are you suggesting that we are lying?"

As Han Ka-ryeon asked, Yeon-hee replied in a resolute voice:

"You are lying."

"Oh my, how blunt of you to say."

"Do you know why?"

Yeon-hee said with a confident attitude.

"Because not once did my older brother mention to me that he'd gotten a girlfriend. This is the biggest proof of all."

I held my breath after hearing her say that.

"My older brother wouldn't hide anything from me, so there's no way he'd have a girlfriend that I wasn't aware of."

Yeah, that's also right.

If I had gotten myself a girlfriend, I would have definitely told Yeon-hee about her, and I especially wouldn't have gone as far as to get engaged without consulting Yeon-hee.

That's because we're the only two remaining members of our family.

"That's because my older brother has severe sister complex."

"..."

...No, Yeon-hee.

It's true that I cherish you as my little sister, but if you put it that way it's somewhat...

Although I do love my little sister, I don't have a sister complex!

"Let me ask you,"

Yeon-hee spoke as though to push Yu Yuyu and Han Ka-ryeon, who seemed lost for words, into a corner.

"Do you have any evidence that you went out with my older brother? Even a witness would be fine."

But Yu Yuyu and Han Ka-ryeon just kept their mouths closed, not saying a word.

"You don't, do you?"

To Yeon-hee's anticipative words, Yu Yuyu opened her mouth, flustered.

“That's... That's because it's not like we went around telling people that we were dating...”

“I don't have any proof... It's not like we signed a contract, and I haven't really told anybody about our engagement yet, not even my older sister.”

Said Han Ka-ryeon, shaking her head slightly.

“If we were talking about a normal person, showing one's cellphone would have been acceptable as evidence. However, Sunbae is not the kind of person to carry a cellphone.”

She was right. I don't own a cellphone which everyone seems to have nowadays. It's a hindrance to my studies and I don't particularly need one.

But I got one for Yeon-hee since she'd be the only person I'd call anyway. I've been contacting her through public telephone whenever the situation arose.

“Even on the answering machine back home, there were never any messages from someone like my older brother's girlfriend.”

“Then, Yeon-hee, why would these girls...”

Their stories are certainly unbelievable, but then why would they lie about us being romantically involved? Isn't that just unnatural?

“Who knows? If it's not the case that they're playing a practical joke on you, then they probably have ulterior motives.”

“Ulterior motives...?”

“For example, to steal our inheritance.”

At that comment, Han Ka-ryeon let out a small gasp.

“That's such a horrible thing to say.”

“For the record, although it's true that we received our father's inheritance, its amount is only enough to cover our tuition and living expenses until we graduate from high school. That's why my older brother is working part-time and you won't get much profit even if you tried to swindle it from us.”

No, Yeon-hee, I think that's quite a considerable amount of money to a high school student.

“And you, didn't you say you're ranked second in your school? Then if my older brother's grades drop, you would be able to take first place.”

“W-Wait...!”

Seeing Yu Yuyu's face turning ashen, I immediately raised my voice:

“Yeon-hee, aren't you being too harsh h—“

“You stay out of this, Oppa.”

Yeon-hee said in a sharp voice.

“It's because you wander around like a klutz that you get yourself embroiled with these weird girls.”

A klutz...?!

Yeon-hee just called me a klutz!

I was shocked to hear those words from my little sister, whom I always tried to be a role model for as her older brother. Meanwhile, Yeon-hee continued:

“There's of course the possibility that you're really my older brother's girlfriend, but as long as you have no proof, treating you like one is out of the question.”

“That's...”

Yu Yuyu was trying to say something, but Yeon-hee paid no attention to her and continued talking:

“But before anything else, right now my older brother is suffering from amnesia from a car accident. The one who has it the hardest is my older brother.”

Surprised by Yeon-hee's words, Yu Yuyu closed her lips. Han Ka-ryeon's expression darkened also.

“Don't cause any further confusion for my older brother. If you want to talk, do so when he has regained his memory.”

After Yeon-hee spoke in a serious voice, the discourse came to an end with complete silence.

Having taken a shower, I trudged back to my room.

I sat on the familiar chair, then I leaned back and sighed.

“Fuu...”

What greeted me when I returned home after taking care of the formalities for my discharge from the hospital was a front door that was a bit different from what I remembered. There was also a pair of shoes and a flowerpot that I hadn't seen before. Even the bathroom I went into to wash myself had small changes here and there. I once again realized there had been flows of time that I couldn't remember.

The appearance of my room was no exception to this feeling, either: the desk and chair placed opposite to the door; the bookshelf placed on the right; the bed placed on the left; the wardrobe right beside the door... The arrangement hadn't changed, but still it didn't feel the same in many places.

“Three months went by, huh...”

I slowly looked around my room.

The desk was organised so that I could use it easily. A stainless steel pencil case holding ball-point pens and highlighters of various colours, pads of post-it notes in different sizes, and a personal organiser with a week's study plan written on it...

The bookshelf standing next to the desk was fully packed with reference books, workbooks, binders with printouts, and notebooks. I could also see a basket with vocabulary memorization notepads. There was also a section with novels and comic books, but their numbers were few.

My own personal space that I'd optimised for studying. Although it was a familiar place, I noticed there were pens and books that I hadn't seen before. Time had definitely passed here, none of which I could remember.

“A girlfriend...”

Now that I was conscious of the three months I'd forgotten, I recalled the two girls, Yu Yuyu and Han Ka-ryeon, who had each claimed to be my girlfriend.

Yeon-hee had said they were lying, but to tell the truth, it didn't seem like they were lying at all.

Of course I can't believe their stories just as they are, and though I was honestly hoping that they were lies... I thought they must have had their own reasons even if they were lying.

“And if they weren't...”

One of the two girls might actually be my girlfriend, or even both.

If so, their hearts must be burning with anxiety; not only has the boyfriend that they've been dating forgotten about them, but now there was also another girl claiming she was going out with their boyfriend, too.

Upon imagining their anguish, a small pang of guilt struck me. Of course it didn't feel real to me since I had amnesia, however I thought I should apologise if that really was the case.

But as I was pondering, it was also occurred to me that such a case would be way too unrealistic.

“That's right... Why would these girls want to go out with someone like me?”

Besides studying, I had no particular interests at all.

I don't watch television, and I don't follow who recent celebrities are, or what songs are top of the charts these days, but that doesn't mean I read a lot, either. I don't have an active personality, or a particularly interesting sense of humour, either. Just what would be so great about dating this kind of guy?

It's difficult to judge, but I don't think of myself as being particularly good-looking. As for my hair, the local barber has been cutting it as he pleased every month for as long as I can remember, and I don't remember having particularly cared about my appearance. Of course, I'd picked my actual body—I mean, my glasses—with considerable attention to detail. Anyway, I think it's impossible that they would be enamoured by my looks.

“Those girls...”

I recalled the images of those two girls I'd seen in the patient room.

Contrary to her old impression of seeming dreary, Yu Yuyu was a pretty girl. The heartrending image of her smiling sadly at me was still vivid in my mind, and moreover she was... Very well-endowed.

And Han Ka-ryeon was a delicate, beautiful girl that appeared as if she had come straight out of a work of fiction. If she has started working part-time at the café, I reckoned there ought to be quite a number of customers now who would visit the café if only to see her.

For such girls to be interested in me is a far stretch from reality. Then again, it could be that they're not really dating me out of romance...

“Okay...”

After a chain of thoughts, I have come to conclude the following:

The current situation is awfully complicated and unclear. I should not make a rash judgement.

Then...

“Oh well, I'll just have to think about it after my memory comes back!”

I erased all the thoughts of the two girls that has been lingering in my head until now.

It's not like worrying will solve anything, and like Yeon-hee said, everything will be fine if I just wait for my memory to return. Who knows? Maybe a shred of evidence will appear in the meantime that might cast a clearer light on our relationship.

So all I have to do is to just forget everything and take it easy with what I must do.

What is it that I must do, you ask?

“Fuu...”

Feeling that I was getting a little excited, I took a deep breath.

But my body kept itching, like a drug addict experiencing the symptoms of withdrawal.

“Fuu... Stay still... My right arm...”

I grabbed and held back my shaking right arm with my left hand. It was obvious that it has been starving since my stay at the hospital.

“Because I'm about to get started...!”

Yes!

Studying!

I can study now!

Yahoo! Studying is the best!

“I've spent the whole day confined to my bed, which means I'm a day behind with my studying...”

I muttered to myself with my eyes sparkling.

When I usually return home from school I do an overall review of what I studied at school that day in class... Alongside what I personally studied during recess and lunchtime. After that, I start studying according to the study schedule I made by the week, month, and semester.

If I had an accident on Friday night, then it meant I couldn't have gotten any studying done that day at home.

“Since it's already late into the night and tomorrow's Sunday, I should get the studying that I should have done on Friday finished by tomorrow.”

Because there are cases where I'm unable to study due to being under the weather, I always leave the weekend free whenever I plan my schedule. On weekends I usually go over the notebook with the wrong answers I got on the test again, or answer questions on the mock exam by myself, or study freely with no regard to the schedule. If I wasn't able to work on my studies for Wednesday, then I'd find the time to do it on Saturday or Sunday.

“Okay, first let's get started...!”

I promptly moved my left hand and opened the top drawer of the desk. That was where I stored the sheets of binder paper I used for reviewing.

At the same time I reached out my right hand, and from the bag I'd placed underneath the desk, I took out the stuff that I should have studied on Fri—

“...?”

I stopped moving; my left hand felt something unfamiliar.

The hand that I've just put in the drawer should have taken out A4-sized sheets of hole-punched paper from the inside, but my fingers had bumped into a hard object and stopped.

“What is this?”

I absently looked inside the drawer, then realised what I had touched was a small paper box.

“...”

Sitting still, I held the box in my hand and looked at it.

Then after I'd placed it on the desk, I stared at it with my arms crossed.

“...”

After a while, I opened the box with my trembling hands and placed its contents on the desk.

It just looks like some vitamin supplements—was what crossed my mind.

Inside the square wrappers made of opaque plastic, each section contained something round.

I wasn't so naive as to not recognise what it was, because we learnt about them in school.

“Why is this in my...”

I muttered to myself as if groaning.

Th-This is...

“This is a con—”

I stopped halfway into the word, lest Yeon-hee would hear it outside my room.

There's no mistake about it though, this... This is your most typical contraceptive device.

“Moreover...”

It said it was a pack of ten on the box, but there were only seven inside.

If three of them were gone, then that meant...

“Oppa.”

“?!?!”

Startled by the voice I heard behind my back, I jumped to my feet from the chair.

As I turned around trying to conceal the desk, I saw Yeon-hee standing there with a tray of bread and milk. It seemed she had silently entered my room.

“Yeo, Yeon-hee?! Wh-Why are you—?!”

“You haven't had anything to eat, so I thought you'd be hungry...”

Noticing my awkwardness, Yeon-hee stared at me with a suspicious expression on her face.

But I couldn't let Yeon-hee see what was on the desk. I had to block her view at all costs...!

“Step aside.”

“Ah...!”

Without any hesitation, Yeon-hee pushed me out of her way.

“...”

Then she saw those ‘things’ on the desk.

“Th-This isn't what you think it is, Yeon-hee. Um, you see...”

Yeon-hee stared at those ‘things’ with ice-cold eyes. Feeling fear from her, I tried to somehow explain myself, but I couldn't even begin to fathom as to how as I had no memory of buying nor using using them.

Eventually, Yeon-hee put down the tray she was holding on the desk. She stood still silently. Frightened by her eerie behaviour, I stepped backwards without even realising it.

“.....I see.”

Yeon-hee gently raised her head and turned towards me, slowly drawing closer.

“Yeon-hee? What's wrong...?”

My legs that were backing away from Yeon-hee hit the edge of the bed.

Whereupon Yeon-hee stretched out her arms toward me.

“Ah...!”

Then, pushed by Yeon-hee, I fell back on to the bed.

Lying on the bed clueless, I was left speechless by the action Yeon-hee took right afterwards.

“...!”

She mounted on top of me. With her hands next to my head leaning over, our eyes met.

It was an abnormal position that a typical sibling would never do.

“.....I was going to stay quiet until you had regained your memory, but it looks like it can't be helped.”

“Yeo... Yeon-hee?! What are you doing?!”

Taken aback by my awkward position, I quickly tried to push her away.

“Oppa,”

However, Yeon-hee's cold voice stopped my course of action.

“This is the kind of relationship we have, though you may not remember.”

“Huh...?”

Due to the provocative position, an indecent thought flashed through my mind.

“This kind of relationship? What is that supposed to...”

“The kind you're thinking of right now.”

“What...?”

When I stared vacantly at Yeon-hee's face, unable to comprehend, a cold voice flowed out from her lips.

“I'm not related to you by blood. It's been quite some time since we first crossed that line..”

I was shocked to the core.

“Wh-What are you talking about? We're...”

“Yes, we've always thought that we're just 'half-siblings', but in actuality I wasn't our dad's daughter, and I wasn't related to you by one single drop of blood.”

“Just what happened those past three months?!”

This was a major event that I'd never even thought of during the 16 years I had lived as her older brother.

“I've liked you since I was young, so I pounced on you without hesitation when I realised there were no more obstacles.”

“Why didn't you hesitate?! You're supposed to hesitate!!”

“Let's get started, Oppa. I've been holding back since yesterday—I'm at my limit now.”

“It's that much of an everyday occurrence?!”

There's no way my little sister could be this erotic!

“W-Wait, Yeon-hee! What has gotten into you?”

Struggling, I tried to get up from the bed, but it proved futile as Yeon-hee was sitting on my lower abdomen, holding me down by the wrists... She was unexpectedly strong, and my body was still weak from the hospitalisation.

“Not only are you a hard-working, model student, but you even used to be a student council president back in middle school due to your popularity. What's more, you are a proper girl who has never once went astray and caused any trouble despite growing up without parents. You're a mysophobe with a dislike for boys, who has turned down countless confessions. There's no way you would do something like this!”

“You were really turned on when you found out your little sister was actually a lewd girl burning to be embraced by her older brother.”

“Ah, I want to kill him. I want to kill my former self from three months ago...!”

Never before in human history has there been a more dire need of a time machine than right now.

“This is the real reason why I was able to come to the conclusion that you couldn't have gone out with those girls back in the hospital.”

With those words, Yeon-hee brought her face closer to mine. Her black hair flowed down and brushed against my face.

“The one who is your girlfriend is me, Oppa. Even those 'things' on the desk were used with me. ...There's no way you'd go out with other girls when you're under these circumstances.”

“That's...”

I swallowed my saliva.

If Yeon-hee's words were true, then this is a quite a serious issue.

It was revealed that two siblings who lived interdependent of each other without their parents weren't actually related by blood, and with the older brother accepting his little sister's feelings for him as a man, they become united in love. Assuming this is true, then Yeon-hee and I would have went through great agony and internal conflicts in the process. However, though we're adolescent teenagers in the full flush of youth, we wouldn't have just indulged in our desires thoughtlessly.

I would have certainly taken the responsibility for Yeon-hee. No, I must have. If what I'd done was nothing more than an indiscriminate impulse, then I really deserve to die.

Under those circumstances, it's impossible that I would have wandered around outside, dating another girls.

“You're mine... I won't hand you over to anyone else.”

“Yeon-hee...”

Rendered motionless by the sight of her desperate eyes gazing at me, I could only feel the warmth and faint trembling from her buttocks.

“Oppa...”

Calling me, Yeon-hee untied the scarf on her uniform. As she subsequently unfastened the button hidden inside the collar, her blouse came undone and revealed her lily-white skin. Then, further below, a light pink lace...

“S-Stop right there!”

“...!”

Suddenly, I heard a sharp voice.

Both Yeon-hee, who was lowering her body towards me, and I, who was immobilised, turned our heads and looked to the direction where the voice had come from.

Standing there was a person I didn't expect to see.

“Wh-What in the world are you two doing?! How could a brother and sister do th-th-that kind of thing?!”

Having entered the room, Yu Yuyu stood there with her face turning red with outrage. Behind her, I saw Han Ka-ryeon with a troubled expression on her face.



Wait a minute, this is our house... Why are they in here?

“You girls, how did you get...”

“I heard strange noises when I was about to press the doorbell from outside... I came in to check what was going on, but you guys were doing this kind of thing!”

Yeon-hee and I live in an old apartment house with access corridors. Because my room's window is situated on the corridor side, there were times where I would hear noises from the hallway.

Then the noises from my room would leak outside as well. Were they eavesdropping on our conversation before they rushed in?

No, that's not the problem here...

“You're trespassing. How did you get in through the door?”

Yeon-hee asked, grimacing. Um, Yeon-hee, could you get off me now? People are looking..

“Oh my, have you forgotten that I am his fiancée?”

Han Ka-ryeon then raised the small object in her hand and jingled it.

“I have a key, you know.”

“...!”

With a surprised expression, Yeon-hee stared at the key in Han Ka-ryeon's hand.

Likewise, I was surprised too. I can't see it clearly because it's far away, but it's probably a house key just like the one Yeon-hee and I have.

Why does she have a key to our house...? Don't tell me she's really my fiancée?!

“Oppa...”

“I... I don't know anything about that at all!”

Although Yeon-hee gave me a glare filled with a sense of betrayal, I had nothing I could say as I had no memory of ever making a copy of the key for Han Ka-ryeon.

If she had the key, does that mean she had been frequenting our house this whole time? Then surely Yeon-hee would have known.

“Anyway, hurry up and get off him already! How long are you two going to stay in that in-in-incestu—unwholesome position?!”

“It's not incestuous since we're not related by blood. Weren't you listening in outside?”

Yu Yuyu yelled pointing her finger, but Yeon-hee only gave a scoff of laughter in response. Rather, she lowered her body and completely laid herself on top of me. Th-This was way too close for comfort!

“As you can see, we have this kind of relationship, so there's no room for you to interfere. Even if you were really going out with my older brother, in the end he only went out with you to pass the time and nothing more. I'm his real lover.”

With her mouth hanging wide open, Yu Yuyu looked at Yeon-hee, who was pressing her body against mine as though to show off her relationship with me. Han Ka-ryeon giggled, and then in a silvery voice said:

“Oh, then we're very much alike.”

“What...?”

As Yeon-hee looked at her with a frown, Han Ka-ryeon smiled and said:

“I'm already engaged to you, Sunbae. We already did everything newlyweds would do since we're to get married anyway.”

I beg your pardon...?

“Wh-wh-what...?!”

Stammering in a shrill-like voice, Yu Yuyu looked at Han Ka-ryeon. but Han Ka-ryeon was simply smiling softly.

“Whoever had the true physical connection with him is his real lover.. If that is the case, then the same goes for me, as I have devoted my body and my heart to him.”

“H-Hey... You're just joking, right?”

Waving her beautiful hair, Han Ka-ryeon shook her head as I asked in a shaky voice.

“My, my... How could you say such a thing? I'm heartbroken. You have to take responsibility for whispering all kinds of dirty things in my ear with your innocent face and fierce lust for me.”

Who is this person? Just who the hell is are they talking about?! It couldn't be me!

“J-Just what in the world are you two saying?! H-How indecent...!”

Now with glistening tears in her eyes, Yu Yuyu shouted with an expression of disbelief.

“Then what about you?”

“Eh... Me?”

“You're not planning on saying that you're also in an intimate relationship with him too, are you?”

Yu Yuyu flinched from Han Ka-ryeon's narrowed stare.

“Judging by your reaction... You haven't even had your first kiss yet, have you? That figures, considering how you're saying the relationship between a boy and a girl born from love is immodest...”

With her body shaking all over, Yu Yuyu seemed like she was on the verge of bursting into tears.

“Yu Yuyu...?”

Seeing her in a disquiet state, I called out to her involuntarily.

But at that moment, with her face flushed red, she raised her head.

“I-I'm the one who is your girlfriend! W-We also did more than just kissing!”

And that was what she yelled.

“Wh-Why do I have to say these embarrassing things in front of other people?! Aren't they supposed to be private and kept as secrets just between two lovers?!”

Yu Yuyu spoke in a tearful voice, giving me a resentful glare.

“I didn't know you were such a playboy, Glasses! How could you do this to me? I trusted you...!”

“Yu Yuyu...”

“Don't call me that! I told you to call me Yuyu!”

As though she was unable to endure her overwhelming emotions, Yu Yuyu lowered her head and buried her face in her hands.

I wanted to say something to her, but I was at a complete loss as to what I should say.

'Just who on earth was I...?'

Was it true? Was I really a playboy who went around wooing these three girls...?

“Don't be fooled, Oppa.”

What snapped me back to reality was once again Yeon-hee's cold voice.

“These girls are lying so that they won't lose to the relationship I have with you.”

Having already gotten off me, Yeon-hee was glaring at Yu Yuyu and Han Ka-ryeon.

“Can't you trust yourself, Oppa? You wouldn't go around and do these kinds of immoral acts. These girls are just being ludicrous.”

“My, my... You're not free from the burden of suspicion either, Miss Yeon-hee.”

“What do you mean...?”

As Yeon-hee frowned at her, Han Ka-ryeon covered her lips with her hand and smiled.

“It could be that you're lying to try to sever the relationships we have with your older brother because you don't want him to be taken away.”

“Why would I do something like that?”

“Because even at first glance, you seem to have a serious case of a brother complex.”

With frigid eyes Yeon-hee glared daggers at Han Ka-ryeon who was speaking serenely.

“G-Glasses... Is that true?”

Yu Yuyu, who was listening to the conversation, looked at me with a desperate expression on her face.

“You don't actually have a relationship with these two, right? That's what it is, right? You're not that kind of person, right?”

There was an earnest hope in Yu Yuyu's voice.

But I had nothing to say, I couldn't remember anything.

“We do have a relationship. At the very least, I'm his younger sister, so I'm in an entirely different relationship than you girls by that fact alone. Plus, I even have a physical relationship with him as his non-blood related little sister. To him, I'm his only number one as well as his only one.”

“That is just your opinion. I'll have you know at once that I'm already engaged to be married to him as his fiancée. Our bodies and hearts are connected and we have promised our futures together— I will not back down.”

“B-Be quiet! All of you! Glasses is not a promiscuous person! There's no way that he has done those l-l-lewd acts with you! He's the kind of person who would only do those things to the girl he cherishes, wh-which would be me!”

I don't know what is what anymore.

Engulfed in exhaustion, I weakly muttered:

“Let's first move to the living room and talk there. Other tenants can hear us from outside, and I wouldn't want some weird rumour to start spreading...”

We have a good reputation with our neighbours as two strong siblings living by ourselves, and rumours will start spreading from tomorrow that our home is this apartment complex's hidden Sodom and Gomorrah.⁴



After all the shouting, I was spent.

“Haah...”

Heaving a long sigh, I sat down on the chair that I brought through from the kitchen with a thump, then I wearily looked around.

“...”

Yu Yuyu and Han Ka-ryeon were sitting on the sofa in the living room, and Yeon-hee on another chair that had been brought through from the kitchen. All of them had their eyes on me with equally studious glares.

They were the girls who had candidly confessed all sorts of stories... Even their first times, to prove that they were my real girlfriends.

“...Okay, I've made my decision.”

“A decision?!”

“What kind of decision is it?”

“Oppa...?”

Feeling their tense gazes upon me, I took a deep breath and said:

“Let's break up.”

The eyes of the three girls opened wide.

“Yu Yuyu, I am sorry, but I don't think I'll be able to study and eat lunch with you at school anymore.”

“G-Glasses...!”

“Han Ka-ryeon, I apologise if I had really made that irresponsible promise to marry you.”

4 A biblical reference to the two ancient cities that were destroyed by God for their sexual depravity.

“Sunbae...”

“Yeon-hee, even if we are really not blood relatives... We are still brother and sister; we are still family.”

“Oppa...”

I raised my voice at the girls staring at me with various expressions on their faces:

“Let's break up! We'll completely sort out our relationships here and now, and then go our separate ways!”

That's right, I'll just end it here!

“It will only be hassle for me to continue dating any one of you when I'm still suffering from amnesia! Let's go our separate ways now! Let's just end it here altogether!”

“G-Glasses! Don't you think that's being a bit cruel after you have messed around with the innocence of all these girls...?!”

“But I can't even be sure if I have messed around with them or not!”

There's no way I could treat all three girls as my girlfriends when I don't even know which one is my real girlfriend!

I must study! And there's no way in hell I can do that if I had three girlfriends!

“B-But it could be true! You have to take respons—”

“Okay, I understand.”

At that moment, Yeon-hee cut in.

“I respect your decision if that's how you want to settle this matter, Oppa. If you completely break off your relationships with these two girls, I'll give up on you as well. It pains my heart, but there's nothing I can do.”

“Yeon-hee...”

That's my little sister for you!

I was moved, however Yu Yuyu was now glowering at Yeon-hee.

“You're thinking of seducing him again after you've kicked us out, aren't you? Even if we break off our relationships with him, you'll still be living with him anyway.”

“It seems your head is as full of fat as those breasts of yours, Uyu⁵.”

“It's Yuyu! And don't you think you're crossing the line with your words?!”

5 'Uyu' is Korean for 'milk'. We all know where milk comes from, right?

"You're the one who's crossing the line. Unlike some pervert who does lewd things at school, I know how to control myself."

"D-Don't talk as if I'm some sort of a nymphomaniac! I know how to control myself, too!"

Yu Yuyu shouted with her face flushed red, but Yeon-hee merely scoffed in return.

"Okay, then we'll settle this as th—"

"H-Hold on a second!"

I tried to close the conversation, but Yu Yuyu cut me off, once again raising her voice.

"Don't you want to regain your memory? I think your chances of suddenly regaining your memory will be higher if you're together with us!"

"Honestly... I don't think I need to regain all my memory right now. It'd be nice if I do regain it, but I think it can't be helped if I don't."

"...!"

Of course, it's not easy having amnesia, but... Judging from the current situation, I reckon it'll only become more troublesome as I regain my memory.

"But Sunbae,"

At that moment Han Ka-ryeon, who had kept silent until now, opened her mouth.

"I think it'd be better for you to regain your memory as fast as we can make it possible.."

"No, I do think it'd be better for me too..."

But it can't be helped since there's really no known easy-fix for memory loss and amnesia.

I shook my head from side to side thinking such thoughts, but at that moment Han Ka-ryeon said something at a complete tangent to what we had been focussed on before:

"There's a national mock examination this Friday. Sunbae, you've made plans in preparation for that mock exam and have been studying since time immemorial."

"...What?"

I blinked my eyes at the unexpected development.

Let's see, if it's June now, then the National Achievement Test is probably...

"However..."

Staring straight into my eyes, Han Ka-ryeon asked:

"I have a question for you: do you remember what you have been studying for the past three months?"

For a moment, I couldn't think of anything.

"What I have... Studied?"

"Well, Sunbae, do you remember? The materials you were studying according to your schedule like you usually do?"

Her relentless questions kept pouring in.

"The materials you methodically studied so that you would be able to take the mock exam with every subject covered, do you remember?"

"Glasses..."

I could hear Yu Yuyu's trembling voice.

"No way... Your memories of studying are gone, too?"

"O, Oppa..."

Yeon-hee looked at me with her eyes wide open.

"..."

I couldn't say anything.

Instead, I slowly slid down off my chair. Kneeling, I laid face down with both hands on the floor.

"My older brother is utterly distraught...!"

"Sunbae, although you can't remember, I'm sure you can imagine just how much three months of studying amounts to."

My whole body was shaking like crazy... Compared to my disbelief over the story of my three-timing, I had never felt so devastated and helpless.

"Having forgotten all your studying must be a serious matter for you, far more than your forgotten memories about us. After all, your obsession for studying is beyond description."

"Th-That's right. Glasses was the kind of boy whose obsession with studying seemed almost perverted in a way... I heard other girls from our class talking about it the other day. Saying that Glasses is a pervert who is so nuts about studying that he p-pleases himself while watching Internet lectures instead of adult videos..."

"Wh-What the hell are you saying...?!"

I involuntarily jumped out of my seat.

“Who is it?! Just who has been spreading those rumours about me?!”

I do what while watching video lectures?!

“I’ve always thought it was strange because there was nothing on your computer no matter how I searched... Could it be that you’ve been pleasing yourself while watching Internet lectures, Oppa...?”

“O-Of course not! In every way, your brother is...”

“Sunbae.”

Han Ka-ryeon's spoke to me in her serene voice.

“You have mentioned to me before that this mock exam, which will be conducted on a large scale, is a very important exam. That it is the perfect opportunity to check if what you've studied has definitely become part of your intelligence, and to confirm for sure what rank you are within the country.”

“Th-That's right. Although I've also been more concerned about the mock exam this time since it's on a far larger scale than previous ones, Glasses, you've been absorbed in your studies to a frightening extent lately.”

“But, Oppa, if you were to take the mock exam this time with the last three months of your memory completely gone...”

I came over faint imagining the worst-case scenario in my mind.

I was about to fall on the floor again, but I mustered my strength and sat back on the chair.

“Then... What should I...”

I muttered in a shaky voice.

“There is only one thing that you can do, Sunbae.”

Han Ka-ryeon's serene voice reached my ears.

“And that is to accompany us and endeavor to regain your memory. We'll do the same things we have done as lovers until now and try to recall who your real lover was and which relationship is real. If your memory returns to you in doing so, then what you have studied should also come back to you.”

“Th-That's...”

“This is the only method I can think of that could increase the possibility of you recovering your memory.”

L-Let's see...

If I redo the things I did during these past three months, it could lead to the recovery of my memory, huh... Sounds about right...

“B-But I have to study and—“

“Sunbae, let’s say starting now you studied non-stop without sleep until the day of the exam, it would still be impossible to catch up the three months of studying you lost. Even if you don't study for a few days, all you have to do is to recall what you have studied.”

“Urgh...”

Han Ka-ryeon rose to her feet from the sofa and drew closer me, and then grasped my right hand.

“Now then, come here you two.”

As Han Ka-ryeon waved her hand, both Yu Yuyu and Yeon-hee stood up awkwardly and came closer to me.

“Miss Yeon-hee, you embrace him from his back.”

“...Like this?”

“Miss Yu Yuyu, you cling on to his left arm. Yes, like that.”

“Don't call me that! By the way... What are we doing...?”

Yeon-hee hugged me from behind with her arms around my neck. Small waves of her breath tickled my ear.

Yu Yuyu is clinging on to my left arm as though she's hugging me with her arms, and I can feel something soft.

Holding on to my right hand, Han Ka-ryeon leaned her shoulder against mine. Then she drew her face near my ear and whispered in a gentle voice:

“So Sunbae, you don't have to study for a while. Forget everything about studying, you only have to enjoy your time with us.”

“E-Enjoy?”

“Wh-What do we need to do?”

“By the way, what's the meaning behind these positions?”

“Everyone, do you know what the most important condition is as to why he was able to establish his three-timing?”

Like I said, it's uncertain if I really was three-timing or not...

“It is that the our times together with him did not coincide with one another. That is why we have never met each other, but were dating him without the knowledge of each others’ existence.”

Han Ka-ryeon gave a sweet smile, and then said:

“So from now on, we will divide the day into three and spend them separately with him.”

She raised her three fingers.

“The time spent from 7 am until 4 pm at school is 'Yu Yuyu Time'.”

After I leave my house in the morning, I walk to school with Yu Yuyu.

“The time spent from 4 pm until 9 pm at work is 'Han Ka-ryeon Time'.”

After the school ends and I make my way to the cafe, I work alongside Han Ka-ryeon.

“The time spent from 9 pm until 7 am the next morning at home is 'Ahn Yeon-hee Time'.”

After I return home from my part-time job, I finish the rest of the day with Yeon-hee.

“We can have our romantic relationship with him without running into each other if we divide the time in this way. Then a perfect three-timing is established.”

“Don't call it 'three-timing'.”

“U-Um, do we really have to do it like this?”

“I don't really see why I should go along with this either.”

Smiling at the reluctant Yu Yuyu and Yeon-hee, Han Ka-ryeon said to them:

“If he cooperates with this plan and engages in romantic relationships with us, you could use the time spent together with him to take complete control of his heart so that he won't look at other girls any more.”

“!!”

“...”

“W-Wait a second... What about recovering my memory...?”

And it's not exactly dating for real, okay?!

“Then let's get started; let's harem.”

“What the heck is that?!”

Come to think of it, what's with this arrangement? It looks as if I'm surrounded by these girls like a playboy with three lovers!

“Oh well, then. I'll prove to you that I'm your real girlfriend!”

“I will devote my body and heart to you, and make you fall deeply in love with me, Sunbae.”

“I won't hand you over to anyone else...”

Three maidens pressing their bodies against me as though to monopolise me... I realised only then that I was completely surrounded and tied down by them. There was nowhere to run.

How did this come to be? Surrounded by these maidens pressing against me to the point of suffocation, I let out a scream in my mind.

Aaah, I just want to study!!

Side. Classmate

Current State and Perception of Adolescent Relationships Survey (For Female Student)

* This questionnaire is intended to investigate the opinions of adolescents in regards to relationships with the opposite sex.



Yu Yuyu

Affiliation: Bigyeong High School, Second Year, Class 6

Hobbies: Watching movies

Speciality: Getting up early in the morning

Favourite Literature: Romance novels and comics

Favourite Food: Chinese cuisine

Strongest Subject: Linguistics, social studies

Weakest Subject: Mathematics

First Year Midterm Result: School Rank #2

1. What kind of a person would you like your boyfriend to be?

A person who is not violent, and has a kind personality.

2. What would you like to do when you are on a date with your boyfriend?

Drink tea at a lovely cafe, go on a trip to the zoo... I have a lot of things I want to do, but I think I'd be content just doing anything with the guy I like.

3. What do you want to do for your boyfriend the most?

I have a lot of things I want to do for him; I want to cook delicious food for him, and knit him stuff like a handmade scarf... Honestly, I want to do everything that I can do for him.

4. What do you want your boyfriend to do for you the most?

If he likes me from the bottom of his heart, I'd be perfectly content with that.

5. What would you do if your boyfriend demanded a sexual relationship?

I think that we shouldn't until we're both adults, but if it's someone that I really love...

6. What would you do if your boyfriend had another girlfriend as well as you?

I'm not sure. Honestly, I don't have the confidence to prevent my boyfriend from being taken from me...

*Isn't this girl a bit too... Girlish?
It was so embarrassing organizing her survey...*

What greeted Yu Yuyu upon returning home was the sound of silence, as though the place was deserted.

“...”

The house was covered in darkness, but rays of light shone through the cracks in the door of the study; probably her mother still working.

Her mother, a designer, was a busy person. It's likely that she didn't even notice her daughter hadn't come home yesterday and had stayed up all night at the hospital.

“Fuu...”

Not even feeling like saying 'I'm home', Yuyu headed straight for her room. She put down her bag and took off her outer garments, and then she made her way to the bathroom to clean her sweat-stained body from being at the hospital this whole time.

After filling her stomach with milk and bread from the kitchen while waiting for her bath to run, she immersed her body inside the bathtub, now with a sufficient amount of comfortably warm water.

“Haah...”

Slouching her weary body inside the bathtub, Yuyu let out a deep sigh.

Really, a lot of things had happened between Friday night and now; she never imagined that things would end up like this.

“Glasses... Does he really not remember anything...?”

Tears started to well up in her eyes unconsciously as this thought crossed her mind. The loneliness she felt from being totally forgotten by the boy was unbearable.

“But...”

Yuyu thought to herself:

If he doesn't remember anything, then...

“This might be my chance...”

Yu Yuyu clenched her fists inside the bathtub.

Her relationship with him could have been completely severed at any moment. Luckily, however, thanks to Han Ka-ryeon's arrangement, she was given the opportunity to eat lunch and study together with him like they always had done. The allotted time was limited, but all she has to do is win his heart using that time.

Everything will be settled when he recognizes her as his one and only girlfriend.

“But...”

However, Yuyu was crestfallen...

“That girl named Han Ka-ryeon... She was so pretty. His younger sister was cute, too.”

Would she be able to win in a competition against those girls?

Although she did not want to believe them, they had said they had been going out with him and were in an intimate relationship. Having listened to the girls talk, they seemed so outgoing compared to her. Would she be able to win his heart completely so that he won't ever be unfaithful with the other girls?

“Wh-What should I do...”

Thinking of a way she could accomplish this, Yuyu noticed the white buds floating on the water right in front of her eyes.

“M-Maybe with these...?”

The two buds felt lighter than usual from the buoyancy of the water.

“I-I'll seduce Glasses with these, and...”

Yuyu swallowed hard.

“I wonder if Glasses likes big ones... It would be nice if he did...”

She had never heard anything like that from him before, but it's been said that boys prefer big breasts...

Although Yuyu honestly wished her breasts were smaller, if he preferred them that way...

“Wh-What do you think, Glasses? Do you like them this big?”

Holding up her breasts with her hands, Yuyu talked to herself.

“H-How should I do this? He didn't react much when I clung to his arm earlier... Maybe that was nothing... Do I hug him tightly from behind and rub them against his back...? Or have him touch them with his hands? If I have him touch them through my shirt.... No, maybe through my bra would be better if I'm going at it... B-But what do I do if he later wants to touch them directly? Th-Then... Ahh, Glasses, if you squeeze them like that, I'll...!”

Yuyu muttered in an aroused voice, and noticed the hands holding her breasts had tightened without her realizing.

In an instant, Yuyu's face flushed red.

“Ahhhh...!”

Yuyu took her hands off of her breasts and suddenly lowered her head. With her face buried, she was shaking all over.

“H-How embarrassing... I'm a complete pervert...”

It wasn't like anybody was watching, but she was ashamed of herself for having done such acts. She was so ashamed that she wanted to squirm, and flail her limbs.

“Haah...”

Letting out a sigh, she rested her head on the rim of the bathtub.

“I'm not a lewd girl like this...”

But she couldn't afford to hesitate as the current situation required immediate action.

“Glasses...”

She recalled the images of the boy that she has been spending time with at school.

He had a little strict look.

The bespectacled boy with a slightly strict appearance. Yuyu had been watching him for the past year, and he was the person she spent most of her time with than anyone else during those three months.

And he was the person she wanted to be with.

“I want to go out with Glasses... I don't want him to go out with any other girl...”

Sniffing, Yuyu muttered to herself:

“I'm the one who is his girlfriend...”

Putting her earnest hope into it, as if she were offering a prayer.

Chapter 2 - Lunch Time

I let out a sigh the same time as I opened my eyes from my sleep.

“If only it were all a dream...”

I muttered to myself staring at the ceiling, but wishing alone doesn't turn reality into a dream.

Looking at the books lying about on the desk with mixed feelings, I got out of bed. They were the 'things I studied over the past three months' that I held onto and wrestled with all day long yesterday... Since today's Monday, I have to get ready for school.

Last Saturday night, I found out that I had completely lost my memories during these last few months. And to regain my lost memories—especially those from studying—it was decided that I would spend some time together with the three girls for a while.

But I needed a day to sort myself out and let my hospitalised body rest.

So yesterday—that's Sunday—I spent the whole day alone inside my room. I was looking over the stuff I should have had learned during those months, however... The English words that were checked off to show that they had been completely memorised were new to me, and I had no idea how to solve the mathematical problems that only had the answers neatly written on the pages.

I hoped that my memories would return to me by looking at the stuff I'd learned for the past three months, but it was of no use. It seemed that my brain recognised those things not as past memories, but new materials ready to study.

“Haah...”

After I went to the lavatory with mixed emotions, I changed into my school uniform and, holding my bag, headed towards the kitchen.

“Did you sleep well, Oppa?”

The one who greeted me in the kitchen was Yeon-hee, preparing breakfast dressed in her ever-flawless school uniform.

The image of her in the white apron was adorable—much like a child playing house—and lovely at the same time, like a bride in her newlywed life.

“Thank you for breakfast.”

“Go ahead and dig in.”

Sitting across from each other at the table, we started eating our breakfast. Because breakfast is the only time, except for the weekends, that us busy high school students are able to sit at the table together, we had decided not to skip it and eat together in the mornings.

Cooked rice mixed with brown rice; bite-sized, homemade hamburger; cleanly cut rolled eggs; braised, crunchy cucumber slices; and braised burdock that is neither too sweet nor too salty.

Frankly speaking, there would no problem if I were to give her hand away in marriage right now with her level of skills attained already. I won't give her hand away in marriage just yet, though.

"Ugh..."

"What's wrong? Is there grit in the rice?"

Seeing my face suddenly stiffening, Yeon-hee gave me a quizzical look.

'I... I forgot all about it...'

I'd forgotten about it because I was having breakfast as usual. I can't remember anything, but Yeon-hee said that we had crossed the line in our relationship as siblings...

Yes, it would've been okay if things were just as normal, but it's now dangerous to have thoughts like 'I won't give her hand away in marriage just yet'. It makes it feel as though I'm being possessive of her because she's my girl.

"...No, it's nothing."

"You're being strange, Oppa."

My heart felt heavy all of a sudden. I don't know how I should treat Yeon-hee from now on. She didn't really do anything to me yesterday—perhaps because she was being considerate about my physical and mental exhaustion—but how should I react if Yeon-hee starts behaving like that time last Saturday when she pounced on me?

"Huuu... I'm off to school."

I bid farewell to Yeon-hee, who had started cleaning up after finishing her meal, and got up from my seat. Although Yeon-hee's high school is farther than the one I go to, I have to leave earlier since she takes the bus to hers and I walk to mine. I took the prepared lunch and went to the front door.

"Oppa, wait."

As I was putting on my shoes, Yeon-hee came up to me in short and quick steps.

"Geez, it's all stiff and erect."

Yeon-hee stood on her tiptoes and stretched her hand towards my head.

It seems my hair was sticking up at the back.

“I’ll take care of it for you, so stand still.”

Yeon-hee turned me around and dampened my hair with the water spray bottle for the plants on the shoe shelf.

“Ah, really, why are you so stiff like this, Oppa? It’s really hard to make it go down when it’s erect.”

“What can I do? It’s a part of waking up in the morning. Just leave it be.”

My hair is naturally quite stiff anyway.

“No. As your younger sister, I can’t let you be in this state even for a fraction of a second.”

Yeon-hee muttered, pressing down firmly with her hand. Knowing her meticulous personality, she probably wants to do it properly using the hairdryer. But she’s making do like this since she knows I’ll be gone if she goes away to fetch the hairdryer.

“Mm... Ahnn... Haah...”

Standing on her tiptoes, Yeon-hee moaned as though she was having trouble. After some time, she stood back down on her heels.

“Okay, that’s you.”

“I appreciate it, Yeon-hee. I can go to school fresh and clean now thanks to you.”

“Really Oppa, what would you do without me? Have a safe trip to school.”

After finishing our amiable conversation between siblings, I opened the door and stepped outside the corridor. As I was about to head towards the elevator after closing the door tight, I heard an urgent voice:

“W-Wait...!”

“.....”

“Don’t ignore me!”

I was striding down the corridor when someone snatched my arm.

“...And why are you here?”

The one who took hold of my arm was a girl in our school uniform— Yu Yuyu.

“I told you two days ago! When you’re heading to school, we’re walking together!”

“You didn’t say anything as far as showing up at my front door, though...”

But Yu Yuyu had a weird look on her face. Her face was coloured red, and she looked like she was very angry and flustered.

I felt it also when I saw her last time, but she seems like a girl who's easy to blush.

“Glasses, wh-what are you making your younger sister do...?!”

I had pressed the elevator button and was waiting when Yu Yuyu shouted at me in an accusative tone.

What's with her?

“Y-You made your younger sister... Take care of that thing that is stiff and erect in the morning! Just as I thought... You have that kind of relationship with your—”

“...?”

Huh?

It seems like she overheard our conversation from the other side of the front door when Yeon-hee was fixing my hair... But why is she so worked up over that?

“Is that a problem?”

“Wh-What?! Of course it's a problem! How could you make your younger sister do something like that?!”

Come to think of it... Don't they say that girls prefers boys who are tidy? Perhaps she's angry with me because I can't even fix my own hair without help from my little sister... Since she's claiming that I'm her boyfriend, she wouldn't be too happy to discover that her boyfriend is such a sloppy person.

“You're right, I should have done it myself...”

“Y-Yourself?! No, that's also kind of...”

Yu Yuyu's flustered look disappeared and she subsequently lowered her head with a gloomy expression.

“Haah... I wondered if it was true, but you really do have that kind of relationship with your younger sister... This is shocking... What should I do...?”

“What?”

“I-It's nothing... Say... I'm just asking you this out of curiosity, but...”

With her face turning red again, Yu Yuyu raised her eyes towards me.

“She... She does it with her m-mouth, right?”

Mouth? Well, yes, she does use her saliva sometimes.

“That was just when we were in elementary school.”

“E-Elementary school?! She's been doing it for that long?! It isn't just a recent thing?!”

“Now she just uses her hands.”

“Ah, j-just her hands... Right, I heard it's done a lot with the hands as well...”

“Yeon-hee likes doing it with a hair dryer, though.”

“A hair dryer?! You can do it with a hair dryer?! Isn't it hot?”

“Well, it's hot at times, but... It feels nice, too.”

“B-Boys sure are amazing...”

But why is she asking me these questions? Is it that surprising because they don't get bed hair due to theirs being so long?

“Then again, it might stand up again today at school since she didn't do it with the hair dryer.”

“A-At school?! It gets like that if you don't do it with a hair dryer?!”

“Well, I'm sure it'll settle down if I sort myself out in the washroom.”

“W-Washroom... Do boys usually do that sort thing in the washroom?”

“It varies from person to person... But there's quite a few guys who fiddle about with it in the washroom every recess.”

“Every recess?! That often?!”

During every break, several guys who pay attention to their appearance fix their hair looking at the mirror.

“B-But I wish you wouldn't do that... Doing that sort of thing by yourself in the washroom...”

What is she talking about?

“Then why don't you do it for me for good? Didn't you say that you were my girlfriend?”

“Ehh?! You're asking me to do it?!”

Although I said it as a joke out of frustration, she was unexpectedly taken aback.

“R-Right, I'm your girlfriend... And we've already went all the way... If I want to keep up with the other two girls, I should...”

Looking firmly determined, she raised her head.

“Th-Then call me when it happens to you next. I'll come to the washroom with you, secretly...”

“What? Are you suggesting that we do it in front of other guys?”

That's a bit embarrassing.

“Eh? We're not doing it in a vacant toilet?! Is it normally done in front of other people?!”

“You can't see the mirror if you go inside.”

“We're doing it with other people in front of the mirror?!”

At that moment, the elevator that was stopped on the lower floor for some time arrived. I got on the elevator along with Yu Yuyu, who had a tangled expression on her face for some reason, and pressed the first floor button.

Although Yu Yuyu was quiet with her head lowered for a while, she suddenly pulled on my sleeve moments later.

As I turned my head to see why, Yu Yuyu said to me looking up with a pink flush on her face:

“I-I'll do it for you when we're alone together. If it's at a secluded place, I'll do my best even though I'm not too confident...”

“No, you don't need to be worried about it that much...”

Oddly, it seems that I've put pressure on her.

“I'll just ask Sega to do it for me, so don't worry about it.”

“Sega...?”

“He's the guy who sits behind me in class.”

“You're going to make him to do it?!”

For some inexplicable reason, Yu Yuyu's face had the most surprised expression I had ever seen until now.

“No, he has never actually done it for me before, but...”

I shrugged and said:

“I have done it for him once.”

“Ahhhhhhh!!”

Yu Yuyu grabbed her head all of a sudden and dropped down on the ground and burst out crying.

...Did I do something wrong?

My seat in the classroom is the second seat from the back in the row closest to the hallway.

As I opened the back door and stepped inside the classroom, I was greeted by the boy sitting at the very back seat.

“Good morning, Ahn Kyeong-hyun.”

“Hey, Shin Sega.”

The one who greeted me in his low, magisterial voice was Shin Sega, who had been my classmate the previous year as well.

He's a tall, handsome fellow with masculine looks. His serene, ascendant eyes are as mature as to not seem like those of a teenager. As for his actual personality, he's calm and well-mannered. Good at studying, he placed twelfth in the whole school on the last exam.

Furthermore, unlike me, he's athletic, and he's been appointed class president every year for his leadership skills. Apparently, he was the president of the student council when he was in middle school. Not only that, I also heard he's from an affluent family.

In terms of his specs, he's the best among the guys I know. Although he should be popular with the girls, I've never heard of him having a girlfriend before.

“Hm.”

“...Why are you staring at me like that?”

Sensing Sega's eyes staring at my back as I put my bag on the desk, I stopped moving. Then, with a serious expression on his face, Sega replied:

“Rebellious eyes visible beneath the horn-rimmed glasses, slightly shut pink lips, smooth line leading down from the clean-shaven chin to the slender neck, defined slim waist, and svelte yet resilient buttocks...”

“.....”

“You're charming today as well, Ahn Kyeong-hyun.”

“Please, could you stop acting like that so early on in the morning...?”

I sighed, looking at Sega smiling contentedly and nodding his head.

This is the reason why Sega doesn't have a girlfriend. Although he's a guy whose looks, personality and ability make it impossible for him to be unpopular with the girls, most of them don't approach him because of this “gay-like” attitude.

Of course, Sega has never hit on me for real. He's probably doing it only in jest as a concept. I'd have kept my distance if he really was being like this expecting something homosexual to happen.

Nevertheless, appearances aside, you could say that Sega is almost the only person whom I regard as a precious friend of mine; even if he plays these kind of jokes on me, I have no reason to get serious.

"Sorry, I couldn't hold back without expressing in words... They sure are bouncy."

Sega muttered to himself, copping a feel of my buttocks as I was about to sit.

"....."

"Is there something wrong?"

As I stared at him, stopped halfway sitting down on my seat, Sega made a quizzical expression.

"No, it's nothing. I just thought you looked handsome today as well.

"Fufu. Right back at you, Prince Charming."

Actually, it isn't just Sega who acts in such way!

Although I could hear the sound of people talking in whispers around me, making comments like 'as expected of a homo couple...' and 'Prez is uke, Glasses is seme...' I paid no heed and sat down in my seat.

"Whew..."

There's no other reason as to why I was staring at Sega:

It was because I was hesitant in telling him that I'd lost my memory.

"Things would be easy if Sega lent me his assistance."

I have no intention of advertising my amnesia to the whole world. It'd only get unnecessarily busy if I were to receive any more attention. I can't stand being distracted.

But without my memories from the previous three months, I might cause trouble due to any relationship and the likes that I do not know about. If I tell Sega, he could help prevent those sorts of problems. He wouldn't spread rumours about it, either.

However, I'd have to disclose my current state if I were to tell Sega... That is, because I may have three-timed with these three girls, I'm in a situation where I now have to divide my time and act as loves with those three girls.

I don't wish to tell this kind of story to a guy like Sega who leads an honest life.

What should I do...?

I turned my head with that thought. My eyes looked at the middle seat by the windows. I could see Yu Yuyu reading her reference book with her body cowered forward and a stiff expression on her face.

Yu Yuyu and I had left the apartment together, but we came into the classroom separately. That's because Yu Yuyu walked away from me halfway here.

The reason was that it would be embarrassing if other students were to see her walking to school with me, her boyfriend. Apparently, because Yu Yuyu is hiding the fact that we're dating from the others in the first place, we had hardly ever arrived to school together.

It's understandable. Even from my perspective, I wouldn't particularly want others to know that I'm in a romantic relationship. Moreover, Yu Yuyu and I are the top two students at our school; if we announce that we're together, there's bound to be those who would speak ill of us.

But because of that, the situation has become more complicated: if Yu Yuyu had behaved as my girlfriend in front of other people in the first place, she would've been able to easily prove that she's my girlfriend. However, now there's nobody who recognises her as my girlfriend. For those reasons, I'm starting to have suspicions that Yu Yuyu might be straight-out lying.

"Stand straight, bow."

While I was thinking those thoughts, the homeroom teacher entered the classroom started to take roll call.

A teacher in charge of mathematics, Kim Mu-hyeok was a tall and skinny man. Bespectacled with an impression of being fastidious, his actual personality was more fastidious even beyond his appearance. I've never seen our homeroom teacher crack a joke.

Most of the students dislike him because his lessons are rigorous and he hands out tonnes of difficult homework exercises. It's all good for me, though; the more stuff to study the better.

"As you probably know already, there is a National Achievement Test this Friday."

After the roll call, he started to talk in his stern voice about the mock examination that was to take place on Friday.

"You took it before in your first year as well, so you should all have an idea of what it is. However, it will have a more significant meaning this time to you second years."

For nearly ten minutes, the homeroom teacher dragged on about why we should pay attention to this mock examination. Although it was an important subject in its own way, since it wasn't anything particularly new, there weren't many students who were listening attentively.

“Especially for those in the top percentile, this academic assessment is fairly accurate. You could say that the rank from here directly represents your ranking as a student in this country..... Ahn Kyeong-hyun.”

Suddenly hearing my name being called, I lifted my head.

“You placed third in the nationals last year, correct?”

I nodded my head with a hazy expression.

“Aim for first place this time. As for the rest of you, try not to disturb him and his studies.”

After saying that, the homeroom teacher took the register and left the classroom.

With the tension gone, the sound of whispers began to rise here and there in the classroom, and I sat there feeling uncomfortable in the midst of it.

Although this is honestly a situation where my classmates would stare at me with hatred because everybody knew the homeroom teacher was usually like that, there was almost nobody staring daggers at me.

“You came in third last year?”

“I was a little lucky that time. The ones I guessed turned out to be right...”

Uncomfortably, I replied to Sega’s voice coming from the back.

Aiming for the first place in a national mock exam with hundreds of thousands of examinees is on an entirely different level than aiming for the first place in a school where there are several hundred students at the most.

There are people in this world who can completely memorise the contents of a book with a single skim, and those who can instantly solve advanced mathematical questions with the sheer power of mental calculation, but I’m not that sort of a genius.

I’m merely maintaining my current grades because I’ve always kept on studying, and there are sure to be many countless people in the country who have done the same. To take the first place among them is a task that is not possible with pure skill alone.

Yet he tells me to aim for the first place in the nationals. Even if he said it to spur me on, it’s an order way too tall to fill.

“But it’s a bit unfair how he’s only talking about you, though. There are two top students in this class, not just one.”

At those words, I turned my head and looked at the window side.

The girl who has always maintained second place in the whole school all the time was silently reading her reference book with her lips held tight.

As the biology teacher stepped out of the classroom with the sounding of the school bell, the classroom became rowdy.

There were students moving their desks to eat with their friends as well as those leaving the classroom to eat outside.

After taking out the lunch Yeon-hee had packed from my bag, I turned my chair around. I've been eating my lunch with Sega since the first year.

“.....”

But there was something strange about the way Sega was looking at me.

“What's wrong?”

I stopped my hands that were about to unwrap my lunchbox and looked at him.

“Well...”

As though he was troubled as to what to say, he stared intently at me.

It was at that moment.

“Ahem!”

The sound of a cough that anybody could tell was intentional. I lifted my head and looked over Sega's head. Standing unnaturally on the sill of the back door, Yu Yuyu was glaring his way with a stiff expression on her face.

“Ah...!”

Now I come to think of it, I recall Yu Yuyu saying how she and I ate lunch together...!

“Colour me surprised: you've been eating outside quite a lot lately, so I wondered what was the matter.”

Sega said to me in a relived voice.

Seeing Yu Yuyu exiting the classroom, I hastily stood up.

“S-Sorry. Then I'll be off.”

Although Sega will probably eat his lunch with some other guys, the notion of leaving behind Sega who I've always ate with in my memories, didn't sit too well with me.

“Don't worry about it. I respect that you want to eat while you're studying alone even during lunchtime.”

Is that the excuse I've been telling him...?

I mean, that makes it seem like I'm some kind of a nutcase obsessed with studying... I'm not that bad.

"Good luck with your studies."

"Thanks, and enjoy your lunch."

After the awkward farewell, I left the classroom. Chasing after Yu Yuyu visible in the distance, I walked along the hallway and headed up the stairs.

The place Yu Yuyu was headed for was the local history study room situated on the top floor of the school. It was here that artifacts from the nearby areas were displayed for the students to view freely. I had once taken a look around when I was first admitted into the school.

But perhaps because there aren't many students who come here often to see the exhibit, there was no sign of other people. Yu Yuyu strode inside the room, and then opened the iron door in the corner.

"This place is..."

"I told you it's the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room."

Yu Yuyu opened her mouth for the first time and let out a curt voice.

Inside, the place was tidy and much smaller than my room. It was devoid of any other objects with the exception of two desks facing one another in the centre.

"This is a storage room where they stored videotapes used for audiovisual references in the old days. But since everything's done with a computer nowadays, they became unnecessary and were all disposed of, and now it sits empty."

"So there was a place like this..."

For a storage room that was not in use, it was free of dust and musty smell. The southward window was small, but it let in plenty of sunlight, and the atmosphere wasn't bad.

"Is it okay to just go in?"

"Why? It's not like it's locked... Come in." Yu Yuyu said stiffly.

I followed her into the room and closed the door.

The place was quiet, maybe because there was nobody around. I could somewhat hear the sound from the schoolyard.

"Huu..."

I saw Yu Yuyu drooping her shoulders as she set down the large lunch bag.

“What’s the matter?”

“H-Huh? What do you mean?”

“No, it’s just that... You seem a little bit nervous.”

“S-So what if I’m nervous...? N-No! I’m not nervous!”

Yu Yuyu shouted with her face flush.

“And you... I told you that we eat lunch together! Why were you trying to eat with Shin Sega?!”

“S-Sorry, it slipped my mind...”

“Other classmates might have noticed! Uuu... I was so careful to ensure that I didn’t get caught having lunch with you...”

I don’t know why she’s worried to such extent, but it looked like it was causing a serious problem for Yu Yuyu.

“...Forget it. Let’s just eat our lunch.”

Sighing, Yu Yuyu took out a lunchbox and a small thermos from the lunch bag, and placed them on the desk. I was surprised to see how small the lunchbox was in comparison to the size of the lunch bag.

At any rate, I knew I had to eat lunch with this girl. I quietly unwrapped my lunchbox and sat down.

“.....”

I furtively checked Yu Yuyu’s lunch: white rice with pork cutlets, braised slices of lotus root, braised fish cake, and pickled radish...

I’m sorry to say this to Yu Yuyu’s mother, but the lunch Yeon-hee made is on an entirely different level.

That’s just like my little sister.

“...You’re not thinking something weird, are you?”

Yu Yuyu looked at me with suspicious eyes. After giving a vague answer, I started eating.

Sitting across from each other, we began to eat our respective lunches as we were.

“.....”

“.....”

...This is awkward!

I'm not the type who chats whilst eating, but it was a bit uncomfortable to just eat in silence with someone in front of me who I can't tell of how close I am to her.

Yu Yuyu still had a stiff expression on her face— I don't think she'll make the first move any time soon, so inevitably, I opened my mouth first.

“Yu Yuyu.”

“Don't call me that!”

Yu Yuyu slapped down on the desk with her left hand as though displeased.

“Why not?”

“I've told you time after ti— Ah, right, you lost your memory...” Said Yu Yuyu after letting out a sigh.

“It's embarrassing. Having 'Yu Yuyu' for my name...”

“Well, it is quite unusual, but...”

Yu Yuyu.

Palindromic names are certainly uncommon⁶. I don't think the Chinese characters are the same, but if you were to write her name in English, I reckon it'd be romanized as 'YU YU YU' or 'YOU YOU YOU'... I started to worry over how much she must have been made fun of as a kid.

“Then what should I call you?”

“Just call me Yuyu.”

“I'm not used to calling people by only their first names, though...”

Especially if that person is a girl.

“I know that! But I still want you to call me Yuyu!”

Saying that, Yu Yuyu turned her head away with a sulky face.

“Because if you call me Yu Yuyu again, I'll hate you...”

“.....”

I honestly think it's a cute name, but I really have no reason to continue to call her by her full name when she herself doesn't like it.

“...Yuyu.”

⁶ Yu Yuyu (유유유) is palindromic in Korean.

“Y-Yeah?”

Yu Yuyu, coming across suddenly shy, averted my gaze.

I first asked her a question that I’d been curious about for some time now.

“Have we been eating lunch together like this all this time? Ever since we became second-year students?”

“...I told you on Saturday. Did you forget?”

“Things were really chaotic at the time and there were way too many stories, so I couldn’t gather my thoughts.”

As I said that, Yu Yuyu sighed.

“It wasn’t right after we became second-years. It was since April.”

So it was two months ago.

“How did we start eating together?”

“.....”

Yu Yuyu closed her mouth with an uncomfortable expression as soon as the words left my lips.

“Um, I’m sorry... But in order to regain my memories, I think it’d be better if you told me in more detail.”

Yu Yuyu sighed as I stood there staring at her, and then said:

“I... I’ve been eating my lunch here since first year.”

“...What?”

“You see, I don’t have any friends. So whenever it was lunch time, I would always come here to eat by myself and study until it was class time again. I’ve been doing that for the last year or so.”

Speaking lightly, Yu Yuyu shrugged her shoulders with an indifferent look on her face.

But I could see that her eyes were trembling slightly and her ears had a slight shade of red. Realizing it’d be better to not respond carelessly, I quietly closed my mouth.

“Anyway, there was a time in April when there was a tense atmosphere in our classroom⁷. You were wandering around this area in search of some peace and quiet at the time, and that was when you met me by chance. That’s how you came to find and use this place, since it was an ideal spot to study during lunchtime.”

“...Sorry about that. It seems I took away your personal study room that you’d been using alone.”

⁷ Probably April is when they hold mock exams in Korea.

“That’s true, but...”

Yu Yuyu murmured, averting her eyes again.

“I-It doesn’t matter because I was able to get closer to you...”

“.....”

Although she had an angry expression on her face as though to hide her embarrassment, her countenance was coloured bright red.

I don’t know why, but I became embarrassed upon seeing her face as well.

“S-So that’s how we became close, huh?”

“Y-Yeah.”

“Then how did we start going out with each other?”

Yu Yuyu closed her mouth once more.

“...Why would you ask me that?”

“What do you mean ‘why’? That’s because—”

I seemed to have hurt her feelings, so treading carefully, I tried to answer.

But Yu Yuyu’s voice that followed didn’t carry a single tone of displeasure.

“Do you really have to ask exactly how...?”

Yuyu lowered her head shyly and spoke in a faint voice.

“I think eating lunch and studying together in the same place every day... And then to end up dating is a natural progression, you know?”

With her head down, Yuyu slightly raised her eyes and looked upon my face.

“I-Is it?”

“I-It is. Why do you ask such an embarrassing question...?”

As though to obscure her reddened face, Yuyu turned her head and poured barley tea from the thermos. Seeing Yuyu bringing the cup to her lips, I began to talk again.

“Then who confessed first?”

“Pfft!”

Yuyu spat out the barley tea. Fortunately, it was before she had a mouthful, so it didn’t make a total mess.

“G-Glasses! Really, were you even listening?! How could you even ask that?!”

Cleaning the surface with the tissue she took out from her pocket, Yuyu shouted with a bright red face.

“I need to know in order to regain my memory.”

“Is it that important?! Do you really need to hear about everything?!”

“Isn’t that obvious? It could become the key in regaining my memories, so I need to check everything I can.”

Yuyu’s face stiffened as I replied unyieldingly.

“For the record...”

To ensure that she understood clearly, I put emphasis in my voice.

“I’m doing what you girls are asking me to do because I was told it’d help me regain my memory. If I feel like you’re not cooperating, I’m going to drop everything and just study.”

“Uu...”

Yuyu’s expression became timid.

“Now I’ll ask you again: Who confessed first?”

“.....”

Yuyu’s shoulders were hunched forward with her lips tightly closed.

Just as I was about to open my mouth to press her again, a faint voice flowed from Yuyu’s mouth.

“.....me.”

“What?”

“It was me! It was me!”

Her face turning scarlet, Yuyu clenched her fists before her big breasts and shouted.

“That’s right! I asked you out first! Why? Do you have a problem with that?!”

“Yu... Yu Yuyu?”

“Don’t call me that! Yeah, so I asked you out! Is that so wrong? Is it something you must enquire about like this, like some sort of interrogation?!”

“N-No, I didn’t say it was wrong...”

I stuttered, intimidated by Yuyu’s animated shouting.

“Yeah! I asked you out! We were only eating lunch and studying together without any sign of romance, but I went ahead and asked you to go out with me!”

“Um, calm down a b—”

“I’d said that if we did go out... I’d be nice to you! I’d become a good girlfriend who listens to her boyfriend! I even said such things because I was worried that you’d perhaps turn me down. I said such embarrassing things!”

Having lost her composure and saying things she didn’t need to say, Yuyu looked as if she was about to cry.

For some reason, seeing that face of hers made my heart flutter.

“I-I see... You confessed your feelings for me first, and I accepted them...”

Something like that happened, and I just forgot all about it, huh...

As I muttered in a complicated state of mind, Yuyu had look on her face as if she was caught off-guard, then her expression quickly changed to that of anger.

“D-Don’t be stupid! What are you talking about?! I don’t particularly have any different feelings for someone like you!”

“Ehh?!”

What the heck is she saying now?!

“Then why did you ask me out?!”

“I-I could have asked you out just out of mere curiosity, you know!”

“No, no, no... To say that now is a bit...”

Ah, I just remembered. You said it with your own mouth that you liked me when we first met at the hospital. So why are you denying it now?

“Although I did think of wanting to go out with you, that doesn’t mean that I had feelings for you!”

Incomprehensible!

A woman’s heart is incomprehensible!

“You said we did all those sorts of things, and you did them even though you had no feelings for me?!”

“.....”

Her face, which had a coy expression, suddenly stiffened.

When she closed her lips, I pounced on the opportunity and threw another question at her.

“Leaving that aside, I find it a little hard to believe that we did those kinds of acts inside school. Did we really do those, um... lewd things here?”

To tell the truth, Yu Yuyu was the most suspicious one out of the three girls.

First, Yeon-hee claimed that she had crossed the line with me, followed by Han Ka-ryeon claiming that it was the same with her as well. Then Yuyu confessed at the end that she was also in that kind of relationship with me after she was provoked by Han Ka-ryeon.

In other words, because of her rivalry towards Yeon-hee and Han Ka-ryeon, she might've fabricated and claimed a relationship that was actually non-existent; merely lying as to not be left behind.

“Honestly speaking, I don't believe you.”

And it was just as difficult to imagine doing such acts inside the school no matter how unfrequented the place is. Of course I know there are actually students who do those things since I've heard the rumor from Sega... Maybe if it was somebody else, but it was unbelievable that it'd be something I had done.

“... Again.”

“What?”

“...If you're that suspicious, we can just do it here again. That'll help you remember.”

Yuyu, who was sitting with a stiff expression, slowly got up from her chair.

Her fringe flowed downwards and concealed her face halfway, just like the image of Yuyu in my recollection.

“...Take them off.”

“Pardon me?”

“I said take them off!”

Shouting, Yuyu started to stride towards me.

Startled, I rose from my chair and backed away, but there was nowhere to escape in such a small room.

“Um, hey... Yu Yuyu?”

“I told you not to call me that...”

“Yu... Yuyu!”

“I told you not to call me that...!”

“Th-that one was just me stuttering!”

Yuyu drew closer to me, forcing me against the wall, and said in a subdued voice:

“Right, if you don’t believe me, you’ll know once we try it...”

“T-Try what?!”

“It’ll all become clearer in your mind once we try it...”

Having driven me into the wall, Yuyu reached out her right hand and placed it beside my head, and then looked fiercely into my eyes. In the situation where the gender positions were reversed, I involuntarily swallowed my breath.

“Wa-Wait, l-let’s talk about this!”

“You said you didn’t believe me...”

“Th-That was because it seemed a little unnatural... I’ll listen to your story again, and if it isn’t unnatural, I’ll believe you...!”

“I think it’s only natural to end up doing lewd things when you eat and study together in the same place every day. I’ve seen it a lot in lewd graphic novels.”

“What on earth are you basing this on?!”

So Yu Yuyu... You read those kinds of books...

“We have to try it in order to regain your memory anyway, right? Didn’t you say you needed to try more things to try and get your memory back?”

“No, no... Still... This is...!”

“You’ll know once we try it: Whether this girl has done it many times with me, or it’s the first time...”

“That’s the problem!”

Perhaps if we were really in that kind of relationship before, but the situation will be considerably worse if we’re both doing it for the first time...!

“Don’t worry, I’m not trying to put the responsibility on you for a relationship with another boy. I’m not close to any boys or girls. Excluding my dad and the teacher, the only guy that I’ve shared more than ten words with is you. The only boy who could steal my first time is you...”

“I wasn’t worried about that in the first place!”

Ignoring my shout, Yuyu pressed her body against mine.

“Now, let’s get started. Haah haah...”

Her breathing is heavy. She’s overcome with elation and the anxiety of committing something serious, not just mere sexual desire.

She has completely lost control of herself. At this rate... I’m really going to get violated.

‘Wh-What do I do now...?!’

Even so, I can’t just push Yuyu aside and run away. If Yuyu is really my girlfriend and we have an intimate relationship with each other, the wound that would inflict on her would be...

“H-Hey! I have a question!”

I shouted without thought.

“...What is it?”

Yuyu stopped moving and raised her eyes towards mine. Yet she still didn’t back off; instead, she pressed those big and soft things on her upper body against me even more.



Ugh, why is the sensation so stron—Wait!

“R-Right! Now that I come to think of it... Weren’t your breasts smaller when we first met?”

“...What do you mean?”

As I asked, a bewildered expression passed across Yuyu’s face.

“Well, I don’t remember exactly since it’s not like I stared at them... But I’m sure they weren’t this big at the beginning of the semester...”

I can’t understand it myself why I have to make this kind of comment bordering on sexual harassment, but it seemed to be effective as Yuyu separated herself from me.

G-Good... Now if I divert her attention somewhere else just like this...

“Did they get bigger because you’ve eaten something nice?” Because I was wondering if you could give me the recipe to pass on to Yeon-hee.”

Aaah, why do I have to say this sort of stuff...?! Yeon-hee, please forgive your brother...!

“C-Could it be that you put a lot of bra pads inside? A-Ahaha...”

Having taken a step back, Yuyu was staring at me still.

It was when I looked at her thinking it was about time now.

I heard Yuyu quietly sniffle.

“...Eh?”

“*sob*, *sob* ...”

Yuyu was crying.

Small droplets of tears were falling from the corners of her eyes.

“Hey, Yuyu? I-I’m sorry, I went too far with the sexual harassment...”

Full of regret, I tried to approach her, but I was stopped by her whimpering voice.

“I-I didn’t want them to be noticeable. These large breasts... They’re just heavy and useless, I was embarrassed and I disliked them... I hated how the boys would give me weird looks. *sob* ...”

She said so in a plaintive voice that I’d never heard before.

“So I was strapping down my breasts, to make them look smaller, with smaller B cup bras I bought on purpose... But you said it was bad for my health and it wasn’t good for my figure... You said that it was best to wear a size that fits my own body. *sob* ...”

She said while slightly swaying her shoulders, ignoring the tear droplets trickling down her cheeks.

“It was embarrassing, but since you said so... I was thinking that maybe you liked them bigger, so I gave my all and even got my size measured... I even bought new ones. But you... You didn’t say a word about my breasts after that, even though it was because of you that I did it all... You have no idea how hurt I was.”

Yuyu clenched her hands and started hitting me on the chest. Those fists weakly pounding my chest didn’t inflict much pain at all; it was her voice coming in through my ears, coursing through my veins that made my heart ache deep inside.

“Why... Why must you say that after you’ve forgotten everything? You don’t even remember, so don’t say it to me now...!”

“...I’m sorry.”

Holding the tearful Yuyu in my arms, I gave her my words of apology.

“It doesn’t make me happy in the slightest even if you hug me and apologize out of pity! Even if you’re like this to me because of my story, it’s just unromantic and weird! It’s only confusing for you, too!”

“You’re right... To tell you the truth, right now I’m just thinking about what cup size would be right for you if the B was too small.”

“Idiot! Dummy! I hope you break your glasses...!”

Not caring about my uniform getting wet with tears and mucus, I let Yuyu cry to her heart’s content.

I still don’t believe that Yuyu was my girlfriend. Although I can believe part of it, there are yet many other parts that are difficult to believe.

However, I can believe the fact that Yuyu had profound feelings for me. I don’t want to be as cynical to doubt that far.

But the more I realise that truth, one question comes to mind:

Then what kind of feelings did I have for Yuyu?

How, and with what feelings, was I treating this girl who has this kind of feelings about me?

Side. Junior



Han Ka-ryeon

Affiliation: Eunyoung Girls High School, First Year, Class 11

Hobbies: Collecting undergarments, napping

Speciality: Heading to the infirmary during class

Favourite Literature: Detective fiction, light novels in general

Favourite Food: Pasta

Strongest Subject: Music

Weakest Subject: Subjects requiring any memorisation in general, P.E.

First Year Midterm Result: School Rank #432

Current State and Perception of Adolescent Relationships Survey (For Female Student)

* This questionnaire is intended to investigate the opinions of adolescents in regards to relationships with the opposite sex.

1. What kind of a person would you like your boyfriend to be?

If he could be a faithful and family-oriented person, that would be nice. The kind of person that transfers money into his wife's bank account as soon as he receives his paycheque.

2. What would you like to do when you are on a date with your boyfriend?

Just staying home and taking it easy would be nice. Going outside is tiresome.

3. What do you want to do for your boyfriend the most?

To be the place of solace for his heart.

4. What do you want your boyfriend to do for you the most?

To provide for me so that I can live comfortably without any worries.

5. What would you do if your boyfriend demanded a sexual relationship?

I'd say 'that means you're capable of taking responsibility for it too, right?' and obtain a promise of marriage.

6. What would you do if your boyfriend had another girlfriend as well as you?

It's not such a bad feeling as a woman when one's boyfriend is popular with the opposite sex, but ultimately I would have to devise a plan in advance so that he would only have eyes for me.

*I feel an inexplicable fear from this girl.
As though you'll be bound to her forever if you date her but once...*

Displayed atop of the white bed were numerous undergarments.

Pure-white lace reminiscent of a wedding dress; mint color with silver dots; all black, strong like dark chocolate; gold and beige with luxuriant floral embroidery; frill-hemmed blue with dreamy patterns; fluttering rose colour made of chiffon; scanty, pastel-toned demi-cup and T-back; simple but with a cute design, made of white cotton...

It wasn't only bras and panties. There were also translucent slips and bustiers with the brassiere and corset attached. There were even several garter belts embellished with plenty of lace.

Stockings of all colours were laid on one side: Simple pantyhose and a pair of fancy band stockings that have a distinctive lingerie feel with their silver pearl patterns. There were over-the-knee and stripped socks with ribbons mixed in as well.

“Fufu~.”

Ka-ryeon looked down at her collection and smiled softly.

The bed, filled to its edges with the undergarments, looked like a garden full of flowers of various shapes and colors.

“Let's see...”

Because she had just got back home, Ka-ryeon was still wearing her sky-blue school uniform.

It's 4:00 PM right now. Supplementary lessons should be well under way in schools by now, but Ka-ryeon was already home. Of course, she didn't stay after school for late night self-studies either.

At Eunyoung Girls High School, which Ka-ryeon attends, supplementary lessons and late-night self-studies were compulsory. However, due to her circumstances where she has to help out her older sister—who looks after her alone—at her store, she was given permission to be exempt as a special case.

Soon, Ka-ryeon has to change into her casual clothes and head off to her older sister's store, but there's something she must do first.

“Which should I go with~?”

Ka-ryeon muttered in a cheerful voice as she surveyed the undergarments on the bed one by one.

All the undergarments before her were the ones she had collected over the past year. In her childhood, she used to only wear what her older sister had bought her, but ever since she came to buy and wear her own undergarments, she had been collecting those that were to her liking one at a time. Because Ka-ryeon didn't have anywhere else to spend the money, the majority of her excessive allowance that her older sister always gave her was being used as funds for the purchase of these undergarments.

They were purchased purely for her collection as a hobby in all respects, and not for the purpose of showing them to someone else. To Ka-ryeon, laces and other small garments graced with all kinds of adornments were cuter than anything else in the world.

But these small pieces of cloth that were merely cute were now waiting for Ka-ryeon's selection as important 'accessories' bearing a different meaning.

"What should I wear, Sunbae?"

Ka-ryeon murmured to herself in a soft voice looking at the exhibition of undergarments spread out in front of her.

"I wonder what kind of style he likes. If I knew this would happen, I would have found out in advance."

She had asked him before, but she hadn't heard his answer. Well, to be exact, his reply was that he had never thought about such a thing.

Of course, if a normal high school boy—moreover, a swot who pretends not to be interested in girls—has a style preference in girls' underwear, that's not a great sign, but... Han Ka-ryeon thought she should have at least found out about his favourite colour.

"Which design do you like the best, Sunbae? A demure one? A fancy one?"

Leaning over the bed Ka-ryeon muttered to herself, touching the undergarments one by one with her finger.

"Since you're still a high school student faithful to your desires, would it simply be better if it's more revealing?"

She poked the suggestive undergarment—which, if worn, seemed it would bare all of her butt—with her fingertip.

"Or do you prefer the innocent, white look?"

Ka-ryeon smiled, caressing the pure-white underwear.

"Which one do you like, Sunbae? I'll wear anything as long as it pleases you."

Ka-ryeon was aware of how ridiculous she was beginning to appear.

Simpering and talking to herself in a lyrical voice with her undergarments spread out—her older sister would probably faint from the shock if she saw her right now. If that happened, Ka-ryeon would have certainly started living the life of a recluse for about three days with her door barred from the embarrassment alone.

But it can't be helped; there are times when girls become like this.

“Sunbae~ Sunbae~ Sunbae~”

Now humming a mysterious tune, Ka-ryeon examined each undergarment and picked them out diligently.

These various, small garments that she had collected over the years just because they were cute, had now become tools of temptation to capture the heart of a single person.

There is, of course, no guarantee that the undergarments she chose would be able to tempt him. There might not be a chance to even show them, and he might even arrive at a conclusion before she can.

But imagining how things will turn out, and to worry based on that imagination is...

“Sunbae... What should I wear to make you lose your self-control and act as your desires command... So that you will fall madly in love with me?”

An exceedingly exciting and enjoyable experience.

Chapter 3 - Dinner Time

As I gently pushed the wooden door open the fragrant scent of coffee wafted past my nose.

“Ah, you’re here, Kyeong-hyun. Come on in.”

A woman dressed in a white shirt and black waistcoat stuck her head out from the side of the counter.

With a vivid countenance and her hair tied back, she could only have been a woman in her mid-20s.

Her name was Han Che-ryeon, the manageress of café “Saint”.

“Good afternoon, Manageress.”

Having entered the shop, I looked around inside for a moment after I greeted her.

Tables and chairs of baronial design were arranged at even distances for comfort on the deep brown wooden floor. Due to furnishings like an archaic birdcage, candelabrum, and cupboard displayed around the room, the café almost seemed like a reception room of an old Western mansion with a long history.

Obviously they weren’t real antiques. It was only their exteriors; none of them were actually made in Europe.

But they were of such high quality that normal people would have no way of telling. Each placed in a natural manner, the manager’s handpicked furniture and furnishings made the room look suitably ‘decent’.

Looking at the room composed with a high degree of perfection like a work of art, I uttered in awe.

“I see the business is slow again today.”

“Sh-Shut up!”

The European-style café ‘Saint’ where I work part-time was plain quiet today as well. It was an all too similar scene. It seems this situation had not changed even during the three months that I had no memory of.

Since there’s no place in this neighbourhood like a cinema or fashion boutiques that young people could gather at, business is bad for shops like cafés where their main customers are people in their twenties. In this business district, you go under right away if you don’t aim for middle school students playing around the school or at families for your customer base.

When this European-style café opened out of nowhere, Yeon-hee and I had predicted that it wouldn't do very well. It's not a chain coffeehouse by a major company, and we had reckoned there'd be nobody in this area who would look for an antique café that put emphasis on the free nature of the owner.

That prediction was dead on, and it hasn't changed even now.

"Hurry up and get changed! Or I'll dock your wages for being late."

"There's still more than five minutes left before I clock in..."

Because I came straight here as soon as school ended, I still have time left until I'm on the clock.

To tell the truth, there's an after-school supplementary lesson in progress at school and there will be a self-study session at night as well. But since they aren't mandatory, I left school early with my homeroom teacher's permission.

Although I don't take them because it's more efficient for me to study alone, it has far more to do with financial reasons. From my perspective, the after-school supplementary lesson fee is too expensive for what I would actually gain from them, and I need time to earn money from a part-time job. That's why I've been coming to the café to work-part time after school.

"Quiet, you! Keep that act up and I'll turn back the clock hand by 10 minutes while you're changing."

"Yes, yes... Understood."

I replied half-heartedly and headed towards the staff room. Although that is its official designation, it's an ambiguous room that is also used for changing and storage. You could say it's a room stuffed with everything that you wouldn't want your customers to see in this small shop.

While thinking "let's hurry up and get changed," I reached out my hand to open the changing room's door. Right at that moment, I was engulfed by an ominous premonition that I could not comprehend.

'Come to think of it, there was a situation like this in a light novel that Sega lent me before.'

When you open the door there's a girl in the middle of changing, and having been seen in her undergarments the girl blushes and screams.

And it's not just me and the manageress that works at this store now.

'That means...'

However, regardless of my thoughts, my right hand unconsciously executed the action that I'd repeated hundreds of times.

“...!”

Inside the staff room was a girl of a seemingly delicate constitution with her long, lightly coloured hair let down.

She had a fluffy navy blue one-piece and a white apron on her. No matter how you looked, she was not in her undergarments.

And then her face became contorted right after our eyes met.

“S-Sunbae, don’t look, you pervert...!”

“You’re already dressed!”

I shouted at the girl stooping her body covering her chest with her hands.

Mindful of the manageress outside, I shut the door. As I did, she drew closer with a mischievous smile on her face.

“Really, Sunbae, why is your timing so off? You should’ve walked in 30 seconds earlier.”

“Sorry, I’m having a little difficulty understanding. And why would I do that?”

“Then you’d be able to see me in my underwear!”

Saying that, my self-proclaimed “fiancée” Han Ka-ryeon gave a sweet smile.

“I’m sorry, but I don’t particularly want to see that.”

“How harsh! Are you saying it’s hardly worth your time unless one is at least on the same level as Miss Yu Yuyu?”

“That’s not the problem at all!”

Her breasts were indeed smaller than Yuyu’s, but that certainly didn’t mean Ka-ryeon’s looks were inferior to hers.

Especially the current image of her dressed in a navy blue one-piece and a white apron suited her far better than when she was in her school uniform the last time I saw her. This seemed to be the café’s waitress uniform, and fitting the concept of the café it felt like she was a maidservant receiving a guest at a mansion. However, the skirt was a little short to call it traditionally “European”. Thanks to that, her beautiful legs underneath the translucent black stockings were... Well, let’s just say it’s really difficult to lower one’s eyes.

“And you’re fine with a man entering the room and stealing a glance at your underwear when you’re changing?”

“But I might’ve been wearing sexy underwear on purpose to show to you.”

“Hahaha, very funny. Hahaha...”

What is this, a light novel?

“Oh my, I think it’s completely possible if you consider our relationship.”

“For the record, I still don’t believe any of the things you girls have said.”

Han Ka-ryeon claimed that we were dating. Furthermore, she was not just a girlfriend but a fiancée, and that we had gone all the way.

But for me, a guy who has lost his memory, she’s nothing more than someone that I’ve met for the first time.

“You don’t believe me... Even though I yearn for you so much. *sob sob*”

“Wow, this is my first time seeing such unnatural false tears...”

It’s quite an acting skill how there are actually tears flowing down her cheeks.

“Let me confirm this again... Is there really no one who can testify we were in that kind of relationship?”

“Regrettably, no.”

“Not even the manageress?”

At that moment a voice was heard from outside.

“Hey, Kyeong-hyun? I’ve just let it be since I figured you’re bantering with my sister again as usual, but you didn’t go in while Ka-ryeon was really changing, right? And you aren’t doing weird things to Ka-ryeon with her mouth gagged because of the sudden burst of desire, right? I’m a little bit concerned how there’s no sign of you two coming out of the staff room...”

Although her voice was gentle, a strange chill could be felt from it.

“Nah, he wouldn’t. Not after I’ve told him firmly that I’d grind his precious place like coffee beans if he ever lays his hands on Ka-ryeon.”

I flinched involuntarily. Scary...!

“Since my sister is like that, there’s no way I could tell her.”

“Kuuh...”

It’s the same as Yuyu, huh. Even the people who are close have no idea about the relationship between me and the girls.

In the end, there’s no method that I can use to cast some light to the authenticity of their claim that we were dating.

“...For the time being, let me get to work. I’m going to get changed.”

I’ll get an earful from the manageress again if I don’t hurry up and go back outside.

I put down my bag and loosened the tie on my school uniform.

“.....”

However, I was unable to undress any further due to the pair of eyes looking at me behind my back.

“I said I’m going to get changed. Why aren’t you leaving?”

As I spoke sharply at her, she replied with an angelic smile.

“I want to see you in your underwear..!”

“Get out!”

“Kyaan♡”

As I pretended to kick her with my foot, she let out a cute squeal and left the staff room.

“Sigh...”

Now I’ve got to work with that girl for about five hours, huh...

“Man, I should be getting paid more...”

It felt like the working conditions had gotten much worse than they were three months before.

After I put on the dress shirt and trousers, I wore the vest on top and wrapped the plain apron around my waist. They were all black except the white dress shirt. Although the clothes were simple, as ‘genuine’ articles in both appearance and reality unlike the fake antiques outside, they felt high-class enough as if to question if it’s okay for an ordinary highschooler like myself to wear them.

Having changed into this café’s waiter uniform, I went out and started working.

“It sure is quiet...”

But there’s nothing for a part-timer to do if there are no customers.

The same goes for the manageress, frowning with her chin on the counter, and Ka-ryeon sitting in front of her yawning.

“Shut up and go wipe the tables again.”

“You asked for it, Sunbae.”

Perhaps it was because she was in front of her sister, but Ka-ryeon no longer made advances at me. Feeling a bit relieved by that fact, I started wiping the tables, just as I was told, in silence.

And without a single customer present, the hands on the clock reached five thirty.

“...They’re here.”

Alongside the manageress’ mumble, the door into the store which had been shut burst open.

“Auntie! Tomato and egg fried rice for three here.”

“I’ve told you I’m not an auntie! And it’s risotto, not fried rice!”

The manageress glared and yelled at the girls striding inside. Clad in nearby Eunyoung Girls High School’s sky-blue uniform, the girls paid no attention to the manageress’s fit and grabbed their seats by the window side while laughing out loud amongst themselves.

“I’d like that spaghetti with garlic and bacon and one pork cutlet with that yellow sauce on top, please! On the double!”

“Okay, okay! Give me a few minutes!”

Replying to the order by the two male students who came in right afterwards, the manageress went into the kitchen behind the counter. Both of them were wearing our school uniform, and they were such regulars that we’d even greet one another in school if we bumped into each other.

“I’d like to make an order!”

“Yes, what will you be having?”

When the manageress is in the kitchen and is unable to come out, I, the waiter, am responsible for taking orders. Greeting the continuous flow of customers, I took the orders at each table one by one.

“Excuse me!”

“Ah, just a—“

After I turned my head while trying to say ‘just a moment’, I closed my mouth immediately. I saw a girl in a navy blue uniform making the order.

‘Right.’

Unlike what I’d remembered, I wasn’t alone. After I confirmed Ka-ryeon was serving the customers skillfully, I went back to greeting the swarm of customers with an oddly relieved feeling.

Eventually all the seats inside the café, including the ones at the counter, became full and the atmospheric European-style café fell into chaos in the clamor of the students. Inside of it, I either delivered the orders to the manageress focused on preparing food in the kitchen or carried the completed dishes, busily moving with Ka-ryeon. The onslaught continued without a moment to catch our breath.

“Sis, table 6 wants to change their order.”

“The food’s all done already! Tell them to just leave if they don’t like it! I’ll eat the meals myself!”

The reason why this store, one that does so poorly as a café, was able to survive over a year since its opening in this neighbourhood was right there.

This was all because the manageress started making meals on the spot with her own supper ingredients for the customers who hadn’t had dinner and were asking if there was anything to fill their stomachs. The taste was better than anything they could ever have imagined. In the end, café ‘Saint’ had settled itself in this neighbourhood not as a place for drinking coffee but as a place for eating food.

When it was evening, students wearing uniforms from Bigyeong High and Eunyoung Girls High—the two of the three nearby high schools except Collegiate High that’s the farthest away—flocked to this café. Although they provide complete meals at Eunyoung Girls High, because the school food is of poor quality as is often the case, quite a number of students sneaked out of school in the evening to eat outside.

As a result, by the evening the surrounding restaurants become full of students who have snuck out from school, and this café is included alongside the major restaurants that such students went to. Despite the fact it’s farther than the snack bars right in front of the schools, it enjoyed a flourish of full tables every evening.

Though the situation somewhat brings tears to the manageress who had been hoping the café would succeed with its coffee and cakes.

“Geez, really... Why do these kids come all the way here to eat?!”

“Manageress, table 9 said the meal wasn’t enough and that they’d like a specially made croquette!”

“Gahhh!”

Despite her grouching, the manageress put the fryer on the stove. Since this place was originally a diner before it got turned into a café, it had a comprehensive cooking facility.

For a moment, I was mesmerised by the sight of the manageress cooking intently on end even though she was dripping with sweat. The sight was always striking.

Although the reason I work at this café is simply to earn money, the reason I insist on working here is because of the manageress.

I heard she lost her parents at an early age, and that she raised her sister all by herself. Since her family didn't have any property unlike me and Yeon-hee, it seemed she went through considerable hardships. But through hard work and dedication, she was eventually able to have her own store at a young age. I respect her, and that's why I work at this hellishly busy store.

It feels 'educational' in a different sense than the studies that I do, and because it's also a nice change of pace, it's a time where I gain a lot in many ways.

"Your change is 3500 won. Have a nice day."

And the hectic peak ends less than an hour later. The students who have to return to school before the end of evening pay their bills right away and leave. Although the manageress designed this café as a place where people could spend their time in peace and leisure, such free time doesn't exist in the weeknights of Korean high school students.

While we were cleaning up the store that had emptied in an instant, the manageress staggered out of the kitchen. Her hands were holding two steaming plates.

"These are your dinners, so dig in... I'm going to take a rest..."

Delicious-looking rice omelettes were on plates that the manageress put down on the counter. Even more enticing than those served to the customers, I could tell she poured her heart into them.

"Thank you for your hard work today."

As I said that, the manageress raised her thumb without a word. Then bumping against the wall, she wobbled off into the staff room.

It has always been like this: having finished her evening battle royale, the manageress went into the staff room and fell asleep after serving the food for the part-timer last. However, unlike how I remembered, this time around there was food for two people, and I wasn't the only part-timer who had to eat supper.

"Then shall we eat?"

"...Yeah."

Sitting in front of the counter, Han Ka-ryeon and I started eating our rice omelettes. Because pre-scented eggs were used instead of regular eggs, the taste was different than that of just eating at a restaurant.

"Sunbae, how did I do today?"

While I was silently eating my rice omelette, Han Ka-ryeon struck up a conversation beside me.

“What do you mean?”

“I meant how I was at work?”

“...You were better than I thought you would be.”

To be honest, I was a bit surprised.

I only have memories of me working alone. So I was worried as to what I should do if we didn't work too well with each other, but it was nothing more than an unfounded concern. Not only did Han Ka-ryeon serve the customers skillfully, she covered for the tables that were out of my vision while moving so that she wouldn't walk into my path.

Although I used to get dead tired just like the manageress in the past, it wasn't that exhausting today. The burden had certainly lessened from before thanks to Han Ka-ryeon being around.

“It's all thanks to you teaching me. At first... All I did was make mistakes.”

“.....”

Slightly embarrassed, I turned my eyes away.

“...Han Ka-ryeon.”

“Yes, Sunbae?”

“Although it's a bit unfortunate that I have no memory of us working together before now... I'll be counting on you from now on as a colleague.”

Though I had only worked with her for an hour at most, I recognised Han Ka-ryeon as a person who I could trust as something along the lines of a colleague. Or should I say a comrade who suffered alongside me? It could be that I'm feeling a kind of camaraderie.

A thought suddenly occurred to me: if it's with this girl, it may be possible to make this store grow further.

“No, Sunbae.”

Han Ka-ryeon shook her head lightly.

When I looked at her, surprised by her unexpected words, she smiled softly.

“You should count on me as a fiancée, not as a colleague, you know? I'll be disappointed if you say you're just my colleague.”

Sitting beside me, she gently leaned her head against my shoulder. Although she must've sweated while she was busy working, she did not smell of sweat at all. Instead, there was only a pleasant scent like the subtle smell of soap.

"...!"

I'd forgotten all about it...!

I was so busy working that I'd completely forgotten that this girl is my apparent fiancée...!

"Y-You see, that's..."

I mumbled, breaking out in a cold sweat. My heart was pounding, perhaps because I was caught a bit off-guard.

Han Ka-ryeon was my 'part-time junior' in every respect while she was working. The image of her hard at work taking orders and carrying dishes was just nothing more than that of a diligent waitress.

But that diligent waitress was now leaning against my body shyly with her hands on her lap— at a distance where our faces would touch if we were to move even slightly.

"But you showed no sign of that during work..."

"I can't express my affection when my sister's watching and there are other customers around, can I?"

"E-Express your affection...?"

"Like this, for example..."

Saying that, Han Ka-ryeon gently hugged my arm.

It wasn't like I could feel her breasts since she didn't hug me tightly, but the slight brushing sensation was peculiarly ticklish.

"W-Well then, I'm off to do the dishes! You look after the shop!"

I sprang out of my seat after I hastily shoved the two remaining spoonfuls of rice omelette into my mouth. I shook off her arms and tried to head for the kitchen, but having emptied her plate already Han Ka-ryeon took the plate away from my hand and stacked it on her plate.

"You don't have to be in such a rush. There won't be more customers anyway."

"B-But you never know! A score of rugby club members who finished their intense training might swarm down on us! I should hurry and get the dishes done!"

"There are no rugby clubs at nearby schools here."

Stopped from escaping to the kitchen, I took a few steps back here and there, ending up inside the counter. I let out a sigh of relief upon seeing Han Ka-ryeon--who was chasing after me--cease her pursuit, but I soon realised my predicament and shouted.

“A-A dead end!”

“Fufu, Sunbae♡”

Driven into the corner of the ⊏-shaped counter; I was completely blocked in by Han Ka-ryeon.

“We finally have the café to ourselves.”

“M-Manageress is here, too.”

“My sister’s fast asleep, so she won’t be waking up for a while. ...Fufu, it feels like we’re a husband and a wife trying to have private time after sending our kid to bed early. Which do you prefer: a boy or a girl?”

She’s getting way too ahead of herself!

“I-If a customer comes in...”

“A customer at this time of day? Not a chance.”

It was sad that I couldn’t refute. There would’ve been people coming in to drink coffee after they’d finished their supper if it was another café, but those kinds of customers were hard to find here.

“Why are you so afraid, Sunbae? What horrible thing could a feeble girl like me do to you?”

“W-Well...”

The incident that happened at school crossed my mind in a flash. Yuyu pouncing on me, her breath, and those overwhelming...

“Sunbae. You’re thinking about lewd things, aren’t you?”

“No, I’m not!”

Although I denied almost immediately, Han Ka-ryeon smiled softly as though she knew everything.

“It’s okay, Sunbae.”

“W-What’s okay?”

“Because, you see...”

Covering her mouth with her hand, Han Ka-ryeon smiled. Then with a slight blush, she said in a gentle voice:

“I’m thinking about lewd things, too.”

“...!”

What is this girl saying...?!

“It’s the first time the current you is seeing these clothes, right?”

Paying no heed to my confused state, Han Ka-ryeon grabbed the skirt hem of the waitress uniform that she was wearing.

“Aren’t they lovely? You said they looked good on me last time, as well.”

Dressed in a navy blue one-piece and a white apron, her attire harmonized with her surreal beauty, emanating a dangerous charm. It seemed that there were more male patrons today than three months ago, and that’s probably because Han Ka-ryeon started working with those clothes on.

“But it concerned me how short the skirt was when I first wore it.”

I also agree. The skirt wasn’t that short to call it a miniskirt, but how it kept fluttering and swaying every time she moved was of peculiar concern. Although it wasn’t to such an extent as to expose what was underneath, I was worried that it might just narrowly reveal because it kept moving constantly. And you never know, there might be guys trying to sneak a peek.

“But it’s not so bad since you steal glances at me.”

“I-I wasn’t stealing glances at you!”

I was looking at you because I was worried! Honest to God!

“But, Sunbae...”

Saying that, Han Ka-ryeon took a step closer to me. Then she put her hands in front of her thighs.

“You couldn’t see it up to here, could you?”

And then she raised the hem of her skirt.

“There’s a pattern sewn on here.”

She had raised the hem by 5cm, at most.

But on the upper portion of the stocking wrapping her leg — i.e. the portion that was hidden by the skirt — was a shining silver pattern. As though it were a silver ornament adorning her thigh.

Her slim leg that followed a smooth curve upwards became sensual in an instant as she exposed her thigh.

“And above there is...”

Han Ka-ryeon raised her skirt further.

The stocking ended at where the band decorated with lace was, and above it was her white bare skin. However, what stole my attention was something else.

'A g-garter belt?'

That black strap that was holding on to the stocking's band and going upwards on the bare skin of her thigh was certainly a garter belt. I had caught a glimpse of it that was displayed at a shop when I went to a department store together with Yeon-hee before, but this was my first time actually seeing it on a person.

An innocent, junior girl of seemingly delicate constitution was wearing immodest lingerie underneath her skirt.

"If you so desire, I can show you what's further underneath. Even the deeper part."

And currently she was showing it to me and seducing me with it.

"I said it earlier, right?"

Talking to me softly in a sweet voice, she looked at me.

"Would you please confirm whether... I came wearing sexy underwear on purpose to show them to you?"

After saying that, she drew closer with one step towards me.

One step, two steps... The distance between us decreased each time she took a step forward, and also made it easier for me to reach out and raise her skirt further up her legs.

"Sunbae..."

With her face flushed, Han Ka-ryeon looked up at me.

It was an abnormal situation: The girl that I was working with here just a moment ago was raising her skirt and seductively tempting me in secret as her sister slept in the next room. I felt as though I would suffocate from the decadent ambiance floating inside the counter.

Eventually, I slowly reached out my hand towards her skirt.

"Why are you doing this?"

Then I snatched away her hands that were raising her skirt. The skirt fell gently due to gravity and covered the thigh that was seducing me.

That was dangerous. I would've fallen for her seduction if I hadn't experienced a similar incident with Yuyu that afternoon.

“It’s in order to for you to regain your memory.”

While her hands were sized by me, Han Ka-ryeon replied with a nonchalant attitude.

“Because my memory might return if I try things that I have done before?”

“That’s right.”

“What if this is not what I had done before but something that I’m doing for the first time completely?”

“Does that matter, though? There’s no harm from a man’s perspective when a girl is seducing him like this.”

Her voice was composed as ever.

“I would have to take the responsibility if I fell for your seduction and lay my hands on you.”

“.....”

As I said that, she stared at my face motionlessly.

“Can’t you think of it as enjoying yourself just this once?”

“I can’t think of it like that.”

“Is it because it might get in the way of studying?”

“There’s also that.”

Sighing, Han Ka-ryeon took her hands out of my grip.

“But then why do you think I’m doing this?”

“That’s the question...”

What does she have to gain by doing these things to me?

“When I think about it, it’s all the same even if your story is true. Supposing we really went out with each other, I believe doing all this is a little bit odd.”

Of course, Han Ka-ryeon’s claiming that we had done all kinds of stuff routinely inside the store since a long time ago...

“Sunbae... Can’t you accept that I’m being like this because I just sincerely love you?”

“I’m sorry, but you’re the one that’s the most difficult to believe out of the three girls when it comes to the ‘genuine’ aspect.”

Now that I think back, the one who created this situation was none other than Han Ka-ryeon.

She's the very person that pointed out that I even lost my memories of what I studied, and proposed that I should date them at the same time in order to recover those memories. In retrospect, she had often complicated the situation by drawing out our reactions at various points on top of that.

Honestly speaking, she's the most suspicious. Although Yuyu is the most questionable, Han Ka-ryeon is the most suspicious one.

"So I've failed to win your trust. Ahh, how sad."

"That kind of behaviour makes it even harder to trust you, you know..."

While staring, I told her.

"And if you really were my fiancée, why did you propose that I date you three girls all at once? You might lose me to those other girls."

"Mm... Because it seemed like it would be fun?"

"Hey."

"And..."

At that moment, she averted her gaze and made an expression as though she was a bit bitter.

"It was because I wanted to know about your... relationship with those people."

"My relationship with them...?"

"Because I'm your fiancée. I have to get a grasp of my fiancé's relationship with other women."

Fiancée, huh...

"Why in the world did we get engaged? Aren't we both high school students?"

To that question, Han Ka-ryeon shut her mouth and did not reply.

As I stared at her still, Han Ka-ryeon let out a sigh and opened her mouth once more.

"Fine. Since it appears you're so suspicious of me, I'll tell you as it is."

"As it is?"

"Although I was planning on having a slow talk with you later since I figured you'd to take it the wrong way when I tell you this all a sudden... I guess it's better to come out with it, rather than be treated as a distrustful woman."

Smiling bitterly, she swept her hair up.

"Sunbae."

Then she said in a calm voice.

“My dream is to become a NEET.”

“...A NEET?”

“Yes, have you not heard of it before?”

I have heard of it... I remember reading about it whilst studying.

It’s an abbreviation of Not in Education, Employment or Training. Although the word was created in connection to the problem with youth in the UK originally, the term was also brought in to Korea as it became widely used in Japan as a word to refer to unemployed adolescents who have no intention of working. The legions of lethargic NEETs who have no desire to work are becoming a problem in Japan, and it has been reported that there’s an increasing trend of NEETs in Korea as well.

But what does that have to do with being my fiancée?

“Are you saying you want to become a full-time housewife?”

“Oh Sunbae, a housewife has to do housework. Cooking, cleaning, laundry... Housework is labour too, you know?”

“...Then what is it?”

“You see, I hate that kind of pesky stuff the most.”

With an angelic smile on her innocent face, Han Ka-ryeon spoke such non-sense.

“That means... You want to live just lazing around...?”

“Yes, I don’t want to do any work at all. Not even housework.”

“But you were working hard a while ago...”

“You fell for it, Sunbae. I worked with great care today so that I would be in your good books. Usually, I fool around and make a lot of mistakes.”

“What...?”

“To tell you the truth, I don’t want to work at the café. I’m just doing this because my sister kept nagging at me to give her a hand.”

“I-Is that so?”

“Well, I also do think I should repay my sister who has raised me up until now.”

Replying like that, Han Ka-ryeon made an expression with mixed emotions for a mere moment.

“But I can only live off my sister for so long. That’s why I need another person who will provide for me.”

“...And that’s me?”

“Yes♡”

With a perfect smile of an angel, Han Ka-ryeon replied.

“Hold on a second...”

I shook my head hard from side to side.

“That absurd future dream of yours... I’ll put it to the side for the time being...”

While looking at the immaculate girl in front of my eyes, I said with a shaky voice.

“Okay, so let’s say you and I got married later... Then I would work outside and earn money... And you would do absolutely nothing at home and play around with the money I earned all day?”

“Yes♡”

“Then what is there to gain for me?!”

She’s not earning money, and it’s not like she’s doing housework... I had promised to marry a person who said she would spend her time simply playing around all day long?”

“Really Sunbae, what is there to gain, you say?”

However, Han Ka-ryeon covered her mouth and smiled.

“You will be able to gain something really nice.”

“And what is that?”

When I asked out of genuine curiosity, she carefully approached me, smiling. Then she modestly gathered her hands on her lap, and she spoke as though whispering, looking up to me.

“I will give you myself.”

“?!”

She said to me with a truly sweet voice as to jolt one’s entirety for an instant.

“I’m not confident that I will do well with no cooking, cleaning, nor laundry. But I think I will be able to do one thing well.”

“A-And that is?”

“Pleasuring my husband♡”

What that means, I can guess from just looking at her crimsoned face.

“Whatever it is that you want to do, it’s fine to do it to me. Whatever it is that you want me to, I will do it for you.”

“Wh-What are you--”

“Fufu.”

Damn, she usually has a pure and innocent style that provokes one’s desire to protect, so it’s impossible to resist when she makes such an extremely coquettish expression.

“You said you didn’t want do anything else because they were all troublesome!”

As I yelled taking a step backward, she replied moving two steps closer.

“This I can do quite well.”

“On what grounds?! Not to mention when it’s th-that kind of stuff...!”

“I like that kind of stuff as well. A married life where I can live idly and do that kind of stuff a lot with my beloved husband... Sounds perfect.”

“?!”

“I will be a good girl and stay at home obediently, so you can work without a worry and return home every evening. Then you just have to adore me a lot.”

“What are you, a pet?”

“Ah, that sounds good, too. Please adore me like a pet, master. Woof woof♡”

Woof woof, my ass! There are probably nine fox tails hidden beneath that skirt of yours...!

Although I tried to back away, before I knew it there was no more space left that I could withdraw to. Having driven me into a dead end, Han Ka-ryeon slowly drew closer, reached out her hand and lightly touched my lips.



“If we get married, I will leave the cooking, cleaning, and laundry to you. In return, you can look forward to our nighttimes.”

That sweet voice, and the subtle sensation being transmitted from my lips... I gulped without knowing.

“H-Han Ka-ryeon, you...”

“Please call me familiarly by my first name like you always used to.”

“K-Ka-ryeon...”

Engulfed in a feeling as though I were bewitched, I stared at Ka-ryeon; the girl who possessed such a dangerous charm right in front of my eyes.

“You may not remember, but I’ve had my eyes on you since I first came to work with you... Thinking to myself ‘this person is the one.’ That’s why I kept tempting you like I did earlier, and eventually made you lay your hand on me.”

Looking into my eyes, Ka-ryeon spoke in a soft voice.

“Just like before, you told me that you would take responsibility. That’s why we got engaged.”

“Is that... true?”

“Yes.”

Replying while nodding her head, there seemed to be no falseness in her eyes.

However, I still can’t trust her word completely. It might be probable, but it’s all a bit too unrealistic.

Also, there’s one more part that is awkward.

“But, why me? If it’s you, you could have any rich and capable man.”

I’m an ordinary high school student who has nothing right now. Wouldn’t I be an inadequate choice for her to make me her man who was to provide for her forever?

If it is her looks, Ka-ryeon could immediately find a man who would provide for her. A truly capable man that’s beyond compare to a part-timer like me.

“How harsh of you to say. What do you take me for, Sunbae? A woman who tries to swoop in on rich men and live an empty life of luxury?”

“That’s much the same...”

Were you honestly thinking it was different...?

“Sunbae, I don’t want to just do that with anybody else. I want to do that with you.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Certainly, you are an ordinary high school student who has nothing now, but whilst working with you, I thought to myself that ‘this person is the one.’”

Her voice rose a little.

“You’re sincere. You study hard and even work diligently at the café. Yet you’re never impatient nor too greedy. Rather than aiming for the jackpot, you’re the type that builds up one step at a time. Although you probably won’t achieve huge success, you’ll have a stable and sound job. If it’s that kind of a person you turned into, I would be at ease and would lovingly wait for my husband at home.”

“I-Is that so?”

“Yes, and you really cherish your little sister. Since you’re a person who treasures family, you’ll hold your wife dear, also. I think I would be happy if you were to treat me as well as you treat your little sister. Furthermore, since we both grew up without parents, we would be able to understand and care for each other much better. What’s more, there are sides to you that are similar to my older sister. You’re that kind of person. That’s why I love...”

Ka-ryeon, who was running off her mouth, suddenly stopped talking. After a brief silence, she shortly turned her head with a slightly reddened face.

“...Mm, I’ll stop right there. It’s kind of awkward now that I’m trying to talk seriously.”

“That’s why I love... What...?”

“I-I said I’m stopping right there.”

Until now she had an attitude as though she was teasing, but now it was something a bit different.

Then I realised the fact again that she was younger than me.

“Anyway, Sunbae...”

Said Ka-ryeon, clearing her throat as if to evade the question.

“This is all I can reveal to you right now. Of course, I don’t think you will believe everything I have told you. Since it’s an unrealistic story, and there are those two other girls...”

“Well, that’s...”

“But.”

Ka-ryeon spoke with an emphasis.

“Don’t forget... I want to be your bride.”

What could I say, I had no clue at all.

At that moment, the sound of the manageress stretching was heard from the staff room, and as soon as she heard that sound, Ka-ryeon took the plate she was eating the omelette rice from earlier and disappeared into the kitchen.

Yawning, the manageress walked out of the staff room soon after, and the café returned to being an idle place of work once again. The strange mood that was filling up the café just a while ago disappeared into thin air.

But the sweet words that Ka-ryeon had whispered did not vanish and still rang in my ears, and thanks to that, I couldn't break away from the feeling of restlessness for a while.

I'm digressing here, but Ka-ryeon did break two plates while washing the dishes. I don't know about the other ones, however it seems it was true when she said she wasn't confident with house chores.

Side. Sister



Ahn Yeon-hee

Affiliation: Jaran University's College of Education Affiliated Girls High School, First Year, Class 3

Hobbies: Watching dramas

Speciality: Cooking, cleaning, et cetera. Housework in general

Favourite Literature: Publications on humanities

Favourite Food: Vegetables

Strongest Subject: English

Weakest Subject: Fine arts

First Year Midterm Result: School Rank #13

Current State and Perception of Adolescent Relationships Survey (For Female Student)

* This questionnaire is intended to investigate the opinions of adolescents in regards to relationships with the opposite sex.

1. What kind of a person would you like your boyfriend to be?

Someone who will respect my brother and treat him well.

2. What would you like to do when you are on a date with your boyfriend?

Go back home right away because my brother would be waiting for my return.

3. What do you want to do for your boyfriend the most?

Nothing in particular. I'm busy enough looking after my brother alone.

4. What do you want your boyfriend to do for you the most?

Nothing in particular. Maybe give presents to my brother?

5. What would you do if your boyfriend demanded a sexual relationship?

Kick him between the legs and tell my brother...

6. What would you do if your boyfriend had another girlfriend as well as you?

There's no need to even think about it... My brother would never do such a thing.

This is not a survey about your brother, you know...

“Sheesh, the bus is packed today, again.”

“.....”

“Hey, Yeon-hee...”

“...What?”

“The café your brother works at is called ‘Saint,’ right?”

“That’s right.”

“But when I went there yesterday, all of the employees were females.”

“My brother doesn’t work there on the weekends. He only works on weekday nights.”

“Ah, really? Then we can’t go. Are they open late there?”

“It’s useless; my brother leaves work when we finish our evening self-study session.”

“Aaah... I wanted to see your brother.”

“.....”

“Say Yeon-hee, could you introduce him to me later?”

“...Why?”

“I’m curious as to what he looks like.”

“...He’s just average-looking.”

“You said he doesn’t have a girlfriend, right?”

“.....”

“Eh? Could it be that he got a girlfriend?”

“And what if he doesn’t? You’re going to ask him out?”

“N-No, I was just asking... Why are you being so serious?”

“...I wasn’t being serious.”

“.....”

“.....”

“Hey, Yeon-hee, did you have a fight with your brother?”

“...Why?”

“You didn’t talk about your brother once at school today. Usually you never stop talking about your brother.”

“...I don’t particularly recall talking that much about my brother.”

“But you have. About how your brother wore a mismatched pair of socks and you made him wear the correct ones, or how your brother knocked on your door in the middle of the night and you wondered what it was... Only to find out he came over to borrow some leads because he ran out of them while studying. You’ve told me all sorts of stories in every little detail.”

“...I’ve only told those as passing remarks.”

“Is that so...? But in any case you haven’t said one thing about him today.”

“.....”

“Did something really happen with you and your brother?”

“...No.”

“I know...! Your brother got a girlfriend, didn’t he?”

“.....”

“Right? Am I right?”

“...No.”

“Ehhh? But...”

“There’s no way my brother would have a girlfriend.”

“Ah, Yeon-hee? Wait a—“

After tapping her fare card on the electronic reader, Yeon-hee alighted the bus.

“Huuu...”

As if to rid herself of the hectic atmosphere that was inside the bus, she took a deep breath in the cold night sky.

Even when the evening self-study session had ended, it didn’t feel real that school was over. It was only when she parted with other people and was finally alone that she truly felt her day as a high school student had finished.

Enveloped in an unknown melancholy, Yeon-hee started walking towards her home.

“.....”

It wasn't like this before. She used to come home before dark, and have supper together with her one and only family member.

That everyday life had started to change since last year. It was because her brother had become a high school student. Although her brother had decided not to attend supplemental classes and evening self-study sessions, because he had started working part-time regularly he would not return home until late into the evening.

And this year Yeon-hee had become a high school student as well. Because the Collegiate High that Yeon-hee attends has a strict environment, it wasn't easy to skip evening self-study sessions. She wanted to eat at least some dinner with her brother, but it was the school's policy to never dismiss students until the self-study sessions were over.

In the end, if they exclude the weekend, the only time they could spend together as family was at morning and night. Fleeting moments where the times they sleep and her brother is immersed in his studies holed up in his room were included.

And her brother spent the remainder of the day aside from those times outside with someone else.

"Yu Yuyu, Han Ka-ryeon."

The girls that were claiming to have had intimate relationships with her brother. Recalling the images of those girls, Yeon-hee bit her lips.

The girl called Yu Yuyu was gentle-looking, but she had a voluptuous figure. However, it wasn't like she was plump, she carried her weight in all the necessary places.

As for the girl called Han Ka-ryeon; her innocent looks and slim figure stood out. The beauty of her stretched legs was a head-turner even for a girl like Yeon-hee.

In contrast, what about herself? Her face and body were that of a mere child.

"Oppa..."

Yeon-hee felt herself becoming a little sad.

If Yeon-hee didn't have a baby face, if her breasts were larger and her legs slenderer, would her brother have not been so easily seduced by other girls?

...No. Her brother was not the kind of person who is swayed by a person's looks. He was completely different from those other boys who get worked up over base chatters about who is pretty or has a decent figure.

Yes, her brother was different from the other boys. Even if naked girls were to attack him, her brother was the kind of person who wouldn't lay a finger without a good reason.

There was no way a person like her brother could have gotten a girlfriend. There was no way he was dating behind his sister's back. There was no way he had messed around with various girls outside.

Her brother was not that kind of person!

“.....”

Yeon-hee stopped and took deep breaths staring up at the night sky to regain her calm.

The kind of person who wouldn't lay a finger without a good reason. Doesn't that mean he would lay his hand if there was a good reason?

And at the same time, that meant if you have no good reason he would not lay his hand on you.

“Oppa...”

With a stiff expression, Yeon-hee started walking again.

If the day is going as per usual, her brother should be on his way home from his part-time job. From now on is the time between only family— only siblings—that nobody is able to interfere.

Nobody is able to interfere.

“I won't hand my brother over to anyone else...”

Walking alone in the empty streets at night, Yeon-hee spoke with a voice as though praying.

Chapter 4 - Bath Time

“Whew...”

Lying inside the bathtub, I let out a long sigh.

Although our house was by no means large, the bathtub was on the spacious side. It was to the extent where I, whose height is in the mid-170cm zone, could stretch my legs and submerge to my shoulders.

“I’m beat...”

I muttered feebly, soaking my body worn out from fatigue into the hot water.

Truthfully, if I were to view my life at school and my work at a part-time job from an overall perspective, it’s not particularly different from before. The fact that I went to school, attended classes, and worked at the store remains the same.

However, the incidents that took place in the short amount of time between lunch and supper were too intense, and their aftereffects were still lingering.

Was I really living this sort of life during the past three months?

“Just how did I study in this state?”

Of course, I’m not someone who just studies all the time. Although I barely watch TV, I sometimes borrow and read comics and novels from Sega and Yeon-hee. But those are strictly breaks between studying... A change of air, if you like. They don’t keep affecting you like this.

I was able to study in the morning, but I couldn’t properly pay attention to the lessons in the afternoon because of the flickering images of Yuyu. Even now, words whispered by Ka-ryeon and her smooth legs linger in my mind. At this rate, I don’t think it’d go so well even if I did sit down at my desk and tried to study.

“...Should I just not study today?”

Like Ka-ryeon said on Saturday... With studying put aside for the time being, should I solely concentrate on romance...? I mean, recovering my memories while hanging out with them?

“I don’t think so!”

I shut my eyes tight and submerged myself up to my head in the bath.

‘Concentrate! Concentrate!’

Shouting that chant in my heart, I focused my mind. I must empty my head and expunge idle thoughts.

You can't concentrate on studying because you keep recalling the times you briefly flirted with the girls? I don't think so! I will forget everything about it, and study with a clear mind!

Yes, I can do this! I, Ahn Kyeong-hyun, am a man who lives and dies studying!

"Oppa."

"Pffp!"

Surprised by her voice along with the sudden sound of the door opening abruptly, I choked on some bathwater.

"Y-Yeon-hee! You shouldn't come in when your brother is taking a..."

I raised my drenched hair and tried to scold her, but I involuntarily held my breath at the sight that came into view.

"...Why are you naked?"

Yeon-hee, who had opened the bathroom door, was not wearing any clothes.

Her bare body stood there with nothing on. I had only seen this sight when we were mere children.

"What do you think, Oppa?"

I heard her calm voice.

As I stared at her silently, she gave a small laugh.

"Fufu. You can't take your eyes off me, Oppa. Are you turned on by your little sister's body?"

Listening to her sweet voice, I swallowed my saliva.

Then I opened my mouth and said with a shaky voice.

"No, I can hardly see because I don't have my glasses on."

My eyes are seriously bad... And I have astigmatism, too...

I could recognise that it was her because of her body size and hair style, but I couldn't see a thing as far as specific parts were concerned. Even her silhouette was faint. There's no way I would get turned from seeing that.

Above all, I don't get turned on from seeing my little sister's body.

"....."

I couldn't see so well, but I could tell she drooped her shoulders with a terribly disappointed look.

"I don't know what you're thinking, but I'll be going out in a few minutes, so wait until later if you want a bath."

I said while turning my head the other way; I still felt it wasn't quite right to stare at my little sister in her birthday suit. She remained in the room, ignoring my words.

"...I want to take a bath with you."

"What are you saying..."

I had a notion when I saw her come in naked; as I expected, it was correct.

"You're not a child anymore, bathing together is..."

"But you've seen me naked numerous times."

"Like I've told you, I don't remember anymore."

Maybe it was because I had already experienced it several times today, or because I couldn't see properly without my glasses, or because the girl was my little sister... But I was able to speak placidly without being all that flustered at all.

"Let's not do this kind of stuff, Yeon-hee."

I told her in a reproving voice.

It would've been a different story if we had truly crossed the line, but given the uncertainties, I can't act carelessly. You have to be straight with these sorts of things.

That's why right now I must have dignity as her brother, and sternly...

"If you don't bathe with me, I'll cry."

"?!"

I flinched at the sound of her depressed voice.

"...*Sniff.*"

"O-O-Okay! Don't cry!"

Even if I couldn't see, I could tell that she was about to cry.

N-No, what have I done...? Making her cry...

"Then will you let me take a bath with you?"

"...Please put on your swimsuit, at least."

That was the most I could yield.

“Fuu...”

“Fuu...”

The sound of the siblings' sighs filled inside the steamy bathroom.

Currently, she was sitting in front of me dressed in a white one-piece swimsuit that she had bought last year. I was sitting with my back against the wall, wearing swimming trunks that I had also bought last year.

Although it wound up like this after many twists and turns, it wasn't so bad. And it's not that weird if you think of it as if visiting a spa with the family.

While I was thinking that, Yeon-hee, who sat with her back toward me, muttered in a small voice.

“...Fail.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I was going to seduce you by entering the bathroom naked... And I even went as far as to consider raping you if you didn't succumb to my temptation, but I failed because of your unexpected response.”

“You were going to rape me if I hadn't said that I couldn't see without my glasses?!”

I began to wonder if this little girl sitting crouched before me was really my sister.

“And you were strangely calm after that, too, and even so now... A girl comes in naked asking you to take a bath with her, and that's your reaction? That's so mean of you.”

“That's because I'm your older brother...”

“The brother I knew wasn't so composed like this... Could it be that he's been accumulating experience points somewhere else...?”

Yeon-hee, who was in the midst of muttering, suddenly looked back and opened her eyes wide.

“Oppa, could it be that you can't feel anything for me because you've sated all your desires with those girls outside today?!”

“That's just absurd!”

“Could it be that the reason why you started taking a bath as soon as you came back was to erase the smell of those girls...?!”

She got up immediately. Splashing water everywhere, she tried to get out of the bathtub.

“I’ll have to inspect your clothes! Especially your underpants!”

“Hey, hey, hey!”

I grabbed Yeon-hee by the leg and stopped her movements before she could search through my clothes.

“I didn’t do anything weird! We simply ate together... And worked together!”

Things like talking about breasts in a secluded room, or seeing a skirt being raised in a café... they don’t count as weird stuff.

...Probably.

“I’m merely taking a bath with family. There’s no reason to have weird thoughts. Stop thinking about such strange ideas.”

“...You don’t have weird thoughts at all?”

To Yeon-hee, who was staring at me as though discontent, I replied confidently.

“Of course not. There’s no way I’d see my little sister as a woman. That’s why I’m taking a bath with you like th—”

...Wait. If I truly didn’t think of my little sister as a woman, then what would it particularly matter if I were to just get in the bathtub with her naked? On the contrary, the fact that I’m wearing swimming trunks would signify that I’m conscious of her being a woman.

“.....”

“...Oppa?”

“Mm?! I-It’s nothing!”

No, that’s not it! It’s a problem of manners...! Not whether I’m conscious of her as a woman or not!

Even if we’re siblings, we’re already all grown up, so being in the nude together is a no-no! It’s basic decorum!

“...Oppa, your eyes are kind of lustful now.”

“Wh-What are you saying?!”

I was startled by her remark.

C-Could it be that... I’ve started to see Yeon-hee as a woman?! Is this a reverse effect due to my overemphasis on not seeing her as a woman?!

“It... It must be your imagination.”

I denied desperately.

We are siblings related by blood. There's no way that I'd see her in such a way.

But if we're not related by blood, as Yeon-hee had said... Mm...

"...Ughh."

When I thought of it like that, the situation suddenly began to feel somewhat erotic.

A spa? Who am I kidding? This is a bathroom inside a house. Even if it is large enough for one person to use, if two people were to get in, it would be inevitable for their bodies to touch each other ...

...Yes, her frail body's been touching mine for a while now. She's not tense like Yuyu, nor is she seductive like Ka-ryeon, but she is vulnerable...

"It's fine, Oppa."

She muttered as if she could read these thoughts of mine.

"If you so desire, I'm always..."

While saying that, she leaned against my chest. I felt her petite frame hidden under the swimsuit. My heart started to race.

"W-Wait a moment, Yeon-hee. We are brother and sister through and through..."

"I told you we're not related by blood. It doesn't matter."

Mm, yes, it doesn't matter if we're not related by blood... Not!

"Say... Yeon-hee."

In order to regain as much composure as I could, I opened my mouth.

Before I get into a dispute with her, there's something I must ensure.

"When you say we're not related by blood... Do you mean you're not our father's daughter?"

"...That's what I told you."

To the subject I brought up, Yeon-hee stopped moving. Then she murmured in a subdued voice.

"We both know that we're 'half-siblings' ..."

Half-siblings. I don't particularly like the term, but fact is fact.

My biological mother left this world right after giving birth to me. Afterwards, my father remarried, and born between the two was Yeon-hee.

As long as we have the same father, we're related by blood, and that's why we continued to live together as family after our stepmom disappeared and our father had passed away.

"I'm not our dad's daughter. I'm the daughter that my mom made with another man before she married father."

However, the shocking revelation that came from Yeon-hee threw everything I knew so far upside down.

"You know what kind of a person my mother is, too."

"....."

I bit my lips, listening to the cynical voice that was unbecoming of a sixteen-year-old girl.

No matter how well you thought of her, Yeon-hee's biological mother was a promiscuous woman. I was well aware of that fact.

But, if that's true...

"Then my father..."

"He was deceived by Mom. She married dad with a child she had with another man. And, not knowing that, dad raised me thinking I was his own daughter."

"But this truth... How do you know about...?"

Don't tell me during the three months I can't remember, our stepmom...

"I found Mom's notebook while I was organising stuff."

"Notebook...?"

"There were memos about the man she was seeing before she married Dad... And about the man she kept seeing even after the wedding. I think I'm that man's daughter."

"H-Hold on a second."

I exhaled as I organised my thoughts.

"But even if you have that, it's not proof that we're not blood-related. Even assuming your Mom was having an affair, the possibility that you're my father's daughter is..."

"Yes, I may be our father's daughter."

Yeon-hee said in a bitter voice.

"So I had a DNA test. Its result was that we're not related by blood."

Those were the decisive words.

If it's verified via DNA that we're not blood relatives, nothing that I can say after that matters.

Me and Yeon-hee are not related by blood. Aside from the point that we've lived as family until now, there's nothing that would pose a problem if we were to cross the line.

Even if I were to reach out for the frail girl before my eyes right now, it wouldn't pose a problem.

However.

"Then show me the test results."

Since I'd expected this development, I asked Yeon-hee without hesitation.

"If you had a test done, you should have something like a printout of the results. If you don't have them, then tell me the phone number of the place you went to get tested or their geneticist."

"....."

She wasn't replying at all. Staring still at Yeon-hee in such state, I waited for her answer in silence.

To be honest, I didn't plan on confronting her like this right now. I was doing this because of what Ka-ryeon had said earlier.

—Setting aside Miss Yu Yuyu, I think it's necessary to find out for certain for Yeon-hee...

Telling me to be careful when I dealt with my sister from now on, Ka-ryeon spoke to me insinuatingly while I was preparing to go home from the café.

—Although I think it'd be fine since you didn't fall for my temptation at all... It'd be a serious problem if you lay your hands on her when you are related by blood.

Saying that, the advice she gave me was about this whole DNA test thing. The subject of DNA testing should come up while talking about not being blood-related, then I should focus on pressing her on that part. If Yeon-hee says she already threw out the result printout or shows doubtful reactions, there's a high possibility that she's lying.

From the start, Ka-ryeon pointed out that Yeon-hee might be lying because she doesn't want her brother taken away from her. The possibility was that Yeon-hee was making stuff up in order to drive away Yuyu and Ka-ryeon.

Frankly, I agree with her. Although Yuyu is the most questionable and Han Ka-ryeon is the most suspicious, the most unrealistic one is Yeon-hee.

The problem of whether or not the brother and sister were blood-related would happen like an everyday occurrence in dramas on TV, but that'd never be the case in reality.

It's just an improvised lie of hers. That's what I'm hoping it is.

"Okay."

But what I heard was her calm voice.

“...What?”

“It’s in the bottom shelf of the desk inside my room. Take it out and check it if you need to, or would you like me to take it out for you?”

There was nothing awkward about her behaviour. At least it didn’t seem like she was making things up on the fly.

“Well... Then... show it to me later.”

“Okay.”

I was thrown into confusion. Was it really verified via DNA test that we were not related by blood?

Then are we really... not brother and sister?

“Oppa.”

The sound of her voice echoed in the bathroom full of steam.

“I’ll say this now, but I’m not really shocked or anything. My only thought was just ‘so that’s how it is.’ I knew what kind of a person Mom was... And the situation would’ve been a little different if Dad was still alive, but they’re both gone now. That is never going to change.”

If it was a normal household with both parents, it would’ve become a considerable problem; a scandal that would shake the existence of the family itself.

But this household had no parents. That’s why this problem depends on how Yeon-hee, the concerned party, accepts it. The truth that she’s a daughter born from her mother’s infidelity, that is.

“I’m not bothered by it, so you don’t need to worry about me being shocked. I mean it.”

“Yeon-hee...”

“That’s why...”

Yeon-hee gently turned her body and sat on her knees in front of me. Looking up at me with earnest eyes, she touched my chest softly.

“It’s fine for you to touch me all you want.”

“H-Hey... Yeon-hee, that’s...!”

“No...”

With her doll-like face reddened, she said while looking into my eyes.

“Please touch me, Oppa.”

“...!”

“If I’m near you like this, you can see even without your glasses on, right...?”

With those words, Yeon-hee began to lower the shoulder strap on one side. The strap on her shoulder fell and her swimsuit slipped downwards. The small mounds that were hidden until now was...



“S-Stop!”

I stretched out my hand in a hurry and grabbed the top part of the swimsuit that was about to slide down. In order to restrain Yeon-hee who was twisting around to break free, I put my hand under her armpit and tried to hold the swimsuit in place so that it wouldn't slide down any further. However, I don't know if it was because I put in too much strength or because she was dodging me, but her body fell backwards.

“Ah..!”

Fearing that her head would hit against the faucet, I reached out with my other arm and supported the back of her head with my hand.

Having succeeded in narrowly protecting her head, I let out a sigh of relief in my mind.

“O-Oppa...”

But immediately after hearing her trembling voice, I understood the situation.

With Yeon-hee leant backwards, my face was close to hers as though I were trying to kiss her. Rather than being there to prevent injury, my hand supporting her head seemed as if it were holding her to stop her from escaping the kiss.

And my other hand was right next to her breasts... It was in a position where, if I moved my fingers a little bit, I could touch her small breasts through her swimsuit— no, if I put my mind to it, touch them directly if I put my hand inside the swimsuit.

It was a scene of crime where the brother was raping his swimsuited —no, topless--sister in the bathroom.

“S-Sorry...!”

I quickly tried to remove my hand, but I couldn't move because Yeon-hee was resting her weight on it. If I take out my hand as it is, her head will hit the faucet.

Th-This is...

“...Fu.”

“Y-You just smiled, didn't you? This situation was intentional, wasn't it?!”

I strengthened my grip to raise Yeon-hee up as she relaxed her body further with a triumphant expression.

But at that moment, Yeon-hee furrowed her brows and let out a moan.

“Ahn...♡”

“Stop making weird noises!”

“Your hand, it’s naughty...”

“It’s not naughty at all! Not naughty at all, okay?!”

Oh, my Lord...!

“It’s okay, Oppa. I’m fine with it...”

“It’s not okay!”

“Whenever I provoked you like this, you pretended to back away only to give in to the temptation. Eventually, you would lust after me like an animal. It seems today will be like that, too...”

“D-Don’t lie! I would’ve never done such a thing!”

“But I remember. My body is all hot from yearning for you... I can’t endure it any longer...”

“D-Don’t say those things! Your brother doesn’t remember raising you as girl who says bad stuff like that!”

“Yes, please violently punish your little sister who has become a bad girl...”

“Since when did you become so skilled at saying those kinds of lines?!”

“You kept ordering me to do it. Telling me to say out loud how my body has become now over and over again...”

“Ahhhhh...! No, I haven’t done anything of that s...”

I shook my head hard and tried to object, but when I saw the expression on her face, I closed my mouth without realising.

With her face flushed bright pink, her hazy eyes were looking up at me. It was a look you’d never see on Yeon-hee. She was usually lacking in expression.

Yeon-hee had the sexiest expression in the world.

“Oppa...”

Having confirmed that I was unable to move, Yeon-hee gently raised her body. It seemed as though her swimsuit would slip off any second and expose her bare breasts.

A water droplet rolled down to her cleavage and went under the swimsuit. While my attention was on tracing its path, Yeon-hee leaned against me with a slight smile on her lip.

“Oppa...”

“Y-Yeon-hee...”

Feeling her small frame, I swallowed my breath.

My body was immobile. Pushing Yeon-hee away or pulling myself away was impossible. Perhaps something deep within my heart was stopping me from rejecting her.

Am I going to be sullied by Yeon-hee like this...?

“...Yeon-hee?”

But no matter how long I waited, she didn't move.

“Y-Yes... Oppa...?”

I slightly pulled myself away wondering what was wrong, but Yeon-hee was simply frozen with her eyes shut and her face buried in my shoulder.

“H-Hold on...”

Pulling myself away further, I tried to push Yeon-hee away. She offered no resistance, and instead weakly fell backwards.

“H-Hey, Yeon-hee?!”

I grabbed a hold of her right away, but her body was limp and she was moaning feebly.

The way she looked in such a defenseless state with her eyes closed was sufficiently suggestive, but now was not the time to be concerned with such a thing.

“Th-This is...!”

When you stay in hot places like a bathroom for a long period of time, the blood vessels expand in order to regulate body temperature and blood pressure decreases...! If I were to set her upright in this state, symptoms such as dizziness and darkening of vision could occur due to the lack of blood to her head...!

It wasn't in my high school curriculum, but I had looked it up on my own before when I was curious, so I'm sure of it...!

“What are you thinking ...?! You already faint enough as it is because of your persistently low blood pressure...!”

Carrying Yeon-hee—who had a delirious look in my arms—I ran out of the bathroom.

It appears the sexy expression she had earlier was because she was just dizzy. Oh boy...

“L-Let's see, I have to dry her first...”

I was going to take Yeon-hee to her room and lay her on the bed, but I quickly realised I couldn't do that with the way she was soaked. I couldn't just lay her on the sofa or the cold floor. After much deliberation, I gritted my teeth and brought her to my room.

After I laid Yeon-hee down on my bed, accepting that it would get damp, I grabbed a towel and started drying her body with it. But because she was still wearing the wet swimsuit, I was unable to dry her properly.

Yeon-hee was completely unconscious and her arms and legs were limp. She was not in any condition to dry her body on her own.

L-Looks like I have no choice...

“Yeon-hee is my family! Yeon-hee is my family! Yeon-hee is my family...!”

I blindfolded myself with the school tie I took off earlier, and put on the rubber gloves I brought from the kitchen. Fumbling along the way, I removed her swimsuit, and then began to wipe the moisture off her entire body with the stack of towels.

“Aah, ahnn...”

She was making weird noises, but that was just because she was struggling...

I swear those sounds weren't her reactions to my hands!

“Ugh... That was difficult...”

Having dried the remaining moisture on her hair and body with the dryer, I untied the blindfold and sighed. Since I covered her body with my dress shirt afterwards, there was no worry of seeing her nude.

“.....”

On the bed Yeon-hee was staring at me with a very dissatisfied expression... Looking perfectly fine.

“...Hey!”

Just when did she regain her consciousness, I wonder. Yeon-hee threw on my dress shirt and got off the bed. Although the shirt covered everything down to her butt thanks to its length, I averted my eyes since it was quite risqué.

“Oppa.”

As Yeon-hee was about to leave my room with footsteps full of discontent, she stopped her feet at the doorway.

Looking at me standing there with my furrowed brow, Yeon-hee yelled with a very angry expression that formed tears in her eyes.

“You're an idiot! Blockhead! Eunuch!”

After saying that, Yeon-hee left and slammed the door behind her. Listening to the stomps of her footsteps getting farther away, I weakly fell down on the bed.

It wasn't just because of the sadness caused by her words--of course there's that as well--but it was because my whole body was struck with a far greater exhaustion.

"N-Nevertheless, it's finally over..."

As promised, I finished the daily schedule with Yuyu, Ka-ryeon, and Yeon-hee— a pseudo-romance where I can't discern the truth. I safely got through the three Times with the girls.

There was no sign of my memories coming back anytime soon, but there was an odd sense of accomplishment. I have successfully endured every temptation from my classmate, junior, and my little sister; it makes me want to give myself a pat on the back.

Anyway, this marks the finish. Of course it's technically Yeon-hee's time with me until tomorrow morning, but it doesn't seem like she'll try to attack me again tonight having stormed out of the room like that. That means I'm free from this point. In other words, it's the start of Ahn Kyeong-hyun time.

But,

"I-I can't study..."

I must study... But there's no way I could do it in this state of mind...

My whole body is sore from dealing with those girls. I feel mentally exhausted. Furthermore, when I close my eyes, not only does the image of topless Yeon-hee that I was just looking at earlier linger in my mind, but Ka-ryeon's legs and Yuyu's breasts as well.

What in the world happened to me...? There was never a time where I couldn't study because I was bewildered by those things...

"E-Even so, I must..."

Although I wanted to stand up and sit in front of the desk, my body didn't budge at all.

"Ugh, study... I must..."

Vomiting grievous voices, I stretched out my hand towards the desk but the reference books and writing utensils were out of my reach.

"S-Study..."

In the end, I passed out in my swimming trunks on the damp bed strewn with towels.

Reproaching myself for failing to study, I fell into the deep darkness.

Side. Boy

Did you ever like a pretty girl in your class when you were in elementary school?

I believe many men have had that sort of experience at least once. But I'm sure that only a minority of people went as far as to confess their feelings to that girl.

I was a boy belonging to that kind of minority.

The one I fell for was a girl who transferred into my school in fourth grade. Adorned in an airy white dress, she was completely different from the girls in my class that looked like potatoes and pumpkins. To my eyes, she was like a 'princess' in every sense of the word, and I fell in love with her in an instant. She was my first love.

Lingering around her, I made efforts to gain her favour. There were kids making fun of me for it but I didn't care. I erased the blackboard for her on days when she was on class duty, and I always helped her out whenever a teacher gave her a task.

Fortunately, she didn't show aversion toward those actions of mine. Instead, she smiled and thanked me. Her attitude towards me became more and more intimate, and she even held my hand sometimes when other kids weren't around.

I was in high spirits. Confident that she liked me as well, I wrote her a letter.

I mustered my imagination, wanting to make a cool confession. At the height of the sunset, I called her out to the classroom.

She appeared before me as I was waiting alone in the vacant classroom, and I confessed to her. With all my strength, a juvenile yet serious confession.

Even now I can't forget her image; smiling with her white dress fluttering in the fresh breeze coming in through the window.

"Personally, I find boys with poor grades disgusting, you know?"

And even her cold voice.

I don't remember what she said afterwards so well. She probably said bunch of stuff about academic supremacy that is uncharacteristic of an elementary school student.

My grades were certainly bad back when I was a fourth grader. I always placed second or third last on tests. But I was never scolded by my parents because of my grades, and I didn't care much about it since I wasn't dead last.

But apparently that part was fairly unpleasant to her.

It was later on down the road that I realized she was leading me on. While also flirting with other boys besides me, she was being treated as a princess all around.

She must have planned on giving me a vague answer to my confession and use me like her servant even after that. But it seems she was so disgusted by my confession that she lost her self-control and showed her true colors.

That day I asked my sister after I trudged back home if girls liked boys who have good grades.

But my sister scoffed and replied that girls don't like boys just because of their good grades alone.

She added after her answer unbecoming of a third grader that, wouldn't it still be better if they had good grades.

I nodded in agreement. I didn't want to be treated as trash, so I thought I should improve myself at least a little.

That was the trigger.

But over time the trigger became not so important. Studying genuinely became enjoyable, and turned into my everyday life.

That is why the memories of my fourth grade in elementary school are of no particular meaning to my present self. It is simply a bitter episode of my childhood that I want to forget.

The reason why I think I don't need something like a girlfriend is wholly because it would interfere with my study. It is not because the memory of that time became a trauma.

Yes, it had no influence on me. If it did, rather than that memory, the incident that day would have been...

Chapter 5 - Sweet Days

I aroused from slumber with a heavy heart.

“...Yet another needless dream.”

Lately I've been having frequent dreams about the incident back in elementary school. I don't know why this is happening.

While reminiscing on the bed, I glanced at the clock on the wall. It was earlier than usual. It should be fine to relax a little longer.

But the bed sheet was damp from the aftermath of last night's commotion where I had to wipe Yeon-hee down.

“Haah...”

I let out a sigh reflexively. I must've passed out while it was still wet. That explains why I couldn't sleep well last night.

Well, I might as well get up then.

“...?”

But my body felt strangely heavy. It wasn't because I was exhausted. Something was holding onto me.

“.....”

I slowly looked down.

And there I found a girl asleep hugging my thigh, with her head resting on my right side as if it was a pillow.

“...Oh my God.”

The sleeping girl who had snuck into my bed was none other Yeon-hee.

To boot, she was not in her usual clothes. She had nothing but a floaty pink slip on her.

Was this the pink that I saw when she was mounting me on Saturday? Since when did she start wearing such cute yet slightly adult lingerie...? Wait, don't tell me she's not wearing anything underneath?!

'Ahn Yeon-hee Time' is from 9 p.m. until 7a.m. the next morning at home. That means her offensive isn't over yet...!

“H-How should I deal with this?”

Should I just wake her up right now?

No, I don't know what she might do again if she wakes up. It's best to escape her hold quietly and run for it.

I moved my body cautiously as to not awake Yeon-hee. Pushing away her limbs to the sides that were wrapped around my thigh, I began to pull out my body carefully.

"Mmm... Oppa..."

But suddenly at that moment I heard Yeon-hee's faint voice. I flinched but noticed that her eyes were still closed— she was sleeptalking.

Relieved, I tried to pull out my leg, but at that moment Yeon-hee muttered in a coquettish voice.

"No, Oppa... If you do it that violently... it's going to break... You're being too wild, Oppa..."

"?!"

J-Just what kind of a dream is she having...?

What the hell are you doing to the Yeon-hee inside the dream?! I won't forgive you as her brother!

"Geesh... You're so mean, Oppa... How could you indiscriminately cut up a cabbage like that...?"

...Ah, so it's just cooking. Don't get me all confused. I thought it was a weird dream.

"Aah, Oppa... Placing the cabbage on my body like that... Ahn... It tickles when you use your mouth like that, Oppa..."

It is a weird dream!

I have to wake her up! I have to wake Yeon-hee up before the me inside the dream defiles her any further!

"Yeon-hee!"

I grabbed her shoulders, and just when I was about to give her a shake—

"Wh-What are you doing...?"

I heard a thud from the direction of the bedroom door.

When I turned around... I saw Yuyu, who had dropped her schoolbag, looking this way with a devastated expression on her face.

...Why is she here?

"Ah, Glasses, y-your clothes... Aaah."

Yuyu's face reddened and she covered her eyes with the palm of her hands. ...But her fingers were spread apart, letting her peep through them.

Only then I realized I was wearing only swimming trunks. I pulled the covers up in a hurry and covered myself. ...Somehow, it feels like the positions have reversed.

"How... did you get in?"

Having woken up from the noise, Yeon-hee set her body upright and asked.

"Y-Yesterday I went to the café where Glasses works after finishing the evening self-study session! Glasses wasn't there, but... Han Ka-ryeon lent me the key when I told her you were... doing questionable stuff with your sister in the morning!"

Oh yeah, Ka-ryeon has the key to our home. She really shouldn't lend our house key to other people so casually...

"Questionable stuff?"

"He's doing it right now! He has his sister by the shoulders and is trying to pull her towards his private place... I came by early just in case, but you were really ..."

What the hell is she talking about?

At that moment, Yuyu spotted something on the corner of my bed and her eyes widened further.

"Th-There really is a...!"

When I looked, the hair dryer that I used to dry Yeon-hee was lying there. I must've forgotten that on the bed, too.

"A-Also a pair of r-rubber gloves... H-How many sexual deviancies are you guys into?!"

"...I have no idea what you're talking about."

That's a surprise; Yeon-hee said something that I completely agreed with.

"The relationship between me and my brother is not a sexual deviancy. It's a perfectly pure love."

And right afterwards she said something that I can't ever agree to.

"Y-Yeah right! How can you call it that when you... have swimsuit and lingerie roleplay first thing in the morning!"

...What is this 'roleplay'?

"First thing in the morning? ...It has been intense since last night. You can't tell from this drenched bed?"

"Oi oi, don't lie. ...And you, don't believe her."

I advised Yuyu, who fell on her rear with a shocked look. ...A little more and her panties would've been visible, she needs to be more cautious.

"I-I knew it. You are in that kind of relationship with your sister... Endless i-immoral nights of carnal desires... Taboo.... Domination..... Discipline."

"Like I said, don't believe her! Listen to what I'm saying!"

"That's right. We have a passionate relationship, so outsiders can go take a hike. Come again after I have completely satisfied my brother. If you need it, would you like me to lend you my brother's underwear while you're waiting?"

"You too, Yeon-hee! Stop saying weird things!"

Sheesh... Where has my peaceful morning gone to...?

"I-I can't let you do that!"

At which point Yuyu burst forth on her feet and strode closer towards the bed.

"So that he can be s-satisfied by other girls beside his sister, I'm going to rehabilitate him!"

"What're you talking about?!"

"Even if you aren't related by blood, doing this sort of stuff between siblings is wrong! I'll s-s-satisfy him myself!"

Shouting that, Yuyu started unbuttoning her school uniform.

"Hold on a second! Don't do weird stuff!"

"You can even compare me together with your sister if you like! It's fine! I've read many erotic comic books where they do it with three people!"

"You really do read a lot!"

"O-Or I can even become your little sister! O-Oppa, p-please violently punish your lewd little sister...!"

"Why are your lines so similar?! Is there like a set pattern?!"

Fortunately, perhaps due to being agitated, Yuyu wasn't able to undo her buttons properly. I quickly got off my hand and took hold of her wrists.

"Ah, O-Oppa, if you wanted to undress me yourself... Kyaa."

"Who are you calling 'Oppa'?! Give it a rest!"

"Yeah, the only one who's allowed to call him that is me."

Yeon-hee followed me from behind and threw her arms around my waist. And I don't know what's she's thinking, but Yuyu was in front of me sticking her breasts out with her eyes shut and face red.

Such a conundrum, what am I going to do with these two...

"I want to hurry to school and study..."

Heaving a long sigh, I drooped my shoulders.



As such, my Tuesday began with a rowdy morning as the starting point.

"Haah..."

Walking my way to school, I sighed. Mornings were supposed to be refreshing, but it had turned into a complete sticky mess.

Yuyu is currently following just a little behind me. Thinking she overdid it earlier, it seemed like she was reflecting on her actions.

"Yuyu."

"Y-Yes?"

For some reason, Yuyu had a happy look on her when I called her name.

The thought that she was like a dog that got its owner's attention crossed my mind, but I quickly erased it and spoke to Yuyu.

"What you did earlier, don't do it anymore."

"E-Earlier?"

"And like what you did at lunchtime yesterday... Anyhow, don't try to create suggestive situations like that anymore. Things like 'I'll know once we try it', or 'check and see what underwear you're wearing', or that 'your body is all hot and you can't endure it any longer'... They are absolutely forbidden from this day forward."

"...I don't recall those last two situations, though."

Yuyu stared at me with doubtful eyes.

“Anyway, don’t do it from now on. Doing such a thing when my relationship with you girls is uncertain is an *absolute* no. I can put up with it and refuse, but there’s also a limit to that. I’ll tell the other girls as well, so follow what I said.”

“B-But...”

“If you attempt to do weird things again, I’ll call off on trying to recover my memories together with you girls. I won’t eat lunch nor commute to school with you like this.”

“N-No, not that...!”

Yuyu shouted, her complexion changing. I was a bit surprised by her reaction that was much more intense than I had expected.

“I-I don’t want that...”

“...Then just don’t do stuff like seducing me.”

“I-It’s an everyday routine, not a seduction...”

Yuyu said that with a desperate expression but, as for me, I have no reason to believe everything that she says.

“Our daily lives consisted of only doing that every day?”

“Wh-What?!”

“I’m asking you if our relationship was the kind where we did that at every chance.”

As I inquired sharply, Yuyu’s face turned bright red.

“Wh-What are you saying?! I-I’m not that lewd, okay? You make it sound as if I was seeing you with that as my sole purpose!”

“No, I didn’t go as far as to say that...”

“I-I don’t particularly like that sort of stuff! I only accepted it reluctantly because that’s what you wanted!”

“Then we’ll stop doing it. There, don’t ever bring that up again.”

“Hauu?!”

Realizing her slip of the tongue, Yuyu looked like she was ready to cry.

“N-No, th-that’s not w-what I...”

Eventually Yuyu, who was stammering in panic, grabbed my arm and clung on with tears in her eyes.

“Y-You’re right, I’m a lewd girl. I’ll admit it, I’ll admit that I’m a girl with nothing but dirty thoughts on her mind, so...!”

“Okay... The conversation is starting to go awry.”

It seems this girl forgot what her objective was from the look of it and is just spewing whatever comes to her mouth.

Thinking I shouldn’t let her get out of control any further, I lightly tapped Yuyu on the head.

“So let’s not do that stuff. If it’s a wholesome romance, I’ll do it as much as you like. So let’s just do wholesome things.”

As I said that, Yuyu looked up at me with wide round eyes.

“You’ll r-really go out with me?”

“That’s what we said we’ll do originally.”

Although it’s solely for recovering my memories.

“Y-Yeah! Okay!”

I don’t know why, but Yuyu clenched her fist with an expression burning with motivation.

“I’m confident in becoming a good girlfriend! I’ll do my best to be to your liking! I can do much better than the other girls!”

“No, I’m telling you to do as we did before, not to do better from now on...”

This girl, I still can’t tell what her objective is.

And it was lunchtime again.

Although we got out of the classroom separately and walked toward the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room again this time, there was something a little different than yesterday.

“A-Actually, today I came prepared with *this!*”

The item that Yuyu took out and placed on the desk was a large lunchbox. It wasn’t the lunchbox that I saw yesterday, but one that was family-sized for picnics.

“What is it?”

“I-It’s your lunch!”

“Ah...”

I nodded with an ambiguous look.

“What’s with that reaction! Your girlfriend brought you a homemade lunch. Shouldn’t you be happy about it?”

“I don’t have memories of you being my girlfriend.”

“Still, you should at least give me a compliment!”

“Yeon-hee prepares my lunch too, you know.”

They provide meals for both lunch and supper at Collegiate High where Yeon-hee attends. However, students in our school have been bringing their own lunch after an issue with the school meal since last year. As for supper, packaged meals via group order are limited to those who want it.

That’s why Yeon-hee has no need for a lunchbox, yet she makes mine every single day. She truly is an excellent sister.

“But you don’t have yours today!”

“Thanks to a certain somebody...”

Due to the commotion in the morning, Yeon-hee wasn’t able to properly prepare breakfast, and of course lunch as well. After comforting the depressed Yeon-hee, I got out of the house in a hurry.

I was thinking of buying bread for lunch from the cafeteria, but Yuyu said I didn’t need to and told me to come to the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room empty-handed. I was wondering why; guess it’s because she had the lunch prepared.

“Anyway, I appreciate it. Thanks.”

“...Why didn’t you just say that from the start?”

Grumbling, Yuyu sat down in her seat.

Rice balls, seafood nuggets, calamari rings, braised Burdock roots, braised fishcakes, pickled radish, and apparently apple slices for dessert...

“The side dishes feel similar to yesterday.”

Although the menu was a bit different, it felt similar overall. Like the color of the braised side dishes, or the weight given to the frozen food.

“Don’t tell me it’s actually you’re mom who—”

“What are you saying?! I always pack my own lunch!”

Ah, was that so.

“That’s amazing.”

“A-Amazing?”

“I know from watching Yeon-hee that it’s no ordinary task.”

Although it’s the same for making breakfast, to wake up early and prepare lunch every day is not an easy task for a highschooler .

“I think it’s truly amazing.”

“Waah... C-Comparing me to her is...”

Despite muttering that, Yuyu lowered her head while looking embarrassed. She was red up to her ears.

...I guess I shouldn’t tell her that her actual culinary skill feels a bit inferior to Yeon-hee’s.

“Anyway, let’s eat. Thanks for the food.”

“O-Okay.”

I held the pair of chopsticks from Yuyu and began eating.

...Unlike their appearance, their taste rivaled the ones made by Yeon-hee.

“Wh-What do you think? Do they taste good?”

“Huh, they’re tastier than expected.”

Honestly, they had exceeded my expectations. They weren’t too salty or too bland, yet savory to keep eating without any trouble.

“You could get married right now.”

“Eh?!”

Yuyu widened her eyes at the remark I said as a joke. Then she covered her face with both hands and lowered her head.

“W-We can’t. My heart is not ready for a marriage yet... It’s too early...”

“...I didn’t say a word about you getting married to me, okay?”

When I pointed that out quickly, Yuyu made a crestfallen expression.

Then smiling bitterly, she muttered.

“It’s the same.”

“What?”

“We had this kind of conversation in the past, too.”

Leaning against the back of the chair, Yuyu spoke in a lonely voice.

“Me bringing your share as well for lunch, you praising me when I told you it was homemade, and my heart fluttering from your remark about how I could get married right now.. It has happened before. Although you may not remember.”

“...I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine. Just keep eating.”

Because Yuyu said that to me with a bitter smile on her face, I resumed eating as per her offer.

“Hmm...”

“What is it?”

“So we’ve had eaten your homemade lunch together like this before, huh...”

There should be a similar scene like this saved inside my lost memories.

Somehow it feels like I may remember...

“C-Could your memories be...?”

“...No good, I still can’t remember.”

My memories didn’t return to me no matter how hard I tried.

It’s a similar feeling to when the answer to a question is on the tip of your tongue.

“By any chance, did we talk or do anything peculiar while we ate lunch together like this?”

“P-Peculiar...?”

Like how one could recall [things starting] from a certain point through sequential memorization, my lost memories might come back if I’m given a peculiarity.

“O-Oh yeah!”

After looking troubled for a moment, Yuyu got up awkwardly from the chair with a bright countenance as if she had thought of something.

Then she picked up the seafood nugget with the chopsticks and held it out toward my face.

“A-Ahnn...”

Blushing, Yuyu opened her mouth a little bit.

“...What is this?”

As I stared vacantly without a clue, Yuyu got mad at me.

“How could you not understand what it means for a girl to hold out food to her boyfriends mouth?!”

“...Ah.”

She’s trying to feed me.

I couldn’t have even guessed since I had never experienced it in my life. There was only this one time where Yeon-hee spoonfed me some porridge when I was bedbound from severe fatigue.

“We’ve done this before?”

“W-We have!”

Although it was more difficult to believe that I had done such embarrassing act than having done indecent stuff at school, I couldn’t refuse since I promised that I’d do as much wholesome things as she wants.

As I reluctantly opened my mouth, Yuyu put the seafood nugget inside my mouth with her trembling hands.

“Mm...”

Nom nom.

The taste isn’t bad for a frozen food. A well pan-fried sea nugget with its coating neither burnt nor undercooked.

“Thank you for the...”

I swallowed the food and looked at Yuyu again, but I noticed she was acting somehow strange.

“Ehe, ehehe...”

Covering both cheeks with her hands, Yuyu was fidgeting and twisting her body while smiling foolishly.

...It was to the point where she seemed a bit stupid.

“What’s wrong?”

“I’ve always wanted to try it... Putting food in your mouth like this...”

“...Wait, what?”

I thought we’ve done it before?

“N-No! I meant I’ve wanted to try again! Since we’ve done it before!”

Startled by my words, Yuyu waved her hand and corrected herself.

“W-Well then, one more time!”

“Again?”

Like a nestling being fed by its mother, I helplessly ate the food given to me.

“Here, have this one next.”

“...Just how long are we going to do this?”

I grumbled, being slightly tired of it, but it seemed Yuyu had no intention of quitting. And she looked so excited, holding out the chopsticks with foolish smiles, that it was difficult to even talk about stopping.

However, I was certain that Yuyu was going to stuff me with the entire contents of her lunchbox at this rate. I had to say it.

“Stop. I’ll feed you this time.”

“...Eh?!”

Yuyu made a surprised look and dropped the chopsticks. After I quickly caught them before they hit the floor and placed them on top of the lunchbox, I picked up my pair of chopsticks and said to her.

“I’m sure to have fed you as well. Or did I only do the eating?”

“B-But...”

With even her ears dyed red, Yuyu was fidgeting.

“If I didn’t, then that’s that.”

“N-No! You did! You filled up my mouth over and over again!”

“...That’s a weird way to put it.”

I picked up a calamari ring with my chopsticks.

Although Yuyu had an expression of mixed emotions, she shyly gathered her hands in front of her chest, closed her eyes, and opened her mouth.

I’ll feed her a few times like this and call it quits. Thinking that, I carried the calamari ring to her mouth. But at that moment—

“H-Hold on!”

Shouted Yuyu, suddenly covering her mouth with her hand.

“What now?”

“N-No. It’s embarrassing to have my mouth open ...”

What’s that supposed to mean?

“You can see inside my mouth... A-And if I have my mouth open in front of you like this, it’s as if...”

“As if?”

“A-Anyhow, it’s indecent! No is a no!”

Yuyu blushed while still shouting nonsense.

“Well, then we’ll not do it.”

“I-I don’t want that!”

“What do you want me to do...”

“Uu... S-Since I’m embarrassed because you’re looking at me...”

Yuyu spoke hesitantly.

“F-Feed me with your eyes closed...”

What kind of play is that?

But I couldn’t even be bothered to argue anymore, so I decided to attempt a feat of feeding someone with my eyes shut in the end.

“Ah, not there... Okay, slightly to the right, no, you went too far down now. Ah, keep going... O-Oww, not there!”

It felt like I touched something, but it appears it wasn’t her mouth and I was a little off.

It’d be a whole lot easier if I could just open my eyes and adjust the position myself, but I don’t think she’ll let me.

“Ah... Yes, r-right ther- Mn! ...Ith toh bih, ith wun guh in...”

Guess the calamari ring was too big to eat in one bite. I had no choice but to open my eyes, cut it in half, and try it again.

At the least, it succeeded with ease this time around. Looking happy, Yuyu chewed energetically and swallowed with a bright smile.

“Th-Thank you for the food...”

...Mm, what an odd sense of accomplishment.

Seeing Yuyu saying that with her face turned red, I started feeling weird for some reason.

“O-One more time...”

“We’re ending it here.”

“...Ehh!?”

Yuyu seemed like she was ready to cry, but I left her alone and started eating the lunch on my own. I had a gut feeling that I shouldn’t keep feeding her like this.

Apparently giving up, Yuyu also started eating her lunch again, and eventually both lunchboxes were cleaned empty.

“Thanks, it was delicious.”

After another word of thanks, I finished eating. There was no sign of my memories returning, but it didn’t feel bad at all, perhaps it was because I had a different lunch from usual.

“So what did we do next after lunch?”

Feeding each other had taken quite amount of time, but was still some left until the fifth period.

“Wh-What did we do? Of course we...”

“Aside from unwholesome things.”

“Uu... We would just talk...”

“And?”

“...Study.”

I thought as much. After all, that was the reason how I came to start eating my lunch here.

“Ah, come to think of it, I didn’t bring stuff to study.”

It was obvious since I came here completely empty-handed.

“I have some with me.”

Yuyu then took out a stack of printouts and a pencil case from her bag for the lunchboxes. No wonder the bag was so big.

“Here, take it.”

“Th-This is?!”

My eyes opened wide after looking at the printouts that Yuyu held out to me.

“Th-These are from the renowned math teacher that works at the nearby academy...?!”

I could tell at a single glance. These printouts contained only the questions with the highest level of difficulty.

Such question would only appear about once on a test, but for those people like me who don't want to miss that single question, these questions were extremely helpful.

"Sometimes I lent you the printouts I got from the academy..."

"I-I see. That's really..."

For me, who's not able to attend an academy due to financial circumstances, these were really valuable printouts. Touched with overflowing emotions, I bowed my head to Yuyu.

"Thank you, thank you very much!"

"I-It's fine... Glasses, you're being so happy that it's a bit disgusting..."

Yuyu had an irritated look for real, but I was in no state to be concerned about that. Bursting with excitement, I borrowed a pen and lined papers from Yuyu and started solving the questions on the printouts.

"....."

Yuyu watched me with complicated feelings for a while, then she smiled bitterly, got her printouts out, and started studying as well.

While studying, we asked each other about the parts that we weren't sure or certain about. As expected of someone who's second in school rank, we understood each other really well.

Like that, we studied together until lunchtime was over. Although it was a study session with an unfamiliar atmosphere that my amnesiac self experienced for the first time... It wasn't a bad time.



"So you studied with Miss Yuyu during lunchtime again today?"

"Yeah, pretty much."

Today is Wednesday. It's been three days since we started this pseudo-romance to get my memories back.

Like always, I was working part-time at Café Saint after school. Now it felt I got accustomed to working with my junior.

"Even though I told you *not* to study."

Ka-ryeon let out a sigh and muttered.

Currently the Manageress was in the kitchen preparing ingredients for the evening, and only Ka-ryeon and I were on the floor.

“Telling me not to study is like telling a shark not to swim.”

“...That sounds more serious than just saying ‘I will die if I don’t study.’”

If sharks don’t swim, they sink to the seafloor and die from hypoxia.

“Is it because you studied? I feel like you’ve become more relaxed than you were in the beginning. Even when I tease—I mean, express my affections—it doesn’t seem to sway you much.”

“Did I hear you say ‘tease’ just now? You said ‘tease,’ right?”

“You were so composed yesterday too, saying ‘Don’t seduce me any further, baby. If you do, you’ll get burnt from my hidden Fire Blade☆’. You meanie.”

“...Your delusions are increasing.”

This girl tried to seduce me yesterday as well like when she raised the hem of her skirt the other day. That’s why I emphasized that I won’t accept such acts from now like I did with Yuyu. However...

She was standing by in the staff room in her underwear today, matched to the time that I arrive. Then when I knocked on the door, she nonchalantly replied ‘I’m fully changed, so it’s okay to come in~’ and was waiting for me to enter. But because I sensed something was suspicious and asked the Manageress to go in there, I was able to avoid the situation of seeing this girl in her underwear personally.

...But I don’t why she is this obsessed over showing her underwear. Maybe to get something on me...? She can’t be doing this because she wants to show off her underwear.

“Anyhow, you better really stay focused today. If you work like you did yesterday...”

I said sharply to Ka-ryeon, recalling her work attitude yesterday that was completely different from Monday.

“But I don’t feel like working when you don’t dote on me...”

“Can’t you just work...?”

“Boosting the female junior’s will to work by satisfying her sexually is an important duty that the male employee of this store has been assigned with. I’ll inform the Manageress for neglect of duty if you don’t push me down on that table right now and violate me wildly.”

“Go ahead, be my guest. Let’s hear what the Manageress has to say after hearing her little sister say stuff like that.”

“That’s harsh, Sunbae. How could you give me the cold shoulder when I worked so hard to satisfy your sexual appetite all this time?”

“At least decide first which side is satisfying which...”

“In my opinion, trust built through sexual relationship increases workplace efficiency.”

“Just get back to cleaning!”

As we passed the time chatting in whispers so that the Manageress in the kitchen wouldn’t hear us, customers started coming in one by one.

I took the orders and served the food, and moved about busily while sometimes casting a scowl at Ka-ryeon when she’s slacking off.

But even during those busy times, there was something that continued to bother me.

“Hey.”

“Yes, Sunbae.”

“That girl over there... It’s her, right?”

“...I believe you’re right.”

Verifying with Ka-ryeon, I sideglanced at the female customer sitting by herself at the table in the corner.

Her appearance was suspicious in that she had a hat and a mask on even though it was indoors. She was stealing glances at me and Ka-ryeon at every opportunity.

I understand stealing glances at Ka-ryeon since there are people who visit this store to see her beauty among other customers. However, it’s a bit weird to glance at me as well.

Especially when Ka-ryeon is near me, she looks this way with glaring eyes.

Just like now.

‘What are you doing, Yu Yuyu...’

The customer who came here under a disguise was none other than Yuyu. Although she had changed her clothes and her hairstyle in addition to hiding her face with a hat and a mask, she was immediately recognizable due to her distinctive figure.

“What’s with her? She could just eat normally if she wants to have a meal here.”

“Let’s leave her alone for the time being.”

After saying that, Ka-ryeon lightly walked into the kitchen and brought the crabmeat cream pasta that Yuyu ordered. Then after she put the food down on table where Yuyu sat, she even smiled and said 'Enjoy your meal' before leaving. All in a very natural manner.

"...Why are you working so hard all of a sudden?"

"Because it's an amusing situation."

"Please work normally..."

I let out a sigh while sideglancing at Yuyu who was worried if she should remove the mask in order to eat.

And when dinnertime was over.

Yuyu remained still in her seat and sipped on the cup of water until all other customers left.

"God, I'm tired... Here, eat up you two..."

The Manageress came out of the kitchen bleary-eyed and put our meals down on the counter.

"Hah... I wish we had some customers besides the evening... Even one person would be nice..."

Despite that one customer was presently seated in the store; it seemed it wasn't entering the Manageress' eyes that were half-shut from fatigue. Then again, even if she did see, she'd have thought of it as a hallucination.

After the Manageress crawled into the staff room and closed the door, the store turned quiet. In the silence, I let out a sigh and asked:

"So, what are you doing, Yuyu?"

Yuyu, who had her lips on the cup of water, flinched at those words. But then she continued to sip on the cup of water again as if nothing happened.

You already drank all the water..

Looks like I have to call her again.

"...Yu Yuyu."

"Don't call me that!"

With the mask on her chin flapping, Yuyu suddenly stood up.

But she soon realized her mistake and blushed.

"Why are you here? You normally request packaged meal for dinner."

"I, I had a feeling that it wouldn't taste good today..."

"The evening self-study session is on now, why aren't you heading back?"

"I, I have cram school on Wednesdays, so I naturally miss it."

"Then why aren't you at the cram school?"

"I, I got a text message a while ago saying the cram school is off today..."

"....."

"I-I'm sorry! It's a lie! I'm just playing truant! I admit doing wrong, so please don't look at me with such scary eyes...!"

"Sunbae... As expected, your reaction is different when it's related to studies."

Ka-ryeon stared at me in strange amazement.

I cleared my throat and opened my mouth again.

"So why are you here?"

"U-Um..."

After Yuyu took off her hat and mask, she said while blushing:

"B-Because I wanted to see my boyfriend working... C-Can't I?"

Speaking shyly with her eyes gazing up at me, Yuyu looked inexplicably cute.

"Of course not."

But Ka-ryeon's sole response to such cuteness was a cold reply.

"Did you forget? The time that Miss Yuyu is allotted to spend with Sunbae is from 7am until 4pm. He's your boyfriend only at school. It's currently 'Han Ka-ryeon Time', so you shouldn't interfere."

"Th-That's..."

Not even able to get angry over the fact that she called her by her full name, Yuyu stared at me as though she was struck speechless. But I had nothing in particular that I could say. Eventually, Yuyu looked at Ka-ryeon again and raised her voice.

"S-Still, I'm curious! You might try to do weird things to Glasses, s-so I came to keep a close watch!"

"And what are these weird things?"

"Th-They're ..."

“Rest assured, we don’t do weird things like the ones you’re thinking about.”

“R-Really?”

“We just engage in obscene acts normally.”

“That’s not normal!”

Although I shouted abruptly, Ka-ryeon paid no attention.

“Well, whether or not Sunbae and I engage in obscene acts, that’s not really an important matter.”

“No, I think it is important...”

“Anyhow.”

Looking at Yuyu, Ka-ryeon spoke.

“Whatever I do with Sunbae, that’s my freedom. It’s not something you should concern yourself with.”

“But...”

“I’ll have you know.”

Cutting off Yuyu, Ka-ryeon said tersely.

“Like you, I’m serious as well.”

“.....”

Yuyu stared at Ka-ryeon as though lost for words.

“I’ll at least treat you to a cup of coffee. Please leave when you’re finished.”

Yuyu couldn’t say anything further to Ka-ryeon’s resolute voice. She lowered her head a bit when she took the coffee from Ka-ryeon shortly after, and that was it.

“...Well then, Sunbae, shall we eat?”

“Wait, hold on.”

Although I was still kind of feeling daunted due to Ka-ryeon’s sudden seriousness, I stopped her because I thought it was wrong to have dinner like usual in this current situation.

“Eating at the counter like usual when there’s a customer is a bit... Shouldn’t we eat inside the kitchen or something?”

“Ah, y-you don’t have to mind me!”

Yuyu said, raising her head. Still, I couldn’t do that.

"That's true. But we can't leave this place completely unattended ..."

Ka-ryeon thought for a moment.

"...No, let's just eat here."

"But we have a customer..."

"You don't have to treat me as a customer! Act like usual!"

"We should do as she says."

That was quite unexpected, coming from Ka-ryeon.

It's obvious that Yuyu will watch if we eat here together... I thought she didn't like her being here.

"Well, okay then."

After I sat at the counter first, Ka-ryeon sat to my right.

...So closely that her arm was firmly pressed against mine.

"...Why are you so close?"

"This is the usual distance."

"No, it isn't... Also, I can't eat like this!"

How am I supposed to eat if you stick to my right arm like that!

"Ah, my mistake."

Muttering, Ka-ryeon stood up from her seat with her plate.

Then she sat to my left.

"Here, Sunbae♡"

Whispering in a soft voice, Ka-ryeon grabbed my left hand.

"You loved touching my thighs while sitting closely like this. You were always saying 'the spice that makes food most delicious is a highschool girl's thighs.'"

"Don't lie!"

I pulled out my hand, startled.

"Just what are you doing when there's someone watching behind us!"

To my response, Ka-ryeon turned her attention to Yuyu sitting behind her back. I looked back as well, and sure enough, Yuyu was on the verge of tears, looking this way.

“So stop it with the...”

The moment I turned my head to Ka-ryeon, I saw a small smile crossed her lips.

“Don’t tell me...”

This is to keep Yuyu in check?!

Now I understood why Ka-ryeon wanted to just eat here. Since she can’t force Yuyu to leave right away, she intends to keep her in check by showing what kind of relationship she has with me while Yuyu is present.

‘S-Scary...’

Women are frightening creatures...

“Sunbae.”

As I was eating while seized by such astonishment, Ka-ryeon spoke to me again.

“What?”

I wonder what kind of nonsense she’s going to say this time.

Thinking that, I replied without turning my head. Then her calm voice reached my ears.

“The reason why you didn’t go out with girls was because of a trauma from elementary school, right?”

I nearly dropped my spoon.

“...What trauma?”

“The one where you confessed to a girl in the same class and got rejected because you had poor grades.”

I looked at Ka-ryeon in the eyes with a stiff expression on my face. Her hands still, she was looking at me calmly.

And probably, behind my back, Yuyu was looking at me while swallowing her breath.

“...I even told you about that story?”

“Yes, since I’m your fiancée.”

Ka-ryeon answered so without a change in her expression.

Why on earth are we talking about this now? Is this also to keep Yuyu in check?

“.....”

I wanted to turn my head and check Yuyu’s reaction.

Did I tell Yuyu about this story, too? It should be fine if she had heard about it like Ka-ryeon, but it could cause a misunderstanding if she’s hearing about it for the first time today.

I don’t feel like it, but I’ll have to clarify on that. I sighed and opened my mouth.

“If I had told you about that story, I should’ve had also stated that it has nothing to do with me going out with girls. The reason why I have no interest in girls is simply because I want to devote myself to my study. Although it’s not completely unrelated since it’s true that I started studying due do that incident, it’s not like that made me hate girls or anything.”

Precisely speaking, I don’t really think about girls. I never got involved romantically with a girl since then, and was never conscious about it.

“It’s not something like a trauma. It’s just an embarrassing memory.”

“That’s what you’ve said before as well, Sunbae.”

Ka-ryeon nodded while replying casually.

“However, can you say for certain that it had no impact on you at all?”

“...What do you mean?”

Ka-ryeon didn’t answer.

As I stared at her still, Ka-ryeon rested her chin in her hand and spoke.

“The girl you liked when you were a kid... Despite the fact that she had no feelings for you, she treated you intimately in order to take advantage of you, right?”

“That’s...”

You could say she was keeping me on the hook.

“Then you must’ve come to hate people who approach you with ulterior motives, right?”

“...No, isn’t that the same for everyone?”

“But don’t you think you have come to hate those people all the more through that experience? I think it became difficult to accept.”

I was lost in deep thought momentary at that question. People who approach you with ulterior motives, huh...

“That’s you!”

I shouted at Ka-ryeon.

You’re the one who approached me with the ulterior motive of wanting to become a NEET!

“It’s not an ulterior motive since I’ve already confessed my true intention. Besides, a seemingly obvious motive is rather cute.”

“That’s not the...”

At that moment, I heard a rattling noise from behind.

“...I’m leaving. Thank you for the coffee.”

Yuyu put the money down on the table and got up from her seat. Then she left the store right away without a chance for anyone to speak to her.

I couldn’t see her face because her head was hanging way down.

“What’s with her?”

Bewildered, I stared in the direction of the door that Yuyu walked out of, and then I heard Ka-ryeon’s quiet voice.

“I was only planning to feel her out a little, but her reaction is beyond what I’d expected.”

“...What?”

In a daze, I looked at Ka-ryeon who was seated beside me. She was smiling with her chin resting in her hand.

“Just what are you doin—”

“Sunbae, I told you.”

Sweeping the hair up around her ear, she spoke in a calm voice.

“I am serious.”

Saying such words, her eyes were like a deep pond.

They were the kind of eyes where you couldn’t see the bottom.

“.....”

At a loss for words, I averted my gaze from her.

When I turned my attention to the seat where Yuyu had been sitting, I saw the money she had left on the table. Looking at the ten thousand won bill was enough to leave over change even after combining the costs for the dinner and coffee, I imagined what kind of thoughts Yuyu was thinking right now.

But for me who has lived without great interest in girls— no, in other people—there was no way I could figure out her feelings.

“Hey, Kyeong-hyun. I’m sorry, but could I ask you for a favour?”

It was at that very moment that the Manageress came out of the staff room with a stiff expression.



It was raining outside before we knew it.

After checking the dimly lit streets with the rain pouring down, I closed the door and returned inside the store.

“At this rate, wouldn’t it be better to just close the store?”

As I muttered so while sitting at the counter, Ka-ryeon, who was standing up against the table, replied.

“Even so, my sister is a stickler for following the business hours no matter what. There’s nothing we can do about it.”

“...She should think about the electric bill.”

I sighed and looked inside the empty counter.

Currently, the Manageress was on her way to the hospital after hearing that her friend had a traffic accident.

Her friend that had a traffic accident is one of the people who help out in the store on weekends. I’m also a little worried because I’ve seen her a few times before.

“My sister said she wasn’t badly hurt, so it should be okay.”

Ka-ryeon said in a composed voice.

“I’m sorry. For making you stay late because of my sister’s personal circumstances.”

“No, well, this much is fine.”

I was staying behind in Manageress’s stead.

Saint's business hour is to 10 pm. Usually, I leave work a bit before nine o'clock, so I'm working an extra hour.

Although there's really not much work to do because of the absence of customers, I have to attend the store with Ka-ryeon in any case, clean up the place and return home.

"You'll get paid overtime, so don't worry."

"No, there's no work to be done, so... staying late for a day is all right. By the way, are you done with the cleaning?"

Just now, I was mopping the hall and kitchen floor, and Ka-ryeon was wiping the tables. The reason why I checked outside earlier was because I had nothing to do after finishing my areas, but Ka-ryeon should have yet finished cleaning all the tables.

"I don't like working on rainy days."

"You make it sound as if you work hard on days where there's no rain..."

As I said that, Ka-ryeon touched her lips with her hand and laughed coquettishly. It's really a needless coquettishness.

As I let out a deep sigh, Ka-ryeon drew closer with her skirt rustling and sat beside me. Then she rested her head against my shoulder.

"Hey."

When I tried to pull away, Ka-ryeon spoke sullenly.

"Isn't this much okay...?"

"You're going to start saying weird stuff again while we're like this anyway."

"Sunbae, it's troubling for me if you think I'm a girl who's in heat round the clock."

"If it's not round the clock, then how many hours is it?"

"An hour a day at the most?"

"Okay, then assign that one hour to the time when I'm not present."

Fufu Ka-ryeon laughed to those words of mine.

"You really are an interesting person, Sunbae."

"...What is so interesting about me?"

"Your reactions are interesting."

As I tried to pull away again, Ka-ryeon caught hold of my arm.

“Please let me stay like this for a while.”

Then she whispered quietly.

“I won’t do or say anything weird. Please let me stay like this just for a moment. It doesn’t have to be as your fiancée, so...”

I looked at Ka-ryeon, feeling caught off guard. She had gently closed her eyes and was smiling tenderly.

“I, too, have occasions where I want to entrust myself to my significant person and spend some quiet time.”

I was lost for words.

As I remained still, Ka-ryeon spoke in a dreamy voice.

“It’s quiet.”

“...You can hear the rain, though.”

“It’s quiet, because the sound of rain erases all noise.”

Hearing her say that, I listened carefully to the sounds coming from outside.

As I closed my eyes and listened carefully, the only thing I could really hear was the sound of rain. It felt as though everything in the world had vanished and I was sitting inside the rain by myself.

The sensation of becoming farther apart from the current situation where I was suffering from complicated problems, especially my entanglement with the three girls.

“...No.”

However, I immediately corrected myself in my mind.

At the very least, I could feel her presence beside me even amidst this sound of rain.

“...Han Ka-ryeon.”

“Yes, Sunbae.”

Turning my gaze to Ka-ryeon who replied in a docile voice, I asked her a question.

“Do you find working difficult?”

“I don’t think a person who wants to become a NEET would find working comfortable.”

“No, what I meant was... Do you find it difficult attending customers?”

“What makes you think that?”

“Although you often slack off, you treat customers politely with a smile when you serve them. You don’t have a bad attitude.”

“I’m happy to hear your compliment.”

“But the moment you turn your back against a customer, though it’s for a split-second, you have a worn-out expression on your face.”

Ka-ryeon closed her mouth for a while.

“...I’m embarrassed to know you were gazing at my face like that. Since when did you become unable to take your eyes off me?”

“I thought recovering my memories would also become easier by getting to know you girls better.”

I flat out told Ka-ryeon, who was trying to give an evasive answer.

“To tell the truth, I noticed it when I was trying to make sure you were working properly. When I kept observing you just to make sure, you were always like that.”

“You shouldn’t do that to a girl, you know.”

Ka-ryeon sighed a little and took her head off my shoulder.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to force yourself to work.”

“Still, it’s my sister’s store.”

Said Ka-ryeon, straightening her hair.

“I’ve always found the act of exchanging conversation with other people itself exhausting. You see, I have sociophobia.”

“But you talk to me just fine.”

“It’s because you’re a special case.”

“Sunbae, my sister... Recently, Miss Yuyu and Miss Yeon-hee would be included as well. Aside from the few people that I wish to be involved with, I find it tiring to even face them. I’m not cut out for the service industry.”

“It’s not like I’m particularly suited for the service industry, either.”

“But you’re diligent, and I’m not.”

“I’m not particularly diligent, it’s just—”

Ignoring my protest, Ka-ryeon cut me off and said in a drowsy voice.

“That’s why I want to become a NEET fast. I want to marry a person that I want to be with and live without seeing anyone else except him.”

Then she added with a sweet smile.

“Like that, I’d pass the time carefree inside the house all day long.”

I couldn’t keep looking at her straight, so I looked away.

Despite the fact that she was saying something so shameless and selfish, her smile was excessively beautiful.

No matter what self-centered things she may say, her charms were real.

My heart was beating from her smile, so much as to feel the future of living with her appealing.

“...Han Ka-ryeon.”

But I set such feeling aside to corner of my mind and opened my mouth.

“Did I really make a promise to marry you?”

“You still can’t believe it?”

Sighing, I said to her.

“I feel it the more I talk with you: I don’t think myself before the memory loss would’ve accepted you. Each time I talk with you, I feel certain about it.”

“Why is that?” Ka-ryeon no longer had a smile on her face. Instead, she stared at me with a serious look. “Do I upset you for saying such shameless things?”

“...I think other people would criticize you without doubt.”

“By any chance, are you criticizing me in your mind as well, Sunbae?”

Ka-ryeon asked me while looking into my eyes. I felt as though I’d be sucked into those deep pupils.

“No,” I answered without hesitation. “I find it perplexing, but I don’t think it’s particularly bad.”

“Really? To people like Sunbae who study and work hard, doesn’t a lazy person like me seem pathetic?”

“There’s no way.”

I study and work because I want to. Saying who’s diligent or whatnot with those would be barking up the wrong tree.

On the contrary, I think badly of people just because they don't work hard in those areas. Although I'd be hard on my juniors if I saw them neglecting their work, I wouldn't think of that as a human flaw in particular. After all, there are times where I also cut corners on jobs that I don't want to do.

"Everyone has their own way of living. I think it's an irresponsible act to evaluate and grade that in detail. There's no right answer, so you can live the way as you want to live."

That, of course, comes with responsibility.

"If you can endure everything you'll come across on the path you've chosen, you have nothing to be ashamed of no matter what others may say."

Ka-ryeon was staring at me wordlessly with her mouth closed.

"Then why won't you accept me?"

Finally, Ka-ryeon inquired in a subdued voice.

"Is it because I'm of no use in your life?"

"You're the one who said it's worth it for the fact alone that I'll be able to have you."

Sighing, I retorted.

"It's not that. That's not the reason."

"Then why?"

Ka-ryeon asked as if pressing for an answer.

However, instead of answering her, I threw a question of my own.

"How many years have you lived until now?"

Ka-ryeon had an expression like she was caught off-guard.

"How many years has it been since you've had this way of thinking like now?"

Before Ka-ryeon could even open her mouth to reply, I kept questioning her.

"How much time has passed since you've met me and wanted to live together with me?"

Ka-ryeon, who was waiting for a chance to speak, opened her mouth in a hurry.

"Even if my time spent with you is short, my feelings are real."

Ka-ryeon said while placing her hand across her chest.

“Of course, as a family member, Miss Yeon-hee would have spent a long time with you that’s incomparable to mine. And Miss Yuyu, who goes to the same school, would have spent more time with you than me as well. But...”

“No, that’s not it.”

I said, shaking my head slightly.

“How many years are you going to live with me after our marriage?”

“How many years...?”

“One year? Two years? Five years? Ten years?”

“What are you talking about, if we get married...”

“That’s right, we’ll have to live together for decades if we were to live with each other.”

I said to Ka-ryeon.

“I believe that is something we should decide on after much more prudence and further contemplation.”

“.....”

Ka-ryeon was looking at me with her eyes wide open.

I said to her while trying hard to get as much of my thoughts across as possible.

“It’s not like we can get married right now, anyway. Then you still have a lot of time.”

She has to think much more not only about her decision of choosing me as her marriage partner, but her dream of becoming a NEET after marrying.

“Even if you marry and become a NEET, you’ll still have to graduate from high school. Then you have almost three years left. You can keep thinking during that time. Is the path I have in mind really the one that I should tread... A different conclusion might appear while thinking that. Then it would be troublesome when you’re engaged to someone.”

Even if that person isn’t me.

“Of course, you don’t need to limit it to when you’re attending school. You can keep contemplating even after graduating from high school. There’s no need to get married right away.”

“I don’t want to go to university, and I also don’t want to work.”

“Then you can remain as a NEET. If even you don’t marry me, just live as a NEET in your current home.”

“That would be too much for my sister!”

At that moment, Ka-ryeon raised her voice for the first time.

“Continuing to put burden on my sister when there’s nothing I can do to repay her is too shameless...”

For Ka-ryeon who wants to live a comfortable life, the only factor that was restricting her was her feelings for her sister who had brought her up by herself.

But she should know this well, too.

“There’s no way that the Manageress would consider looking after you as a burden.”

Ka-ryeon was caught off-balance by my comment.

“Is she the sort of person who would feel burdened from supporting you? I’ve only known her for a year, but she’s absolutely not that kind of person from how I see it.”

For someone like her who has looked after her little sister on her own without anyone’s help, who always lives every day to the fullest even when the store she set up through blood, sweat and tears isn’t working out the way she thought it would... There’s no way she would feel burdened from that.

“Don’t take her lightly. If you get married and tell her that you’re leaving the house, she’d probably cling onto you and ask you not to leave her behind.”

I can easily predict the Manageress’ state of mind because I have a little sister, too. Even if I was in a situation where I had to work to support Yeon-hee, I would never think of it as being a burden.

...Of course, I wouldn’t do so because it’d be bad for Yeon-hee if I were to take care of her forever. After all, I don’t have a sister complex!

“Have more faith in your sister. She’ll wait as much as you need for you to decide your way of life.”

Ka-ryeon was staring at me motionlessly.

“I went off on a tangent for a bit, but—”

I said, clearing my throat.

“Anyhow, I could only think like this after hearing your story as my current self. Of course, the pre-amnesiac me may have different. But if it was my current self, I would’ve told you to give it a bit more thought.”

Even if her words were from her heart in earnest.

“I would’ve tried to give it more thought too, of course. I don’t believe I’m the kind of person who has enough determination to make an eternal martial vow to someone on the spot. I would’ve

tried to reply after a long consideration, and the time I've spent with you is too short for me to reach a conclusion."

Of course, I've never thought seriously about stuff like marriage before. But my current self had no choice but to think so.

"If I had decided to accept you, then that would've been a conclusion from the end of a long and serious deliberation. I wouldn't have accepted you if it wasn't."

While I was saying those things, Ka-ryeon had her head lowered.

I couldn't see her face, which was difficult to read her true intentions as it was, due to her forelocks which had rolled down.

I couldn't tell if I had conveyed my message clearly. But I didn't rush her and patiently waited for her response.

"...I see."

Then a very small voice flowed from her mouth.

"You're the same despite your amnesia, Sunbae. You haven't changed."

"...What?"

I looked at Ka-ryeon in bafflement, but she didn't reply at all.

Then she slowly stood up from her chair. After turning towards me, she looked down at me in silence.

With cold yet mysteriously ardent eyes.

"...I've decided."

"What?"

Bemused, I could only look up at Ka-ryeon.

"I don't care if your memory doesn't return. The words you said to me, the things you did for me, I don't care even if you've forgotten them all."

Staring down at me softly, Ka-ryeon spoke in a subdued voice.

"I don't care if you treat me as a worthless girl. I don't care if you treat me like a girl you've met for the first time."

Looking down at me with deep pupils, the girl with an appearance as delicate as though she would vanish any moment whispered.

"As long as the current you choose me. That is all I want."

She laid her hands on top of my shoulders. I couldn't move; it was as though I was paralyzed.

Then she slowly leaned toward my face.

With her beautiful pastel hair ruefully flowing down, her face, her lightly moist lips came closer.



“—!”

It was at that moment.

“...What are you two doing?”

A sharp voice accompanied the sound of the store door being opened.

Leaving behind the pouring rain, the footsteps entered the store.

“What are you two doing?”

And the question was repeated.

“Oppa, just what are you doing...?”

Yeon-hee was standing there expressionlessly with her whole body soaked from the rain, as though she didn't properly cover herself with the umbrella.

“Yeon-hee...?”

Barely managing to move my frozen lips, I called my little sister's name.

Dripping wet from head to toe. Void eyes gazing at me. Firmly shut lips. Clenched fists. I was overwhelmed by the disquieting state that my little sister was in.

“.....”

Yeon-hee turned her frigid gaze to Ka-ryeon.

Ka-ryeon had returned to her position and was simply staring at Yeon-hee without a word.

“Yeon-hee, you...”

I called my little sister again.

It was only then that Yeon-hee turned her eyes to me once more and moved her small lips.

“...You didn't come home. There wasn't any call, either.”

“...!”

I realized my mistake only then.

I didn't inform Yeon-hee that I'll be late because I'm watching the store in place of the Manageress. I should have called Yeon-hee's cellphone with the store phone, or left a message on our answering machine. But I was so out of it myself because we had to send the Manageress off on such a hurry that it had slipped my mind.

“I kept waiting but you weren't coming home; I wondered if something happened, so I went outside and searched for you.”

It was almost 10 pm right now. Since I usually finish work and return home around 9 pm, nearly an hour had passed.

When did she start searching for me? How long was she in rain for while she went around searching for me?

“But Yeon-hee, there were times where I came home late before as well...”

Until now, there were many times where I came back late because I had stopped by places like the bookstore, stationery store and supermarket. But there was never a time where Yeon-hee went out looking for me like this.

“And, as expected, it was just I had worried.”

However, Yeon-hee didn't reply and glared at me fiercely.

No, it wasn't me.

It was Ka-ryeon sitting beside me that she was glaring at.

“You, you're the one who...!”

Leaving a water trail on the floor, Yeon-hee strode towards our direction.

Seeing that aggressive attitude, I got up from my seat in a hurry.

“Yeon-hee...!”

“What filthy things are you doing to my brother...!”

I grabbed Yeon-hee's arms and stopped her from attacking Ka-ryeon. However, Yeon-ee was trying to break free from my restraint, struggling with violent motions that you would normally never see from her.

“You said until 9 pm, and that you'll give back my brother after that. You're the one who said that, yet why are you...!”

“Calm down, Yeon-hee! The reason why I was late today is because the Manageress had to go out for a moment... She's not at fault!”

Regretting that I didn't give her a call, I stopped Yeon-hee.

However, Yeon-hee raised her voice even higher.

“Why is Oppa defending this girl?! Just what has this girl done for you?!”

“What are you saying...”

“I was enduring it even though I hated it; I wanted to keep hold of you so that you couldn't go anywhere; I wanted to keep you from being together with those girls...!”

I thought it was just water from the rain, but it was only then that I realized Yeon-hee was crying.

“Why? Why?! Why are you stealing *my* brother?! Even though he’s *my* brother, why?! Why is someone like *you*...!!”

Yeon-hee yelled at Ka-ryeon.

“Don’t touch my brother...! He’s, he’s...!”

When I turned my attention to Ka-ryeon, I noticed she had a surprised look on her face as well.

“Yeon-hee, calm down. Nothing happened, and your brother didn’t do anything. I’ll go back home with you, so let’s calm down, okay?”

I desperately tried to soothe her.

Then, as though Yeon-hee’s reached her emotional limit, her arms dropped and she burst into tears.

“You’re soaked from the rain, so let’s get you dry first, okay?”

I took Yeon-hee bursting into tears and went into the staff room. After I cleaned her face and head with a towel, I took out Ka-ryeon’s spare uniform that was in a corner of the locker.

After telling her to get changed, I closed the door and came out of the staff room. Although I wanted to check to make sure she got changed properly in my heart, I couldn’t that.

“Sorry, I borrowed your spare clothes. I’ll get them dry-cleaned and return them, so...”

I bowed my head to Ka-ryeon with complicated feelings. Clothes are clothes, but I have to apologize for my sister who tried to attack her. No matter what the reason may be.

But Ka-ryeon didn’t respond to my apology.

“...How strange.”

Sitting in her seat with her arms crossed, Ka-ryeon was lost in deep thought.

As I stared at her in confusion, Ka-ryeon spoke up in a calm tone.

“I think it’s fully understandable for your sister to be shocked after witnessing her brother about to get kissed by another girl.”

“...Eh? I was about to get kissed?”

S-So that was why, huh? I was wondering why she brought her face closer all of a sudden...

“...We’ll put aside your innocence for now. Anyway, it’s fully understandable for her not to be able to maintain her normal self after seeing that sight. Of course, normal siblings wouldn’t be like

that, but for someone like Yeon-hee who has a considerable case of a brother complex, it must've been fairly shocking."

"Y-Yeah. Although I don't know if it's for real, she did go as far as to say we crossed the line..."

"I didn't believe that story to be true."

"You... didn't?"

Ka-ryeon said in a past tense.

Then does that mean she thinks it might be true now?

"But even then, her reaction now was weird. I didn't see her as the type to lose her rationality like that."

"That's true..."

Yeon-hee is a composed and docile girl. Her attacking someone was something unimaginable until now.

"For a little sister who spent over 10 years with you as family until now to become this fixated on you is unnatural. There must be some kind of a reason."

"A reason...?"

"Yes, a reason for her to violently oppose when she feels her brother is about to be stolen."

After saying that, Ka-ryeon came down from the bar stool.

"Sunbae, I'll postpone proving that you are my fiancé."

"What...?"

"The current situation is not good for both you and Miss Yeon-hee. Even as your fiancée, it's a situation that I can't ignore."

Ka-ryeon said in a calm voice while looking at me.

"Sunbae, try to find out the reason why Miss Yeon-hee is so fixated on you. I'll cooperate."

"Han Ka-ryeon..."

"I've asked you to call me by my first name."

Ka-ryeon smiled bitterly for a second, but her face returned to its cold expression and she spoke.

"You too, Sunbae. Please put off other things as much as possible and give me your cooperation. This love rectangle of ours, I think it may be more dangerous than I'd thought."

Tensing up from her serious attitude, I swallowed my saliva.

Then I said in a trembling voice. "...Say, Ka-ryeon."

"Yes?"

"...What about my memories? The things I studied?"

"...You're even thinking about studying *now*?"

I felt a prickling sensation on my skin from her glare.

But tomorrow, Thursday morning.

That day before our mock examination, a totally unexpected and major incident happened.

It was an incident so shocking, that my entire life was completely changed.

Chapter 6 – Tempest

Part 1

Yuyu, who had come to meet me four days in a row since Monday morning, was nowhere to be seen.

Although I waited for a while just to be sure, she didn't show up, and I ended up going to school alone in the pouring rain that hadn't let up since yesterday while feeling an unidentifiable, ominous premonition.

And when I set my foot inside the classroom, that premonition became a reality.

“Good morning.”

“...Hey.”

I greeted Sega who sat behind me as usual, but his response was somewhat awkward. I sat down in my seat, wondering why; however, I felt out of place right away.

There were eyes on me, and it wasn't just one person.

“...?”

Wh-What is this?

Almost a majority of the people inside the classroom were looking at me right now. Their gazes weren't particularly malicious. Rather, they were close to being curious stares.

“???”

As I looked around the classroom in confusion, one sight came into view.

A group of girls were crowded at Yuyu's seat, where she was always by herself. Smiling strangely, all of them were looking at my face.

And among them, Yuyu was looking at me with a blush on her face.

“Ahn~ Kyeong~ Hyun~”

A boy, who was in the same class as me last year that I haven't really talked much with, approached me with some other guys. My body involuntarily got goose bumps from his slimy voice.

“I can't believe you're doing this to us, man. Grr, you son of a gun.”

“...What are you talking about?”

“I heard you didn’t even tell Sega. He must be disappointed.”

“Well, I wouldn’t go that far.”

Sega replied, smiling bitterly from the back. Still, I couldn’t understand what was going on.

“So just what is this all ab—“

“You’re dating Yuyu, right?”

“...?!”

My heart felt like it stopped at those unexpected words.

“I was talking to Yuyu earlier. She said you two are dating.”

“D-D-Dating?”

My speech involuntarily became similar to that of Yuyu’s when she’s tongue-tied.

“She came in early in the morning and asked me if you were here yet. When I asked her why, she replied it was because she was curious since she’s your girlfriend.”

While listening to Sega explaining the situation calmly, I thought to myself:

What the hell is she doing?!

“Man, the top two of the school going out with each other? I guess it’s nice since you’re both in the same league?”

“What do you do when you’re together? Just study? I can’t imagine what you would do when you’re on a date with a girl.”

“H-How far have you gone? Don’t tell me you’ve already kissed. Say it’s not true!”

“No, they say it’s always the quiet ones, so he must’ve already...”

“I’ve always believed in you! I knew you weren’t gay!”

The whole classroom became chaotic. Even the guys that I’ve never really talked to before came up and started commenting.

“I think everyone’s interested because there hasn’t been a class couple until now.”

I couldn’t even hear Sega’s voice properly.

My mind was swarmed with queries. I couldn’t comprehend why this kind of situation was unfolding at all.

Just why did Yuyu start all this?

'Yu Yuyu...!!'

Keeping my usual low profile, I've always taken meticulous caution in order to be able to attend school in quiet. I've kept myself distanced from complications before they rise well in advance, and made continuous effort so that I'd be able to study in peace, staying away from trouble.

Thanks to that, I was able to spend my school life quietly in peace until now. Without getting entangled in a complex web of relationships inside the classroom, without getting swept along by the commotion of the hot-blooded youth, I had created an optimum environment that I could spend time in simply studying.

But now, my school life was getting turned completely upside down.

"Grr...!"

Biting my lips, I stood up from my seat.

I wasn't going to sit still. I'll definitely lose it if I don't give her a piece of my mind this instant.

"Ah! Glasses is heading over to his lover!"

"Ooh, what a lucky guy, ooh."

Pushing my way through the boys surrounding me, I tried to get closed to Yuyu.

Yuyu, who usually didn't have friends, was presently surrounded by a large number of girls.

"Yu Yuyu, let me know if Glasses tries to do something weird to you. I'll make sure to teach him a lesson or two."

"O-Okay. B-By the way, I don't like being called by my full name, so please call me 'Yuyu'. Glasses calls me that, too..."

"Ah, really? But I see that you call him Glasses as well, Yuyu. That's funny."

"Say say, what is he like when you two are out alone? Is he still taciturn like in class?"

"Oh oh, you two are all lovey-dovey when you're alone together, aren't ya?"

"I'm a model student with a heart of ice, but my blood runs hot when it comes to my girl... T-That sounds pretty nice."

"U-Um... G-Gee, I can't say..."

"Ahaha~ You're surprisingly cute, Yuyu."

"By the way, Yuyu, I've always been curious... Haven't your breasts gotten larger than before? Is there some kind of a secret to it? D-Don't tell me it's because your boyfriend has been fondling them... *Kyaa~*"

...I, I can't cut in on their conversation.

If I cut in recklessly, I might get detained by the girls and be hit by a barrage of questions. Even just imagining the situation send shivers down my spine.

'I got to do something...!'

Having grown anxious, I made up my mind to confront this head on.

After breaking through the crowd of girls to reach Yuyu, I'll pull her out of the classroom right away without giving them any opportunity to ask me questions!

"Yuyu...!"

Shouting her name, I immediately moved towards where she was sitting.

The girls were surprised by my sudden intrusion, and Yuyu was staring at me with her eyes wide open.

I didn't say anything further and grabbed Yuyu's arm. I reckoned that everyone's attention in the classroom was on me, but there was no helping it now.

At the moment when I made Yuyu stand up in order to pull her out of the classroom...

"The homeroom teacher's coming...!"

A short yell was heard. At the same time, the classroom turned into chaos momentarily.

The girls surrounding Yuyu quickly returned to their seats. The guys who were surrounding my seat did the same as well.

And all of their eyes were on me, who had frozen still with my hand holding Yuyu's arm.

"..."

The stern-looking teacher stepped into the classroom, and almost simultaneously I let go of Yuyu's arm.

Receiving the teacher's cold and every classmate's curiosity-ridden stare, I returned to my seat.

And after the morning assembly was over...

"Ahn Kyeong-hyun, come to the student council room after you've eaten your lunch."

...I want to die. This is the end of my school life.

I looked for a chance to talk to Yuyu in private whenever it was breaktime, but it was difficult to find the right timing to drag her out with so many people watching.

In the end, I was able to drag Yuyu out of the classroom only after the third period was over.

“What in the world were you thinking?!”

I shouted at her as soon as we arrived at a remote location where people didn't pass through.

Yuyu's body cowered, but she bit her lips and raised her head right away.

“W-What do you mean?”

“You know what I'm talking about!” Flabbergasted, I raised my voice again. “Why did you tell them that we're dating?!”

“B-But it's the truth! There's no need to hide it!”

“What?! That's not...!”

I could feel my blood pressure rising from her absurdity.

Even if it's true that Yuyu and I were really dating before, we had been keeping it under wraps until now.

Yuyu had told me that she had kept our romantic relationship a secret because it was embarrassing. It had seemed to me that Yuyu didn't have any intention to tell other people about the fact that we were going out.

It was the same for me. Dating itself was an inconvenience to the school life that I was aiming towards, and if other people found out about it, I'd become the center of attention and receive their unnecessary interest. A far cry from the quiet school life that I wanted.

Therefore, we don't tell other people that we're dating. Although this is of course on the premise that we were going out before is true, I'm sure we were of the same opinion in regard to this matter.

“Why are you telling other people *now*?! We had been keeping it a secret so far!”

“B-But, yesterday you...!” Yuyu tried to say something, but she closed her mouth, then she averted her gaze in an expression with mixed emotions and mumbled, “I only wanted to tell other people about it to let them know that I'm going out with you.”

I was lost for words. A maiden's heart was beyond my realm of comprehension.

“...That's just your self-assertion.” Frustrated, I opened my mouth. “If it isn't true... that we were dating before, what are you going to do? What happens if I have no memory of us being together when my memories return?”

Do I explain to the other guys that Yuyu took advantage of my amnesia and lied to them? Just thinking about it gave me a headache. Not only that, I don't know what sort of gossip will spread about Yuyu and me afterwards. This was not a viable option.

Do I just tell them we broke up with each other? Even if I do, a bothersome situation is bound to occur either way.

"T-Then..." Yuyu's face turned bright red and she looked up to me, "W-We just have to keep dating."

"....."

I was at a loss for words again.

I can't comprehend what this girl is saying.

"I-Isn't it fine? There'd be no need to give them a complicated explanation, and they're all being supportive, so why don't we just keep dating?" Shrinking back, Yuyu continued while forcing a smile, "Then we wouldn't have to worry about people around us, and studying together would be much easier. I'll lend you more course materials from the academy, so let's just keep..."

"H-Hold on!"

Interrupting her unexpected reply, I raised my voice.

"Just what are you saying right—"

At that moment, a loud melody rang out from somewhere. It was the sound of the bell that notified break time has ended and that fourth period was starting.

"O-Oh no! We have to get back quickly!"

After shouting those words abruptly, Yuyu left me alone and started running.

"Yu Yuyu! Wait!"

"I'll go on ahead! You should hurry as well!"

Despite my attempt to stop her, Yuyu ran off like the wind by herself. Although she didn't seem to have a good athletic ability, her escape was in the wink of an eye.

"What the hell..."

I couldn't understand why Yuyu was being like this.

Isn't she supposed to be trying to prove that she's my real girlfriend?

And here I was, dating her like I have done so far in order to regain my memory.

"Why is this happening to me...?"

I stood there vacantly when I should be returning to my classroom.

The mock exam was tomorrow, but I couldn't remember anything about what I'd learned, and only the number of incomprehensible events was increasing with each day.

The situation was getting way out of control, and I had no idea how I'd turn things back to normal.

And when lunchtime rolled around, Yuyu did something unpredictable again.

"Sh-Shin Sega!"

Unlike what other students had anticipated Yuyu to do, which was for her to start talking to me, she stood up from her seat and struck up a conversation with Sega sitting behind me in a nervous voice.

"...What is it?"

"W-Would you like to have lunch with us? With me and Glasses!"

Yuyu stuttered to Sega who was staring at her quizzically.

"...What?"

What the hell are you doing?!

My eyes widened at the totally unexpected development.

I quickly tried to tell Sega that he didn't need to, but surprisingly he gave a small smile and nodded his head.

"Sure. It's been a while since I've had lunch with Kyeong-hyun."

With that reply, Sega apologized to the other classmates for the inconvenience and placed the desks end-to-end, creating a spot for us to have our lunch in an instant. It was done with all too swift precision that I had no chance to stop him.

Perhaps due to Sega's grandeur, the people who were bothering Yuyu and me during every break time no longer approached us. Although there were furtive glances our way, they had begun preparing to eat in their respective seats.

Looks like I have no choice but to have lunch with Yuyu and Sega today.

"...Haah."

Helplessly, I placed the lunch that Yeon-hee had packed for me in the morning down on the desk. Yeon-hee followed suit with the lunch that she'd probably prepared herself, and Sega took out his.

“Your lunch looks wonderful...”

Yuyu widened her eyes at the contents of Sega’s lunchbox.

It has always been like this but Sega’s lunch is packed in elaborate balance with dishes of culinary arts that you’d see at traditional Korean restaurants. If Yeon-hee were to prepare that kind of lunch, she’d have to wake up at least an hour early.

“We have a personal chef at our home. Help yourself if there’s anything you’d like to try.”

“I-Is that okay?”

“Hey now, Yuyu...”

Despite by dissuasion, Yuyu ate a sidedish composed of various vegetables wrapped with a slice of beef with her chopsticks.

“I-It’s delicious! It’s pleasant to the eyes and on a whole different class than the lunch that I made...”

“Do you prepare your own lunch? I find that incredible.”

“It’s nothing of the sort! I made one for Glasses before, but I was a bit embarrassed of how it didn’t turn out so well...”

“Still, I’m sure Kyeong-hyun liked it, though he may not have expressed it clearly.”

...They’re having a cordial conversation!

It felt like an ideal conversation between a ‘girl who’s meeting her boyfriend’s friend for the first time’ and a “boy who’s meeting his friend’s girlfriend for the first time”. Their topic was unusual, but the mood was great.

“So the two of you have been eating together during lunchtime?”

“Y-Yeah. Gosh, being found out sure is embarrassing...”

I silently ate my lunch, watching them talk back and forth in such manner with mixed emotions. Since I don’t acknowledge that I had been dating Yuyu, it was difficult for me to carelessly join in on the chat.

“However.”

But at the moment, Sega spoke in a calm voice.

“The reason why you’re making your relationship public and arranging this occasion with me is probably because you’re aiming to further substantiate the relationship between the two of you. I’m sure everyone understands Kyeong-hyun is your boyfriend now.”

Yuyu's face stiffened slightly at his words. I also realized the nuance behind Sega's words and swallowed my breath.

Sega had likely noticed that this revelation had nothing to do with me and that Yuyu had acted all on her own. By revealing in secret that he is aware of the truth, he's admonishing Yuyu not take it too far by herself

"But having gained official approval from others also means that your relationship is no longer just between you two. Both of you will have to take care to have a responsible relationship."

Speaking such insightful words, Sega looked so mature.

"...Hey Sega, do you have a girlfriend?"

I asked him out of the blue.

"No."

"Then have you had one before?"

"Nope. You should know this, too."

Yes, that's how it was according my memory.

"You really have no plans on getting a girlfriend?"

"A-As I thought, you're after Glasses because you're really a ho— *Kyaa!*"

Before Yuyu could finish her drivel, I stepped on her foot to shut her mouth.

"Of course not. I'm a normal male."

Sega answered her, smiling bitterly.

"Then why aren't you getting a girlfriend? If it's you, I'm sure you can pick and swap as you please."

"Hmm..."

Sega stopped moving his chopsticks and fell into a moment of thought.

"Although I'm interested in the opposite gender as a man, I have no desire of dating multiple women."

"Then what?"

"If I can meet a woman that I find to be the best for me and solely love that person—that one person in my life—I think that would be enough."

After saying that, Sega bitterly smiled once more.

“I’m not really looking to date anyone until I find that person.”

I looked vacantly at Sega who had finished speaking.



Sega tilted his head as I stared at him still without words.

“What’s wrong?”

“...N-No, it’s nothing.”

Wh-What is this...

My faux-homosexual friend is looking so cool right now...

“What a world of difference to some three-timing boy I know... Ow!”

I stepped on Yuyu’s foot again for her mumbling.

That’s a yet unconfirmed fact! Don’t make a comparison like that! It makes me seem like a really terrible guy!

“Three-timing?”

“N-No...”

I turned my attention to Sega who was looking strangely at me.

If I was really three-timing, I’d be overwhelmed with shame standing before this guy and would probably have to kneel down and start confessing my sins. ...Not as a joke, but for real.

This guy was living with such firm beliefs, while I was spending my time being pushed around at the mercy of these girls.

“Shin Sega...”

“What is it?”

“If I told you that I’m three-timing... that I’m dating not only Yuyu but other girls as well, what would you think of it?”

Yuyu stared at me with an expression of surprise, but I disregarded it and kept looking at Sega.

“Three-timing, huh?” Sega thought for a moment. “That’s an interesting story.”

“Of course, I’m not saying that I have the skills to date three girls at the same time...”

“Well, if it’s you, I think you have sufficient skills to do so.”

“Wh-What are you talking about?”

Not knowing if his comment was serious or a joke, my face turned red.

“I don’t think it’s particularly bad.”

“...What?”

“Even if you are dating three girls at once, I don’t think that is particularly bad.”

His response was unexpected.

“But there’s no way that would be socially acceptable... And if we consider from your view of love as a standard, then three-timing is out of the question.”

“Things like social norms are not important, and everyone has their own method of dating people. The choice is yours to make to three-time. That is, if you can manage the consequent responsibility. No matter what others may say, I think it’s okay as long as you walk down your own path.”

Suddenly I realized what Sega was saying similar to what I’d said to Ka-ryeon yesterday.

‘If you can endure everything you’ll come across on the path you’ve chosen, you have nothing to be ashamed of no matter what others may say,’ is what I had said to her.

“There would of course be problems along the way, but...” Sega paused for a moment. “You won’t have regrets if you can act like a man.”

“Act like a man? You mean I should be sincere and honest?”

“You don’t need to go that far. Sometimes it’s necessary for a man to be duplicitous.”

“...I don’t quite understand.”

As I said that, Sega smiled.

“I believe that’s the first time I’ve heard you say that.”

Sorry but recently there’s been a lot of stuff I don’t understand! I’m really at my wit’s end lately!

“But it sure is refreshing.”

Said Sega who had started eating his lunch again.

“What is?”

“It’s been more than a year already since I’ve known you, but I think this is the first time we’ve had a profound discussion like this.”

“I-Is that so?”

“Yes, quite so. ...After all, you weren’t very interested in other people.”

His remark weighed on my mind, but Yuyu was nodding her head next to me as though there was a part that she agreed with.

“You’ve changed a little, though I don’t know the reason why.”

While saying that, Sega's attention shifted towards Yuyu who became wide-eyed. Sega smiled back and resumed eating his lunch again.

“That reminds me, Kyeong-hyun, are you sure you should be eating while talking leisurely like this?”

“Huh?”

“If I recall, our class teacher told you come to the student council room after you’ve eaten your lunch.”

...I totally forgot about that!

“...Pardon my intrusion.”

Having come here running after gobbling down my lunch, I nervously opened the door to the student counseling room.

Different from regular classrooms, the interior of the counseling room was of soft pastel tone to make people feel at ease. However, due to my situation being as it is, my mind wasn’t at ease at all.

“Did you call for me, Mr. Kim?”

I asked the homeroom teacher sitting on the sofa, who always had a temperamental look about him. Frowning, he opened his mouth.

“You don’t have to be so formal with me when we’re alone.”

He cast a cold stare behind his glasses with a stern voice. I flinched involuntarily, but I let out a sigh and sat on the opposite side of the sofa.

“...Yes, uncle.”

Uncle Muhyeok, the homeroom teacher sitting across from me, was our guardian.

“Are your studies going well?”

“I’m managing.”

“And how’s your little sister?”

“She’s fine as usual.”

The conversation was curt, but our conversations had always been like this.

As an old friend of our dad, he was the person who became our guardian when our dad who had no relatives passed away.

But since we mostly take care of ourselves, the only things he helps us with were legal matters. No financial support or anything of the sort.

“You’re always taking care of yourselves. Sorry for not being able to help you that much.”

“N-No, not at all.”

I knew that he had no time to spare since he was taking care of his stroke-stricken mother by himself. Nevertheless, it was thanks to him resolving our inheritance problem and other complicated issues that my sister and I were able to live together. I was certainly grateful.

...Our relationship is really awkward, though.

“I called you here to discuss a certain matter.”

He cut straight to the chase.

“I saw it this morning. What’s your relationship with that girl?”

Sure enough, it was about what happened in the morning.

‘That girl’... He’s not even calling her by her name, huh.

“You’re not dating her, are you?”

I was in a predicament.

There was no way I could explain to this strict person that I had actually lost my memories and that I was temporarily dating three girls due to the suspicion that I had been three-timing them. Furthermore, I couldn’t just affirm his question for the moment and move on while it was uncertain that I had been dating Yuyu for real.

“I’ve told you time and time again.”

I didn’t know how he took my silence, but he said in a stern voice.

“It is a student’s duty to study. Getting distracted by romance and neglecting one’s studies is something foolish children do. You must never be like them.”

A strict lecture with no room for backtalk.

If it wasn’t for my penchant for academics, I would have been considerably stressed out due to this person. Even I find him hard to bear, so I can only imagine what it must feel like for other people.

Erring on the side of caution to smoothly pass over this situation, I opened my mouth.

“...It’s fine, uncle. We don’t really have that kind of relationship... We just study together sometimes.”

I left out some of the stuff, but it wasn’t so much as to call it a lie.

“You know too that she’s ranked second in our school ... Studying together is quite beneficial.”

I told him while selecting the right words to his liking.

But he just knit his brows.

“Not with that girl.”

“...Pardon me?”

“She probably seduced you like a slithering serpent she is because she knew you wouldn’t approach her first.”

Slithering serpent.

That expression echoed inside my mind.

“That girl had always been the top student since middle school. But from the time that she entered the same high school as you, she got pushed back to being second place all the time.”

“What does that have to do with...”

“She approached you to make your grades drop so that she can take the first place for herself. Don’t fall for it. ...Women are always that.”

I felt the anger rising within myself.

“Uncle... No, Mr. Kim—” Even though it was him, I was angry. Yuyu is certainly a pain in the ass, but I’ve been eating and studying with her all this time. She wasn’t a stranger to me. I found it hard to simply overlook his comment. “Aren’t you being too harsh? No matter what it may be, treating a student that way is...”

I was aware of his disinclination toward girls.

He didn’t like Yeon-hee that much either, and instances of him discriminating against girls were common. When he talked about the upcoming mock exam last Monday, I was the only person that he gave words of encouragement to. He said nothing to Yuyu who was ranked second. That was probably because Yuyu was a girl.

Although he had a problem with his sexist mindset, I had tried to not think badly of him since he was our guardian. However, this was taking it too far.

“...What in the world are you saying?”

There was a look of surprise on the teacher’s face.

“You’re the one who told me that she had stolen your notes.”

Like a sharp spear from a sprung trap, the fragment of my lost memories pierced my heart.

"I was keeping quiet since you've told me you would take of it yourself, but... Did something happen?"

I couldn't say anything back. To hide my trembling hands from view, I placed my hands down beside my legs.

"...Never mind, I won't poke my nose into your affairs. I'm sure you'll take care of it." After clearing his throat, he continued while nodding his head. "I know you're not the type to get deceived by a girl and neglect your studies."

"What... are you..."

"I understand completely. Considering how that woman was, there's no way you would do such a thing."

"That woman...?"

"I'm talking about that wretched woman who used to be your mother... The one that ran away and left behind her husband's son and even her own daughter."

He blurted out as though he was fed up.

"That woman that your father married right after your mother's death... I was against it from the start. I knew that woman well, and she was a loose woman. It was regretful that your father had to marry her because she was pregnant..."

He let out a long sigh.

"You see, from an early age, she had a taste for smart men. But your father wasn't that kind of a person. Eventually, after living as she pleased, she abandoned her own daughter and eloped with a university professor. God knows what she's doing now..."

He continued.

"Your father's health deteriorated after that and he ultimately passed away at a young age in the end. Having experienced that, for you to become bewitched and neglect your studies is—"

"Mr. Kim!" Grabbing my knees tightly, I shouted. "The reason why... I studied a lot and didn't try to get a girlfriend... wasn't because of that. I already forgot everything about that person. It's the same for Yeon-hee as well."

Desperately, I stressed my words.

"The reason why I'm like this now... is because I was dumped by a girl that I had a crush on in elementary school due to my poor grades. I hit the books after that and lost my interest in girls."

"....." He watched me closely with his mouth closed. "I see. I'm sorry."

And that's how the conversation ended. Since I got a call on my cellphone afterwards, he didn't say anything further and dismissed me right away.

I stepped out of the counseling room and looked for a secluded location. Although the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room was the first place that came to mind, I didn't feel like heading there.

Eventually, I ended up outside in a quiet spot behind the school building. I leaned against the wall and looked up to the sky.

".....Haah."

The digression had thrown me off balance, and I had said things that were unnecessary.

Like what I had said to Ka-ryeon last time, the incident in elementary school was nothing more than a phase. It wasn't like that incident had a great influence on me or anything. But one thing led to another, and ended up saying that was the reason.

The disappearance of that woman who was my mother at the time didn't have a great influence on me, either. Those incidents had by no means determined my life.

My current way of life was of my own volition. It wasn't because of those traumas that I avoided girls and buried myself in my studies— I wasn't a dramatic person like that. I had no interest in other things because I simply loved studying. This was the life I chose.

But...

Was that the real case?

Did those incidents truly had no influence on me?

Yu Yuyu...

She should be in her classroom right now.

Was she lying to me? Was she deceiving me like that girl who had led me on with her real secret intent to exploit me, and like that woman who had married my father while hiding the truth that Yeon-hee was another man's child? And what about Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee?

Engulfed in the complex emotions that I couldn't resolve, I leaned against the wall until the rings of the school bell.

Part 2

It was evening at café Saint.

"Sunbae, I have something to tell you about Miss Yeon-hee."

Having finished serving the crowd of customers, the place returned to its usual silence. Exhausted, I was absently eating the spaghetti that the Manageress had brought out.

“According to my investigation, she... Um, Sunbae?”

“...Yes?”

Realizing that she was speaking to me, I raised my head.

“...Did something happen?”

Ka-ryeon looked into my face with a look of concern.

“No, it’s nothing.”

I shook my head, but Ka-ryeon continued to stare at me with a face full of doubt.

“Did something happen at school?”

“.....”

“...Did Miss Yuyu do something impulsive again?”

I was surprised by her accurate remark.

“How did you know?”

“I’ve told you this love rectangle of ours may be more dangerous than I’d thought. I had foreseen the possibility of something like this happening. Although I’d thought the first one to act impulsively would have been Miss Yeon-hee and not Miss Yuyu.”

“...And *you* don’t act impulsively?”

“I’ll be living with you for a long time come. I’m not so impatient as to act on impulses. *Fufu.*” Touching her lips with her finger, Ka-ryeon laughed. “Please tell me what happened.”

“No, that’s...”

“Sunbae, don’t worry. I’m on your side. There may be something I can do to help.”

After contemplating for a moment, I told Ka-ryeon everything that has happened at school. About how Yuyu had spread the secret that she’s my girlfriend, and how she had arranged the occasion to eat lunch with my friend Sega.

“...She sure is transparent.” Said Ka-ryeon, sighing.

“Transparent? Then you know why she did it?”

“Yes. It’s to create a situation where you won’t be able to ‘dump’ Miss Yuyu.”

A situation where I won’t be able to dump her?

“Sunbae, let’s suppose our claims are all true for the moment. Even then, will you keep three-timing?”

“No, I can’t do that...”

What Sega had said flashed through my mind, but I shook my head.

“Then you’ll have to choose one girl, and that means you must break up with the other two. If you choose no one and decide to put an end to our relationships, you’ll have to break up with three girls.”

“I, I suppose so.”

“But if you’re in a situation where people at your school are aware that you and Miss Yuyu are going out, it becomes difficult to break up with her, increasing her probability of not getting ‘dumped’. That means she may get selected to be your exclusive lover.”

I swallowed my breath at her words.

“And even if Miss Yuyu’s claim... her claim that she’s your real girlfriend proves to be false, she can take over the position of being your real girlfriend with that as a pretext. An upgrade from a fake girlfriend to a real girlfriend.”

We just have to keep dating.

Yuyu had definitely said that.

“I’m not the one to talk, but a woman’s heart sure is frightening. I didn’t expect her to pull out all the stops.”

“...Why is she doing this?”

“Must I really tell you myself?” Ka-ryeon made a hopeless expression. “You’re not a dense protagonist from a romantic comedy; don’t tell me you still haven’t noticed? The reason why Miss Yuyu is doing this is because she...”

“Because she’s really trying to bring down my grades?”

“...Sunbae, I’ll have to reconsider my opinion of you if you really mean what you’re saying.”

“But...”

I disclosed the story that I had heard from my homeroom teacher at the counseling room to Ka-ryeon.

“...Have you confirmed this with Miss Yuyu.”

“I wasn’t able to...”

“Hmm.”

Ka-ryeon’s expression was deep in thought.

“Maybe it’s a misunderstanding.”

“I hope so...”

I, too, didn’t want to believe that Yuyu had approached me in order to bring down my grades.

“I don’t think the current Miss Yuyu is the kind of person to do that sort of thing.”

“I think so, too.”

“However, there may be a side of her that we don’t know about.”

The Yuyu from my lost memories may have been different.

When I started to think that way, I became more doubtful.

“There is no way of telling...”

It was at the moment I muttered to myself:

“Then you just have to ask the person herself.”

The door opened and someone entered the store.

It was Yeon-hee... Unlike yesterday, she was looking at us with an ice-cold expression.

And she wasn’t alone.

“A-Ah, wait!”

Having been dragged inside with her arm seized by Yeon-hee, Yuyu was with her as well.

“H-How are you two...”

When I spoke with a shaky voice, Yeon-hee gave a dismissive snort and replied.

“I caught this stalker snooping outside.”

“I-I’m not a stalker, I’m...!”

“Shut up.”

Dragging the teary-eyed Yuyu, Yeon-hee walked towards us.

“...It’s been a long time since we got together in one place like this.” Said Yeon-hee as she looked around. At her words, Yuyu and Ka-ryeon looked at each other as well.

Come to think of it, it was the first time seeing these three girls in the same place since Saturday.

“Oppa, let’s put an end to this.”

Yeon-hee turned her gaze to me .

“Put an end...?”

“I gave uncle Muhyeok a call during lunchtime today and asked him. This broad was the one who stole your notes, right?”

“...!”

The call he got right before I left the counseling room was from Yeon-hee!?

“Hey stalker, tell the truth why you approached my brother.”

“I, I...”

“If you don’t come clean, I’m going to tell him what really happened that day.”

“T-That’s...!”

What really happened that day?

I had no idea what they were talking about. Seeing how Ka-ryeon was tilting her head, she didn’t know either.

“O-Okay. I’ll come clean, so don’t tell him...!”

However, it seemed like it was a big deal for Yuyu; on the verge of crying, she was begging Yeon-hee.

“Then tell the truth.”

Pushed in the back by Yeon-hee, Yuyu stumbled to a stop before me. She looked up at my face, but she bit her lips and lowered her head right away.

“What’s going on, Yuyu...?”

“I, I...”

“Did you approach me... to bring down my grades? So that you can become the school’s top student?”

I looked at Yuyu in disbelief. Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee were watching her quietly.

Yuyu, who had shrunk away and fallen silent, slowly raised her head at last.

“...That’s right. The reason why I approached you was to steal the first place from you.” Yuyu said with an expression as though she had given up everything.

“I was upset the whole time during the first year. I had always been the top student in middle school, but after entering high school, I could only get second place because of you. Every time I saw my name written below yours on the results board, I felt like I was going mad.”

Her subdued voice echoed inside the silent café.

“I kept observing you after we became classmates in the second year. I was curious as to what kind of a boy you were, and I wanted to find out your secret to maintaining first place if you had one.”

Stunned, I could only stare at her. Ka-ryeon looked on with a calm expression and Yeon-hee watched with a cold look on her face.

“But strangely enough, I started to feel unpleasant as I kept watching you. Although I was conscious of you to such degree, I wasn’t even a subject of interest to you.” Said Yuyu, smiling bitterly.

I certainly wasn’t the type to take particular interest in others. I probably wouldn’t have cared if there was a top ranking student in the same class.

“That’s why I started hindering you.”

Yuyu had a smile on her face as she spoke those words. Yet I saw in clear view the tear drops from her eyes trickling down her cheeks.

Were they tears of regret, or did they have a different meaning?

“Although I say that, it wasn’t like I did something serious. Stuff like bumping into your desk as I pass by when you’re studying— it was that sort of childish interference. Probably it didn’t bother you at all.”

Inside a classroom, it was common for wandering students to bump into desks. I wouldn’t have been really bothered if Yuyu had bumped into mine.

“Then one day, I saw a notebook fall out of your bag while I was peeking at you from behind in the hallway. When I picked it up just to be sure, it was organized with the materials you’ve studied. Looking at its contents, I knew right away that the notebook was very important to you.”

Yuyu looked at her hands as though she were holding that notebook now.

“But you came back; maybe you noticed that you dropped it. Startled, I ran away. I should have gave it back to you right there, but I couldn’t.”

Then she feebly lowered her hands.

“I thought you didn’t realize that I had picked up your notebook. Hoping that your grades would drop because you lost your important notebook, I didn’t give it back to you the next day and the day after next. ...But my heart grew heavy as time passed.”

Like what the homeroom teacher told me, I had known that Yuyu was the one who took my notebook. I wonder why I had not asked Yuyu to give it back.

“So I finally decided to give the notebook back to you. I had even thought of excuses in case you inquired why I had it. But then, you... told me I can keep the notebook if I needed it, as if you didn’t think much of it.” Yuyu put on a smile. “Hearing that, I got really angry. Why are you so relaxed? Are you looking down on me? I felt like I was seriously ignored. I was angry at you even though I was the one who had done wrong.”

Then, smiling in sorrow, Yuyu...

“I felt that I had to get one up on you for my anger to go away. So I...”

Shed a drop of tear once more.

“Made up my mind to make you fall head over heels in love with me, then... dump you at the end, and drop your grades completely.” Said Yuyu in a weary voice. “So I told you about the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room that had been my personal study. Then using the course materials that I received from the academy as bait, I lured you in.”

Although her face was tinged with shame, Yuyu was unable to lower her head.

“Then, seeing that the time was right, I confessed to you. I asked you to go out with me.”

Her face was close to bursting out in tears.

“I was turned down in the end, though...”

Among the voices I’ve heard from Yuyu, this one was the most heartbroken of them all.

“B-But, you see, Glasses, I...”

“...That’s enough.”

At that moment, Yeon-hee, who had been listening without a word, cut her off.

“Now you understand, right? This girl is a liar who was pretending to be your girlfriend when she wasn’t even in a relationship with you. Moreover, with an impure motive.”

“Wait, I still have more to...”

“Shut up.”

While browbeating the confused Yuyu, Yeon-hee turned her attention to me.

“Oppa, I’ll tell you what I’ve found out a little while ago.”

“What...?”

“W-Wait!”

With her expression changing greatly, Yuyu sprang towards Yeon-hee.

“Y-You said you won’t tell him...!”

“It’s the reason why you’ve become amnesic.” Said Yeon-hee, shoving Yuyu away. “Do you know the cause behind the car accident?”

“The cause...?”

“I got a call in the afternoon from the driver who hit you asking about your condition. I had the opportunity to hear the exact account of the accident from him.”

“N-No! Don’t tell him...!”

Desperately, Yuyu tried to cover her mouth; however, Yeon-hee quickly dodged her.

“Just before a schoolgirl who was on a crosswalk on a red light was about to get struck by the car, you threw yourself and pushed her out of the way, and got hit by the car in her place.”

After saying that, Yeon-hee cast a cold gaze toward Yuyu.

“That schoolgirl was you, wasn’t it? You were also the first one to call for an ambulance.”

“I, I...”

I looked at Yuyu with a feeling of disbelief. Her face had turned pale and she was shaking like a leaf.

“Yet you’re flirting with my brother while lying to him, hiding that fact... It’s all your fault that my brother got into a car accident and lost his memory...!” Yelled Yeon-hee, unable to hold back her rage.

The moment Yuyu heard those words, she turned her back from us.

She had reached her limit.

“*Sniffle*...!”

Yuyu ran out of the store. Although I couldn't see her face, it was easy to guess that she had burst into tears from the looks of her back.

"Yu Yuyu...!"

"Oppa, don't chase after her!" exclaimed Yeon-hee in a sharp voice, "There is no reason at all for you to care about her. Everything had been amiss. We must turn everything back the way they were."

"What do you mean the way they were..."

Then Yeon-hee, who had maintained her silence, opened her mouth.

"Isn't this taking it too far?"

"...What is?"

Yeon-hee gave Ka-ryeon a dirty look, but she paid no attention to it and spoke in a calm voice.

"You have only forced Miss Yuyu out with your accusations. Do you think this is right?"

"Then are you saying what she was right?!"

Without replying to Yeon-hee's question, Ka-ryeon turned her gaze towards me.

"Sunbae, are you going to resent the person you threw yourself to save? Rebuke her for having gotten into a car accident in her place?"

"That's..."

"You're not that kind of person. This matter would've been over with Miss Yuyu's thanks and apology, but Miss Yeon-hee led the conversation astray." Ka-ryeon continued, "And about how Miss Yuyu approached you to bring down your grades, that's most likely not..."

"Hmph, I see that the two liars are on the same side."

"...Excuse me?"

"You're also a liar. I know everything."

At those words, the expression on Ka-ryeon's face vanished.

"What do you mean?"

"The key."

Yeon-hee pulled out a single key from her pocket.

It was the key to the front door of our home.

"I took this from the girl who left just now. Apparently she got it from you."

That must be the key that Ka-ryeon and Yuyu used to open the door on Saturday night and Tuesday morning, respectively.

“This key has a sticker mark on the end, meaning it originally belonged to my brother. It’s the original, not a copy that my brother gave to you as his fiancée.”

Yeon-hee turned her attention to me.

“Oppa, do you have the house key on you right now?”

“...I don’t.”

I left home earlier and returned home later than Yeon-hee. Since there was no real need for me to use the key, I usually kept it in the desk drawer.

“The key wasn’t in the spot that my brother always leaves it at as well. So that means it’s not a copy that my brother has either. There has always been one key and it was never copied.”

“...And that matters because?”

“You’ve said that you have the key because you’re his fiancée, but that’s a lie. It just happened to fall into your hand for you to show as a proof of your legitimacy.”

Surprised, I looked at Ka-ryeon. Was she lying to me, too?

“...Maybe your brother just gave me the key that he had.”

“The very key that he has to use? What if a situation comes up where he needs it? I’d understand if he had let you borrow it for a moment, but how does that prove that you’re his fiancée?”

Perhaps something was bothering Ka-ryeon’s conscience; she wasn’t able to respond clearly.

“Maybe you stole the key from my brother.”

“...I beg your pardon?”

“Ahh, now I get it. You were trying to steal our family fortune, weren’t you? You were going to sneak in with the key and run off with our inheritance.”

The moment those words reached Ka-ryeon, her expression became as cold as ice.

“...If that’s how you want to play, I have something to say also.”

“Oh really? You do?”

To Yeon-hee who was scoffing, Ka-ryeon spoke in a frigid voice:

“The DNA test that said you two weren’t blood-related is a lie, isn’t it?”

This time it was Yeon-hee's turn to shut her mouth.

"W-What do you mean? I saw the printout of the results with my own eyes..."

"She forged it, though I don't know how." Ka-ryeon explained calmly. "I should have personally called the place you went to get tested to confirm. It was a mistake moving on after just seeing the results."

"...What are you talking about?" Yeon-hee replied in a shaky voice. "On what basis are you saying I forged it?!"

"Miss Yeon-hee's mistake was her lack of knowledge of DNA testing. Of course I only learned about it after doing some research myself." Then Ka-ryeon asked, "Sunbae, your father has already passed away long ago, right?"

"Y-Yeah."

"In this situation, it's impossible to tell if you and Miss Yeon-hee have the same father. Even DNA testing is of no use."

"...!"

"If you two were brothers, it would've been possible to tell if you have the same father with just the genes from the two of you since men have the exact same Y chromosome as their father. However, since women don't have Y chromosome, you can't find out the paternal lineage through DNA testing with a brother and a sister."

I opened my eyes wide and looked at Yeon-hee. She was looking this way with a pale face.

"Yeon-hee."

"O-Oppa."

"So... it was a lie? How we weren't related by blood?"

When I asked her, Yeon-hee bit her lips and lowered her head.

"...I don't know."

"You don't know?"

"It's true that mom was cheating on him. Even before and after the marriage, she was seeing another man. That's what was written in the diary." Yeon-hee stumbled over her words. "So there's sufficient possibility that I may not be dad's biological daughter."

"Then that means there's also definitely the possibility that you're related by blood!" Unable to hold back, I shouted. "If it can't be even confirmed through DNA testing, there's no telling if we're

blood-related or not! How could you do such things despite knowing I might be your biological brother?!

“...Don’t worry, Sunbae. It’s probably a lie that you two crossed the line.”

At that moment, I heard Ka-ryeon’s voice.

“What?”

“Miss Yeon-hee told a lie because she didn’t want to lose you to us... to me and Miss Yuyu.” Looking at Yeon-hee, Ka-ryeon spoke. “Right?”

“.....”

Yeon-hee didn’t reply. However, that silence verified Ka-ryeon’s remark.

I see. We haven’t made an irreversible mistake.

That’s good, I’m glad but...

“Still, you... tried to seduce me.”

“.....”

“We’re lucky that nothing happened. If I had lost self-control and embraced you...”

Just the thought was terrifying.

“Just what... were you even thinking...?”

Yeon-hee couldn’t say anything. With a pale face, she hung her head and bit her lips hard

“Ha, haha...”

Finding it difficult to stand straight, I leaned against the counter.

The plate of cold spaghetti remained on the counter, but I no longer had the appetite to finish it.

“Just who are you girls? Were each and every one of you deceiving me?”

Covering my face with the palm of my hand, I coughed out the words in a weary voice.

“Why me? I’m a boring person who knows nothing but studying with no interest in girls. Why are you doing all this stuff to me? No, perhaps because I am that type of person, I was easy to deceive and swindle.”

“Sunbae, please w—”

“Enough, I don’t want to hear it anymore.” Although Ka-ryeon tried to speak to me in a hurry, I curtly cut her off. “It’s a lie that you’re my fiancée, anyway.”

“.....”

Ka-ryeon didn't respond.

It was just as I thought. I had never accepted her.

“...Give me the key.” I took the key from Yeon-hee's hand. “Sorry but I'm leaving now. ...Tell the Manageress that I'm taking an early leave. And I might not be coming in tomorrow.”

I might not even come in from now on.

“Sunbae, please wait a moment.”

“O-Oppa.”

Brushing aside their voices calling out to me, I got out of the store.

“.....”

I looked up at the sky with mixed emotions.

Unlike yesterday, it wasn't currently raining. I could really use some rain right now.

The not-so-everyday-life that went on for four days straight since Monday. Thinking how great it'd be if I could erase those days where everything was fake, I started walking my way back home.

It seems like I'm not going to get any studying done today as well.

Chapter 7 - Bitter End

Part 1

Friday.

I left the house early without seeing Yeon-hee's face.

There was nobody in the classroom when I arrived at school. I took out the organized notes from my bag and started studying by myself.

Aside from greeting Sega briefly when he entered the classroom, I kept studying without talking to anybody.

I was used to it since this was my everyday life.

"Yu Yuyu. ...Hmm, is she absent?"

Then during the homeroom period, the morning roll call caused a small stir.

Yuyu's unexpected absence made everybody turn their eyes towards me. However, I ignored them and continued reading my notes.

"I'm sure everybody knows, but we're holding a National United Achievement Test today. Don't let your guard down just because it's a mock test. Think of it as the real deal and get your head on straight."

After giving his advice, the homeroom teacher encouraged the class to attain good marks while pointing towards me again.

However, it would be difficult to get a good grade this time. I had forgotten about three months of studies, which was quite the amount.

Of course, I have been studying, so it wasn't like my grade was going to drop sharply all of a sudden. But, since I have studied three months lesser than other high schoolers in the country, my ranking will go down a fair bit. A result significantly short of the first place in the country that the homeroom teacher wants was certain.

There was no way around it. I'll make it up by increasing the amount of studying from now on. For today, I will do all that I can with my current skills.

And so, the mock test began.

The tense mood unique to the day of mock tests filled the classroom to the brim. Feeling at ease in that mood. I put my writing implements on the desk.

“It seems there’s an absentee.”

The first period was linguistics. The teacher in charge came in and commented on the empty seat.

But as if it was nothing, the teacher started preparing the test. The test sheets were distributed to the students, and a moment later the announcement notifying the commencement of the test was heard from the speakers.

The listening test broadcast would have begun right away in the past; however, due to its scheduled removal from the national university entrance test, we now start with solving paper questions first.

Beginning with question number one, they’re questions assessing one’s writing ability. Even if you had not studied comprehensively, it was perfectly possible to solve them with a grasp on their context and logical thinking.

However, grammatical questions weren’t so easy. There were parts that I felt like I had studied before, but couldn’t remember clearly. I probably had thoroughly memorized them in the last three months, but I was unable to solve them due to my memory loss.

Nevertheless, it wasn’t in my character to leave it unsolved and move on to the next question. In the end, after contemplating for a good while between the likely answers number two and four, I checked number two as the temporary answer and went on to the next question.

Read the following and answer the question. Literary questions started appearing.

‘This text, I’ve seen it somewhere before...’

I remembered immediately. It was from the mock test preparation printouts that Yuyu had lent me two days ago.

Given how the question did not show up too often, I was surprised to see it appear on the test just like this. The academy has a considerably high accuracy rate.

‘.....’

But I had no time to spare on random thoughts. I lowered my head and resumed solving the questions.

‘...Whew.’

However, I felt oddly at ease.

Maybe because it’s a test, I could concentrate really well. It has been too long since I’ve solved problems with the right focus like this.

When I thought about it, there wasn't a single time where I was able to study properly in peace since Saturday. My amnesia had also been constantly on my mind, but my life was too disarrayed. Since I had no way of knowing when and what would happen, I wasn't able to keep my mind at ease.

'Yu Yuyu, Han Ka-ryeon, and Yeon-hee...'

Because of their pestering all this time, I had wasted too much time. But that is all over now.

Yuyu won't be bothering me any more now. The same goes for Ka-ryeon. It'd probably be best to quit my part-time job.

Things will be awkward with Yeon-hee for a while, but it should go back to the way they were over time.

Then everything will be back to normal. I'll be able to study in silence. Continue attending school and study, do well on the national university entrance test, get into a university where I can receive an all-expenses paid scholarship, work more part-time jobs while studying in university so I can keep getting scholarship, send Yeon-hee to a good university, and then...

Live in peace and quiet without getting involved excessively with other people.

'.....'

I raised my head up a bit and glanced at the seat where Yuyu should have been sitting.

There was nothing on the ownerless desk. Looking at the sight, I thought about Yuyu.

'How pathetic.'

That was what I thought.

She was a girl who cared greatly about marks and ranks, and yet she was playing truant on the day of the national university entrance test. Has she lost her mind?

Perhaps she hasn't sorted herself out yet after yesterday's event. Nonetheless, isn't being absent like this contradictory? Her objective should be to bring down my grades and steal the first place in the school. It's not a competition if she doesn't even show up.

And if she wants to surpass me and place first in the school, the best opportunity is now where I've forgotten about three months of studying. Yet why in the world did she skip out today. I couldn't understand.

'I just can't underst—'

Hold on.

There was just one more thing I couldn't understand.

All this time, Yuyu had followed me around. She came to see me in the mornings, and we ate our meals together during lunches. She was so anxious about my activities that she had even come to my part-time job to spy on me.

Doesn't this mean Yuyu was unable to properly study as well?

'And—'

One more thing.

This time Yuyu had discovered that there were also two more girls who were actively approaching me.

If her goal was to bring down my grades by distracting me with romance, then there was no real need for Yuyu to take action in this situation. All she had to do was to take a step back and let Ka-ryeon or Yeon-hee to push me around. There was no need for her to personally take action and sacrifice her study time.

But Yuyu had continued to approach me. Not only that, she had even tried to keep Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee in check, going so far as to put aside her studies.

"What is up with him?"

Some of the students who were doing the test looked this way from my blurting. The teacher in charge also turned his attention to me.

But I couldn't care less about their stares.

'Just why...'

Yuyu wouldn't have gone about it this way if her goal was to bring down my grades and steal the first place in the school.

Then why did Yuyu do those things? Just why?

For what reason did she try to be my 'real girlfriend'?

'And...'

This raises second doubts about Han Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee.

'Yuyu, Ka-ryeon, Yeon-hee...!'

Did Yuyu lie to me in order to bring down my grades and steal the first place in the school?

Did Ka-ryeon lie to me in order to get someone who'll support her for her whole life?

Did Yeon-hee lie to me in order to cross the line with her brother that might be blood-related to her?

Why did these three girls lie to me?

Where is the solution to this problem?

“Damn it...!”

Kicking the desk, I got up from my seat.

The loud noise drew attention from more people than the previous time. No, almost everyone inside the classroom was looking at me.

“W-What’s wrong?”

With an expression of surprise on his face, the teacher in charge asked me.

I looked straight into his eyes and told him:

“Something urgent came up so I will be leaving early.”

“Wh-What?”

Probably he’s one of the teachers who remember my face.

“Y-You’re Ahn Kyeong-hyun, right? What do you mean you’re leaving early because something urgent came up?”

“Then make it for a medical reason, please. I will inform my homeroom teacher later.”

In front of the teacher who had his mouth agape, I swiftly packed my bag. As I waltzed out of the classroom, all the students looked on with dumbfounded expressions. Sega stood out amongst them, greeting me with his hand in the air, but I had no time to respond to his encouragement.

“Hey, hey, where are you going...?!”

Ignoring the teacher’s voice calling me from behind, I walked down the hallway in strides. He won’t be able to leave the other students and chase me right away.

I have to confirm them, without a moment’s delay, what their true intentions are.

I’ll miss the test, but that doesn’t matter. What’s important right now is not that.

Because even if there’s a question I’m not sure of, I don’t skip to the next question— I’m the type of person who just has to find the answer ASAP.



“...Now that I think about it, I don’t even know Yuyu’s cellphone number.”

After leaving the school without hesitation, I encountered my first problem.

“But I have my ways.”

Right away, I walked to a nearby pay phone. I took out the notebook from my bag and opened it to the page where I had written down the contact information.

“Hello, this is Café S—”

“Manageress, it’s me.”

The place I called was Café Saint.

“Kyeong-hyun...? Shouldn’t you be at school right now?”

“Please tell me Ka-ryeon’s cell phone number.”

“Wh-What?!” The Manageress, whose voice had been drowsy, sounded surprised. “Hey, hey! Why are you trying to get my sister’s number?! Are you interested in Ka-ryeon? W-Why you...”

“It’s an important matter.”

When I responded with a serious tone, the Manageress became quiet.

“...Wh-What? What’s with the seriousness...? I-Is it really an important matter?”

“Yes.”

“I-If you’re seriously interested in Ka-ryeon for real... If it’s a serious relationship and not a fling, then as her older sister...”

“Manageress, her cellphone number.”

“O-Okay.”

I jot down the number from the Manageress in the notebook. The Manageress said “Y-You two can’t have sex yet! If you really want to do it, make sure to use contracep—!” at the end, but I didn’t reply and hung up.

I called Ka-ryeon immediately afterwards. Hearing the dial tone, I realized that she was also in the middle of the linguistics portion of her test, but the call connected shortly after.

“...Sunbae?”

“You guessed right.”

Somehow, Ka-ryeon had sensed the call was from me even before I spoke. Her intuition was something else.

“Sorry, but can you tell me Yuyu’s cellphone number?”

“...Why do you think that I would know Miss Yuyu’s cellphone number?”

“You came to my house with Yuyu on Saturday as well, and after that you had lent my house key to Yuyu after hearing her story. There’s a possibility you had used your cellphone to contact her.”

“...Haah.”

Ka-ryeon let out of a sigh.

“...I will tell you her number.”

Was she searching through her cellphone directory? After a momentary silence, Ka-ryeon told me Yuyu’s number.

“Thanks.”

“Sunbae, what do you plan on doing?”

“I’ll have a talk with you soon, too.”

With those last words, I ended my call with Ka-ryeon. Although I was searching for Yuyu’s whereabouts right now, I wasn’t going to delay settling the issue with Ka-ryeon.

...But how did she answer her cell phone during the test?

“Well then...”

I phoned the number that I’ve obtained. I don’t know if she’ll answer it or not, but I had to call her.

However, the call quickly went through.

“Hello?”

“Yu—“

I stopped myself from calling Yuyu’s name right away. The voice didn’t belong to Yuyu.

“Hello? Did you call Yuyu’s cell phone?”

The voice was that of an old lady.

...Is it her mom?

“...May I ask whom I’m speaking to?”

I asked while trying to sound as mature as possible.

“Ah, my daughter went to school with her cell phone at home today... By the way, may I ask who this is?”

After making something random up, I hung up the phone.

Right now, Yuyu wasn't at home. And her mom said she went to school.

"...Time to find her."

It'd be hopeless if she went somewhere far; however, considering the kind of girl Yuyu was, she wouldn't have wandered far. Her prep school was around here as well, and she didn't seem to be the kind of person who had a wide range of movement.

It was already past ten o'clock. The mathematical portion of the test was going to start soon.

Even though an earnest desire to immediately return to school and solve the latest questions was stirring inside me, I started walking in the opposite direction of the school.

I'll find Yuyu and uncover her true intentions. Even to my own surprise, the desire to do so was far stronger.

But no matter where I looked, I couldn't find a trace of her. I searched the library intensively, thinking I'd go there if it were me, but to no avail. I searched everywhere else but there was no sign of her.

I thought she'd be in this neighbourhood that was divided from other areas by a creek and a national highway. Perhaps my thinking was wrong.

Realizing that it was lunchtime even before I knew it when I saw the clock inside a store as I passed by it, I became hungry. Come to think of it, I haven't had any breakfast this morning.

But still, I was reluctant to get something to eat with the present situation at hand. Just as I was thinking about the matter, I heard a voice besides me.

"Sunbae."

I turned my head to see Ka-ryeon standing next to me in her school uniform.

"Why are you..."

My eyes widened at the sight of her. Then my eyes opened even wider when I saw the girl standing behind her.

Standing there was Yeon-hee clad also in her school uniform. She was staring me with a stern look.

"Why are you girls here...? You first-years also have an test today."

Sweeping her hair up, Ka-ryeon replied to my question:

"I didn't want to write the test, so I'm playing truant for today."

“What...?!”

Is this girl also skipping school like Yuyu is doing?!

“Hey, you shouldn’t be doing that.”

“Oh my, but I’m a delinquent. I don’t normally study at all.” Said Ka-ryeon, while smiling with an innocent face. “You’ve lost consciousness before after seeing my midterm test report card. Apparently you have a constitution where you faint upon seeing terrible marks, Sunbae.”

“...Wait.”

“You ravished me throughout the night that day, saying ‘naughty girl who neglects her studies needs to be punished!’ I was scared, but it was a little exciting.”

“D-Don’t lie!”

Although I regard studying as being important, there’s no way I would’ve done such a thing... is what I’d like to believe.

...And here I thought I’d never have this sort of conversation with Ka-ryeon anymore.

“Yeon-hee... You didn’t go to school, either?”

“.....”

Yeon-hee lowered her head with an expression of discomfort.

...My goodness.

“Yuyu, and now you girls. Why are you all skipping the test?! Do you or do you not realize that you’re test-takers?!”

“Sunbae, take a look in a mirror.”

“...Ah.”

I was skipping, too... Though, technically, it wasn’t truancy in my case.

“Looks like we’re a group of four delinquents.”

“B-Be quiet. ...But really, what are you two doing here?”

“I was just about to take a nap in a nearby park when I got your call, Sunbae.”

You really have a laidback life...

“But I figured it wasn’t the time to be napping after I got your call, so I called Miss Yeon-hee right away and met up with her. “

“Why would you call Yeon-hee? And how did you find out her number?”

“You’ve given me Miss Yeon-hee’s cellphone and home telephone numbers before to get in contact with you in case something happens. The reason why I contacted Yeon-hee was because...”

Ka-ryeon’s turned her eyes to Yeon-hee.

“I thought it was a bit unfair for only me to know about this situation.”

“Unfair?”

“And things have become urgent for me, as well.”

“Urgent?”

“Sunbae.” Said Ka-ryeon, without answering my question “This love rectangle had started with you and us three gathered together. And yesterday, it fell apart with you and us three gathered together.”

With a light smile, Ka-ryeon continued.

“Then don’t you think we all ought to gather together when settling this matter?”

Although I couldn’t comprehend them, her words felt oddly persuasive.

While eating a plate of rabokki for lunch after entering a nearby snack bar as per the girls’ wishes, I explained the current situation where Yuyu has gone missing.

“You couldn’t find her no matter where you searched...” Ka-ryeon, who was listening to the story while eating a roll of cheese kimbap, nodded her head, seemingly lost in thought. “There are only a few locations around here that a high school girl would likely go to. You’ve searched all of the possible places, and we’ve also went around everywhere searching for you but we didn’t see Miss Yuyu.”

Yeon-hee, who was eating a bowl of udon next to her, nodded her head.

“...So she’s gone to a different neighbourhood?”

“I don’t think that’s the case.”

“Why is that?”

“Call it a woman’s intuition.”

Ah... Is that so?

“Sunbae, women will never run away to place where truly nobody can find them in these situations.”

“Is that so?”

Seeing how Yeon-hee is nodding her head in agreement, I guess it's true.

"Does any place come to mind, Sunbae?"

"I've pretty much searched everywhere."

"A place of memories that only you and Miss Yuyu know of... Don't you have a spot like that?"

"There's no way such a place would exist... The only places we had met outside of school were the hospital, our home, and Saint. If there's a place that we went together within my lost memories..."

While muttering so in my head, a thought flashed across my mind.

"...Wait."

"Does something come to mind?"

"No, it's that..."

If I'm right...

"Ah... For heaven's sake."

I scratched my head hard.

The proverb "it's always the darkest under the lighthouse" rang true.

Since we couldn't go in right away, we had to wait for quite a while outside.

It was about 3 o'clock when we entered the school, after the start of the fourth period of the test. The hallways were devoid of students.

"...I knew it. Her shoes are inside the shoe rack."

Having confirmed her presence by checking the shoe rack, we walked up the stairs together.

"This is exciting."

"Exciting, my ass."

Paying constant attention to see if anyone's coming at the front, I grimaced at Ka-ryeon's carefree comment.

I told Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee to wait outside but they tagged along anyway, saying it's too late for that now. It'll become an issue if they find out that a student from another school snuck inside the school during the test...

"Are we there yet?"

“We’re almost there.”

Our destination was the local history study room on the top floor of the school.

To be precise, it was the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room inside the space.

“...This is the place.”

Having stepped inside the local history study room, we stopped in front of the iron door to the preparation room. I stood still with a variety of exhibits behind me.

“What do you plan on doing?”

“...Let me first check.”

I grabbed the doorknob, but the door didn’t budge. It was locked from the inside.

“Yuyu.”

There was no answer; however, certain that Yuyu was inside, I called her again.

“Yuyu, you’re in there, right?”

There was still no answer.

“Why did you skip the test today? Not just any test, but the National United Achievement Test. A girl with good grades like you shouldn’t be skipping out on this.”

“...You have better grades than me. You’re the number one in the school.”

At last, a subdued voice was heard from the other side of the door.

It was definitely Yuyu's voice.

“First place or second place, there isn’t much difference.”

“Don’t lie to me.”

“Anyhow, though it’s impossible to do the test today since it’s already late, you should at least take the test paper with you. Also, we have to talk to our homeroom teacher about today’s unauthorized absence and get it sorted out. So let’s hurry and—”

“...Why are you saying that?” Said Yuyu in a dark voice. “Why did you come to see me?”

“That’s...”

I hesitated for a moment. I didn’t know the right words to say.

In the end, I gave the easiest reply.

“Because we’re going to keep going to school together and keep seeing each other.”

“...I’m going to drop out of school.”

What...?

“Hold on, why of all a sudden—”

“Because I have no reason to be at school. Starting next week, I’m not going to come to school.” Yuyu’s subdued voice continued, “I have no friends anyway, and I even lied about you being my boyfriend. Even if I stay in school, nothing good will come of it.”

“S-Still, you should at least graduate from high school... And get your parents’ permis—”

“I’ll quit school and take the General Education Development tests. I can take the SAT test after studying at home while attending a cram school. My mom will give me permission if I tell her it’s because I want to focus on studying for the SAT test.”

“Yuyu, you should still...”

“But then you’re not going to have lunch with me anymore ...!”

As I kept talking to her despite my confusion, what reached my ears was Yuyu’s woeful voice.

“I’m not your girlfriend, and I’ve even lied to you... There’s no way you would have lunch with me!”

“Is that... important?”

“It is important! To me, it is...”

Even without seeing her face, I had a feeling Yuyu was crying behind the iron door.

Alone, she was crying.

“Because the lunchtimes I was spending with you were the happiest times for me...! I was coming to school in order to see you...!”

Listening to Yuyu shouting at me, my eyes opened wide.

“I definitely confessed to you. I confessed, saying that I liked you and wanted to go out with you. That was last Friday.”

Last Friday...?

I swallowed my breath, realizing its significance. That was the day I had gotten into the car accident.

That day that I had thrown myself to save Yuyu, I had received a confession from her?

“Originally, I had planned on pulling a prank on you. But while confessing to you, I could no longer tell if I was really confessing to you to entrap you or if I was confessing to you for real.”

Yuyu continued to let it out in a heavy voice.

“But you turned me down. Of course you did. You’re Ahn Kyeong-hyun, who only knows studying and has no interest in girls. Even if a girl devoid of charm like me were to confess to you, you wouldn’t have gone out with me. I kept asking you out while not knowing if the words I was saying were from my heart or not, but you kept turning me down. ...It would’ve been better you had outright told me that you had no intention of dating a girl like me. Then I would’ve been able to get angry for being ignored and hate you again. But you didn’t even do that for me. Gently, admonishingly... You told me that you weren’t worthy of dating another person as though you were sorry. That’s why it was even more painful.”

It was likely that it had been her first confession.

She had confessed while not knowing if her words were for real or not, and she was turned down.

I wondered what thoughts she had and what emotions she had felt at that moment.

“But what really pained me wasn’t your rejection. I was unbearably sad that I could no longer spend time with you and the thought that you wouldn’t have lunch with me from now on...” Yuyu said as she was close to tears. “That’s why I wanted to talk to you again. Seeing you leave early for your part-time job, I also left school in a rush and chased you. I was about to cross the road in a hurry after spotting you on the other end of the crosswalk. Having noticed me running up to you hurriedly while calling your name, your face changed color and you came running towards me. ...I was happy deep down at that moment, since it was me who you came running after.”

...But that was to save Yuyu who was about to get struck by a car, and it was the incident that caused all this.

“And you got into a car accident. My head was about to burst— How was I going to apologize when you wake up? But I was surprised that you couldn’t remember anything. I was sad that you couldn’t remember our times together that were so precious to me, but then an idea came to my mind.”

“So that’s why... you did that.” I said with parched lips.

“Yes, I’d thought of becoming your girlfriend by exploiting this opportunity.” Yuyu continued in a self-deprecating voice. I was confident that I could be good to you. Treat you really kindly, make you happy and help you to make you glad that you have a girlfriend... I’d thought how nice it’d be if I could make up even a little for the inconvenience that I’d caused you. And that maybe even after your memories returned, how nice it’d be if you continued to treat me as your girlfriend...”

But Yuyu’s plan went awry from the beginning.

I looked at the girl of seemingly delicate constitution standing behind me, staring this way without an expression on her face.

“But I wasn’t the only one who wanted you. When Han Ka-ryeon, that girl who looks way prettier than me, said she was also going out with you... I felt betrayed. Why was he going out with another girl when he wouldn’t go out with me? At the same time, I felt the possessive desire to steal you and make you mine alone.”

And in such a situation, my sister had driven her further into the corner.

“And even your sister started claiming that she had an intimate relationship with her brother. My mind was in complete disarray. The thought of wanting to be good to you after becoming your girlfriend had vanished somewhere, and I was in constant fear of losing you to another girl and drifting apart from you completely. That’s why ... I tried to create an unbreakable relationship while pretending to be your girlfriend.” Yuyu said in a feeble voice. “This is my real ‘truth’. I went out of control, unable to keep my emotions in check, and caused you trouble. It’s not something that can be forgiven.”

Then, Yuyu offered a word of apology.

“I’m sorry, Glasses. You lost your memories because of me, and you couldn’t study properly... I’m truly sorry. I’ll disappear from your sight from now on; I won’t pester you anymore, so...”

She began sobbing in a muffled manner inside the preparations room. The sound of her cry was so sorrowful that it pained my heart to listen to it.

No longer able to bear it, I opened my mouth.

“No, Yuyu, I...”

It was that moment.

“...Oppa.”

I heard a stiff voice from behind my back.

What I saw when I turned around was Yeon-hee looking at me with a pale face.

“Oppa, are you going to go out with that girl?”

Yeon-hee had kept silent until now. However, the question she asked me was absolutely unexpected.

“What are you... talking about?”

“I, I don’t want that...!” Eyes glistening with tears, Yeon-hee shouted. “No! No! No...! I don’t ever want you to get a girlfriend!”

“No, Yeon-hee! That’s not what we’re talking about—”

“You’re lying! You were just about to say kind words to that girl! If you say those things, that girl is going to like you even more!”

I swallowed my breath at her unexpected comment.

“In such a situation, can you just act like it didn’t happen? After making a girl fall head over heels in love with you, will you not take responsibility?!”

I was struck speechless. I should be denying what Yeon-hee was saying, but I was confused as to how to go about it.

While I was lost in confusion, Yeon-hee ran into my arms and cried out.

“No! No! Yeon-hee will become your girlfriend if you need one, I’ll quit being your sister and become your girlfriend, so don’t go out with anyone else...!”

Just like Wednesday night, Yeon-hee had completely lost her composure again.

“What’s wrong, Yeon-hee? This isn’t like you.”

“But, but...!” Hitting my chest with her fists, Yeon-hee cried out. “I may not be your real sister, so if you get a girlfriend, if you find a girl you like, if you find a girl that you want to spend your life with... I’ll end up alone...!”

Then, in a grief-stricken voice, she continued...

“I may not be related to you by blood and we maybe aren’t a family. You’re definitely going to leave me!”

“What are you saying? Even if we’re not blood-related, there’s no way I would—”

“Really? Even if we turn thirty, even if we turn forty, are you still going to live with me?!” Yelled Yeon-hee while looking up at me after she had stopped hitting my chest. “That’s impossible. We can’t live like that. You’re looking after me while we’re living together like this right now, but someday you’ll think that we should live independently. Then you’ll find your significant other and start a new family.”

Looking up at me with eyes filled with tears, Yeon-hee continued.

“If we’re a real family connected by blood, then we can keep being connected even if you start a new family. But if we’re not, if there’s nothing connecting us, then our relationship will be completely severed in the end.”

“No, Yeon-hee, there’s no—”

I desperately tried to deny it, but Yeon-hee wouldn’t listen.

"I've always been afraid ever since I realized that I may not be dad's biological daughter after finding mom's notebook. I was so scared that you might find out about the truth. It may be useless even if I were to hide it. Our mom who'd vanished might return, and a person claiming to be my real father might appear. If that were to happen, and you were to learn that I'm not your real sister, then I'd lose my place as your sister..."

"Yeon-hee, why... Why are you so fixated on me?"

I spoke in a trembling voice. Then, Yeon-hee replied heavy-heartedly.

"Mom ran away, and dad's in his grave... The only person I could rely on in this world was you. You were my sole family, and you were my everything... I couldn't stand being separated from you."

That was why Yeon-hee couldn't approve the existence of her brother's girlfriend who appeared out of nowhere one day.

If Yuyu or Ka-ryeon is really her brother's girlfriend, then she'd lose her brother. Furthermore, in her brother's room was evidence of him having an intimate relationship with a girl.

So Yeon-hee lied about being a sister not related by blood and having already crossed the line long time ago. Then seducing me, she tried to create an unbreakable relationship... so that she may keep on being connected with me.

"So, oppa... I don't want you to get a girlfriend. Yeon-hee will become your girlfriend if you need one; I'm fine with ceasing to be your sister and becoming your girlfriend..."

"Yeon-hee, I..."

What should I say...? I didn't know.

While my lips quivered shut, a serene voice reached my ears.

"Then may I speak now?"

Ka-ryeon, who'd been observing the situation in silence, took a step forward.

"Han Ka-ryeon, now's not the—"

"No, I must say it now."

Contrary to her seemingly delicate appearance, Ka-ryeon interrupted me with a forceful manner.

"I'm not your fiancée as you have pointed out, Sunbae. You had turned me down, like you did on Wednesday night. 'Put on hold' might be the more appropriate phrase to use, but a rejection is a rejection."

"That's..."

“But nevertheless, I wanted to have you.” Ka-ryeon said in a definite voice, “So I lied about being your fiancée and seduced you, similar to Miss Yuyu and Miss Yeon-hee.”

Placing her hand on her chest, Ka-ryeon seemed as though she was in pain.

“Right now, I’ve listened to both of their stories. I know that they both have desperate circumstances. In comparison, my circumstances aren’t that desperate.”

“Then...”

“However, Sunbae...”

Smiling gently, Ka-ryeon spoke. Her smile was truly beautiful and otherworldly.

“My desire to become your bride is true. I’ll never lose to anyone when it comes to this desire. I want you from the bottom my heart. So...” She continued in a heartfelt voice. “If you reject me, I’ll definitely be hurt. Like how the other two girls will be hurt, the same is true if you assume an ambiguous stance.”

After saying that, Ka-ryeon let out small sigh.

Only then I realized that her shoulders were slightly trembling, and that she was feeling nervous.

“Then, Sunbae... You’ve heard enough about us now, right?”

My mind recalled last Saturday where I’d listened to their stories *at my home*. These girls who had gathered at my place that day and had lied about their relationships with me were now telling the truth this time around.

Unlike yesterday where they pointed out each other’s contradictions at the café, they were laying the truth bare and were trying to determine their relationship with me.

“Then, please decide.”

“Decide? What do you—”

“That should be obvious.”

Yuyu behind the iron door, as well as Yeon-hee in front of my eyes, were waiting for my answer breathlessly.

“Please decide... who you’re going to choose among the three of us.”

Ka-ryeon’s voice ate into my heart.

If I choose Yuyu and make her change her mind, it's inevitable that I become close to her. Then I'll have to leave Yeon-hee one day, and I won't be able to grant Ka-ryeon's wish.

If I choose Ka-ryeon and start dating her on the premise of marriage, it'll be difficult making Yuyu change her mind. Not to mention, I'll drift apart from Yeon-hee.

If I choose Yeon-hee and decide to live with her now and forevermore, then I'll have to turn the other two down here clearly, once again.

Having said that, it was impossible to choose none of them and ambiguously move on.

Then, what is it that I should do?

"I..."

My quivering lips opened before the three girls awaiting my answer.

"Glasses..."

"Sunbae."

"...Oppa."

I wanted to say, "Give me some time to think". I wanted to postpone it.

I've lived my life until now only studying while keeping complicated human relationships at a distance. I've never wanted to have an intimate relationship with another person. Yeon-hee was a family member I've lived with, and Sega was a lame excuse of a friend that I've never had a deep conversation with. Uncle Muhyeok was close to a stranger.

And now for some inexplicable reason, I was put in a situation where I have to choose one of the three girls. What's worse, if choose one, I would hurt the other two.

There was no way I could properly solve this kind of problem.

"I, I..."

It was at that moment.

"What are you kids doing here?"

Sternly stoic and heartlessly cold, it was a familiar voice.

Having stepped inside the local history study room, it was none other than my homeroom teacher, as well as my legal guardian, Kim Muhyeok, who had a fierce look on his face.

Part 2

Everything was over.

As I got dragged out of the room by my homeroom teacher, a feeling of impending doom loomed over me. It was the same for Yuyu, Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee.

He must have already heard about how I ran off during the exam. Maybe the homeroom teacher had been searching for my whereabouts.

Given the serious atmosphere I was creating with three other girls in a remote area of the school, it was definitely an issue that the homeroom teacher couldn't just overlook.

Everyone gathered here had skipped out on their mock tests, so there was also the problem of being absent without leave. Moreover, it gets more complicated since two of the girls are from different schools. Considering that it's a matter between opposite sexes, mentions of public indecency and impure relationship could arise.

It was a situation where we could receive multiple punishments, not to mention that my homeroom teacher was also my legal guardian. There was certain to be some sort of penalty aside from the school's punishment.

'.....'

At this state, it became difficult to reach a conclusion in regards to these three girls.

It was going to be completely over with everything up in smoke like this.

"...Don't worry."

Breaking his silence, the homeroom teacher spoke as we followed him down the stairs.

As I looked at him in confusion, he came to a stop, turned around to face me, and said:

"You've done nothing wrong. These girls probably seduced you like the slithering serpents that they are."

For a long time, I failed to understand what I just heard.

Other students started showing up, seemingly indicating that the mock exam had ended. Students who were using the stairs often stopped at the sight of girls in different school uniforms.

"I'm well-aware of how earnest of a student you are. I know that you're not the type of kid who would run off on your own during a mock exam to do obscene things with girls from other schools in a remote part of the school." In an atmosphere that was gradually becoming rowdy, the homeroom teacher spoke with a stern voice. "There must've been a reason. For example, you could have been blackmailed... or threatened... or deceived."

I kept looking at his face in confusion.

Just what on earth was this guy saying?

“...I can tell from their faces. You damn vixens whose only talent is fooling around with men.”

His glare towards the three girls standing behind me was filled with clear mistrust.

In his eyes, they were nothing more than malefactresses who had seduced his favourite honour student. Even Yeon-hee, who he had known for a long time as her guardian; even Yuyu, who he was a homeroom teacher for; and even Ka-ryeon, who he had met for the first time.

After spitting out his words in disgust, he turned his attention to me again.

“Don’t worry. I’ll make sure no harm comes to you. I’ll deal with those girls that cornered you into this mess myself, so you just be careful to not get caught up in something like this in the future. I’ll have a good talk with their school teachers as well. So you don’t have to worry. You just have to keep up the good work studying.”

...Aha, I see.

If I keep my mouth shut here and do as this adult tells me to, I should be able to regain my peaceful everyday life. This person will protect me flawlessly like his frigid countenance.

There may be rumors and gossip, but it’ll quiet down in no time if I stay silent. I’ll be able to restart my life of devoting myself to studying without any damage.

But, if that happens...!

“Damn it...”

I thought about the three girls standing behind me. If that happens, what will become of them?

If Yuyu gets punished the school will contact her parents, and if they're the strict type, they won't just let it pass. Not only that, it'll become hard for Yuyu to be at school. Then there will be a high possibility that Yuyu will quit school for real.

Ka-ryeon doesn't have parents. However, there's the Manageress who lived her life only looking after her little sister as an older sister. The Manageress will be very sad if she finds out that Ka-ryeon has caused trouble with this incident. Then, crushed under the guilt in regards to her older sister that has gotten bigger, Ka-ryeon will spend day after day in agony.

As for Yeon-hee, her reputation as a model student who was even a student council president in middle school will be tarnished. It may even affect her admission into university. She's been suffering alone because of her birth and her relationship with me. Her heart will wear out even further.

Is it really okay to leave all the responsibility to these three girls so that only I can live?

'But, what should I do in this situation?'

I broke out in a cold sweat.

The man in front of my eyes, Kim Muhyeok, isn't the kind of person who'd let this sort of thing just pass. What's more, there were many students passing by who were watching this situation unfold.

There was no way to cover everything up without holding someone responsible.

Even if I were to insist that I was responsible as well, the outcome wouldn't change greatly. In the end, we will lose our everyday life until now.

'Think...!'

But I didn't give up, and kept thinking. Biting my lips, focusing my entire mind, like when I'm solving an extremely advanced applied question, I thought frantically.

The answer, where is the answer to solve this situation?

At that moment—

An idea flashed into my mind, just like how a solution to a mathematical problem you couldn't figure out what formula to apply suddenly pops up.

'But this is...'

A violent repulsion swept over my whole body.

I may be able to solve the problem if I act according to my thought just now; however, that might not be the textbook answer. I may regret it saying I've really made a big mistake.

If I go with this choice, I'll probably be throwing away everything that I've been protecting till now. I will lose many things incomparable to skipping out once on a mock exam.

'Just what should I do...?'

Feeling desperate, I looked behind me.

Staring at the three girls who had their heads down with an expression as if everything was over, I thought about why these girls acted the way they did until now.

And why I've lived only to study until now.

'The reason why I immersed myself in studying and distanced myself from human relationships like dating...'

I was ridiculed and dumped by a girl I used to like.

I was abandoned by a woman who I'd thought of as my mother even though we weren't blood-related.

But my mistrust in women and my obsession with grades and academic ability weren't due to my past.

I just didn't want to form a close relationship with another person. The other person might have different feelings about me, and I was afraid of being hurt from it.

The other person might not like me as much as I think. That other person might suddenly abandon me one day. I don't want to be involved with an "other person" like that.

That...was the me created from my trauma.

That's why I did nothing but study. If I only study, there'd be no need to form a relationship that's more than necessary. There'd be no need to get hurt from a relationship with another person.

So I'd maintained my relationship with others to such a degree that it would not interfere with my everyday life. Although I was friends with Sega, I had nothing but superficial conversations with him. Although I cherished Yeon-hee as my little sister, I had failed to notice what was troubling her because we never had any heart-to-heart talks.

With nothing but a shell of a relationship left, I continued immersing myself in studying. I took no interest in a things like romance. If I only studied, there was nothing to worry about and nothing to lose.

The reason why these three girls told such lies to me was because I was that sort of a human.

"Ahn Kyeong-hyun, what's the matter?"

While I was keeping my silence, the homeroom teacher asked with a suspicious look on his face. Instead of replying, I clutched my fist and let out a sigh.

Now I fully understood why these three girls told such lies. I finally had the answer to the burning question that had made me storm out of the classroom during a mock exam.

Then what should I do? Where should I go from here now that I have a complete comprehension of the reason behind their actions?

"...Mr. Kim."

This may not be the right answer.

But the answer I must choose has already been decided.

“You’ve got it wrong. These girls were seducing me, you say?”

I slowly raised my head and looked straight into the teacher’s eyes.

Feeling an inexplicable impulse surging within me, I smiled.

“I think you’re mistaken. These girls, I was just playing around with them.”

There was no stopping now.

“Wh...What?”

“I just messed around with them for fun, but things got a bit twisted. I was only playing with them... but these girls were too innocent, and they started fighting over me.”

“Messed around with them for fun...? Too innocent...?”

“I’ve made a little mistake. I knew better than mindlessly laying my hands on innocent girls who’d never gone out with a guy before. Who would’ve known they’d come to my school and create a fuss like this? Hahaha.”

What in the world are you doing right now!?

The other me was yelling inside. He was trying to stop me from carrying out my absurd plan.

I was throwing away the image of a model student that I had built up so far, and getting on the wrong side of the homeroom teacher-slash-guardian who had always favoured me. Furthermore, the students who were passing by began to stop, sensing the unusual mood, and started looking our way.

If I do this, my future school life was as good as doomed. Just keeping my mouth shut and staying still would have been the best for my future, but here I was doing the exact opposite.

Stop, shut up, it’s not too late to shut up. The other me was ordering me endlessly inside.

However, I had a reason for what I was doing right now!

“Sorry for the trouble, Mr. Kim. I’ll be more careful next time, so could you let this one just slide?”

Shrugging my shoulder, I asked frivolously.

Earlier, the teacher was trying to turn me into a victim by treating the three girls behind me as the perpetrators. But that must not be the case. It can’t be a situation like that.

I alone have to be the perpetrator!

“Are you... saying this trouble was caused by your misbehaviour with these—not one, but three—girls over here?”

“Ah, come on, Mr. Kim, don’t be like that. You know I’m a guy, and it’s not like I forced them.”

“Are you out of your mind? One of the girls is your younger sister!”

“Ah, you didn’t know? We might not be blood-related. Well, not that it matters even if we were.”

I smiled as wickedly as I could.

I have to play the villain here from start to finish...!

“Think about it, Mr. Kim. Wouldn’t you get a hard-on if you were living alone under the same roof with this fine-looking girl?”

“Why you...!”

Abruptly, the homeroom teacher grabbed me by the collar. I couldn’t breathe, but I didn’t care at all.



I can't back down a single step.

"What's wrong, Mr. Kim? It's a given for a guy when he sees a hot girl. Maybe you don't get it because you're not married yet."

"You...!"

I needed him to get angry at me. Have him lose his cool so that he doesn't notice the true intention hidden inside my drivel.

"I thought you were a diligent, studious model student. That's why I didn't interfere and let you be. How did this..."

"...You've got the wrong person, Mr. Kim. I'm quite the skirt chaser."

A sharp pang of guilt pierced my heart. This man has given me the greatest help in my life. It wasn't like he gave me financial aid or took care of me as like a parent. But if it weren't for this man, my present self wouldn't have existed. Even at school, he trusted and favored me greatly.

The reason why he discriminates against women with such bias was probably because of Yeon-hee's mother. His friend married an immoral woman, and because of it, his friend suffered and died. That had distorted his view of women.

But I have no choice but to go against this person. I do feel gratitude toward this man, and I do think that I should repay his kindness someday. The trouble that I'm causing him with this commotion, I'll give a proper apology and ask for his forgiveness someday. Despite that, I can't back down. I have a reason why I can't.

And to tell the truth, I was a little angry with him.

'Uncle, these three girls aren't that bad as for you to degrade them!'

These three girls had lied to me. They had deceived me. But what was the reason?

Did Yuyu lie to me so that she could drop my grades and steal the title of first place?

Did Ka-ryeon lie to me so that she could find a person who would feed her for the rest of her life?

Did Yeon-hee lie to me so that she could cross the line with her older brother who may or may not be blood-related?

Did they lie in order to satisfy their perverse desires?

'That wasn't it...!'

They simply didn't want me to hate them. They didn't want to grow distant from me. They didn't want to lose me. They were merely holding onto me out of desperation. Even if it meant lying, they didn't want to lose their relationship with me.

The girls knew well that I was the sort of person who tried not to form a relationship with others that was more than necessary. Because they knew I was the type that distanced myself from others, they had no option but to use extreme methods to hold on to me.

Indeed. In the end, I was the reason why these three girls had told such lies to me.

Yuyu had no choice but to continue lying because she thought I was a person who would coldly sever a relationship. Ka-ryeon had seduced me because she'd judged that entering such a relationship was the only way that my attitude would change. Yeon-hee had acted in such a way because I failed to give her the affirmation that we would still be a family even if we weren't related by blood.

They treasured my relationship with them so much. Was it okay to criticize them on the sole reason alone that they lied? Rather, aren't I the one who should be criticized for failing to give them a proper answer to their feelings and making them do such things?

Then what should I do? What should I do in order to become the person who could support these girls who got hurt because of me?

"Mr. Kim, aren't these girls pretty nice even to your eyes? It's hard to pick just one girl. Three-timing is the only way to go here."

With my collar still being grabbed, I turned my head back. I saw the three girls, each of them with a different look on their face.

I turned my gaze to one of the girls. Then I vulgarly raised my voice to my classmate.

"Hey, your boobs are seriously huge. Honestly, I bet all the guys wants to cop a feel when they see your boobs. I was so lucky that I got to spend my time with a girl like you."

With a surprised look on her face, Yuyu covered her breasts with her arms. But I took no heed and continued, speaking the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

"I've had a lot of headaches when I was with you, but eating lunch and studying together with you wasn't so bad. It was quite fun."

Yuyu was staring at with me her eyes wide open. She had an abundant collection of expressions that I never got tired of.

"You're the one who made the boring school where I'd only sit and study into an exciting place. I want to keep studying with you."

"Glasses...!"

I shifted my gaze next to her. I spoke playfully to my junior who was standing there silently.

“Your legs were to die for. Especially when you wore a pair of stockings, it was great, like it was a fetish. I couldn’t keep my eyes from going below your skirt.”

I babbled so that the other people would perceive me as a hopeless pervert.

But at the same time, I didn’t leave out what I wanted to convey.

“Working with you was quite fun. Even if you were slacking off, it was reassuring that I had a coworker that I could work together with.”

Ka-ryeon didn’t have her usual carefree look. She was staring at me with a crimsoned face.

“If you hate burdening your older sister while you worry about how you’re going to live, just rely on me. I’m not a stranger anymore, so I’ll take care of you for a while even if I don’t plan on marrying you.”

“S-Sunbae...”

I shifted my gaze again. To my little sister who had shrank away, I spoke leeringly:

“You grew up into such a cute little girl. Even if a guy doesn’t have a thing for little girls, he would give in to your seductions. There’s no way I could stay sane when I live under the same roof with such a girl.”

There was no doubt I was saying stuff that anyone would disapprove of. Even I thought so as well.

Still, in between the perverted words, I mixed in my true feelings.

“It doesn’t matter whether or not we are blood-related. Even if the blood tie that was connecting us were false, the ‘time’ we have spent living together so far will never be a lie.”

Yeon-hee looked at me with tears in her eyes. She looked so pitiful that I wanted to hug her right this moment.

“To me you’re an important person that I want to keep being together with whether or not you’re my little sister. No matter what happens, our relationship won’t end.”

“Oppa...”

I shook of the hand that was grabbing my collar and turned around.

Now, I have to finish this.

“Earlier you told me to choose one of your three girls. That is, to choose only one girl and abandon the other two girls.”

The reason why I did nothing but study and distanced myself complicated relationships.

I was ridiculed and dumped by a girl I used to like. I was abandoned by a woman who I'd thought of considering as my mother even though we weren't blood-related.

So I tried not to form a relationship with others that was more than necessary. For that reason, I only studied and lived with ease inside the meritocratic world where nobody would try to hurt me. I was that kind of human.

However, by losing my memories of the past three months, I've changed. These three girls who struggled to get deep inside my heart changed me.

No matter what, I have to change.

"Sorry, but I can't do that."

Among the crowd of onlookers that filled the stairs and hallway, I caught a glimpse of Sega's face.

'You won't have regrets if you can act like a man.' Sega's voice flashed across my mind. I don't know if what I'm doing right now is manly or not, but I have no intention of having regrets after it's over.

"All three of you are my women. I'll take the responsibility."

I opened my arms wide and hugged the three girls. The crowd of onlookers around us burst into an uproar, but I paid no attention to them.

All three of them didn't reject me.

"...Hurry up and run."

"?!"

"Hurry! It'll be hard to handle if another teacher shows up!"

After whispering to them in a suppressed voice, I pushed them away.

Immediately after that, I took a punch to my face and stumbled.

"Ahn Kyeong-hyun...!"

Glaring at me with a contorted face, the homeroom teacher grabbed me by the collar again. But without a moment to wince from the pain, I threw a look at the three girls.

'Hurry...!'

As if they understood my look, they used the opportunity to slip away.

Overwhelmed by the serious atmosphere, the nearby students were frozen in place. The three girls made their way through the crowd and ran down the stairs. After confirming their escape, I let out a sigh of relief.

“Mr. Kim, what’s the meaning of this?”

Sure enough, the other teachers showed up from the crowd of students.

“I’ll handle this! Please don’t concern yourself!”

While the other intimidated teachers were hesitating, the homeroom teacher started dragging me.

“Come with me! I would’ve never thought you were this kind of a kid...!”

In the end, the situation unfolded the way I wanted.

The homeroom teacher perceived me as the perpetrator and Yuyu, Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee as the victims. Now, having lost his cool, the three girls were nowhere in his mind. The only thing left in his head was his rage towards a delinquent student who had betrayed his expectations.

Then I’d be the only to receive punishment. Yuyu, Ka-ryeon, and Yeon-hee were no longer important to the homeroom teacher. Only I would stand in the courtroom as the culprit.

“This kind of indecent act... I won’t let it slide, so you better prepare yourself...!”

“...I am prepared.”

Yes, the fight has just begun.

From here on, I have to thoroughly disguise myself as the sole perpetrator to the homeroom and possibly even the other teachers. Masquerading as the villain and misleading others so that it doesn’t implicate the other girls won’t be an easy task.

If I think as far as to apologizing for this incident to the homeroom—no, Uncle Muhyeok—and repaying my debts, this will really be a long, long fight.

But I can’t back down. So that I won’t have regrets, I can’t back down a single step.

Thus I began the fight to protect the indecent relationship between four lovers.

Epilogue - Indecent Relationship

My face was aching from the punch.

It wasn't swollen or bruised, but my lips were a bit split. I laughed at how I really looked like a delinquent student after sterilizing and putting on a band-aid on the wound at the infirmary.

"Whew..."

It was totally night time when looked up at the sky. I felt the cool wind against my cheeks.

Leaving the school this late was a rare occurrence. Maybe I could chalk this one up as a good experience.

"It'll at least be a suspension ..."

My punishment has yet been undecided. Probably the discrepancy between my usual demeanor and my behaviour today was confusing the teachers.

The good news was that it was unlikely Ka-ryeon's or Yeon-hee's schools were going to be contacted. In the first place, the teachers don't even know who the girls are as well as their school affiliation. Although the homeroom teacher knows who Yeon-hee is, he won't intentionally make an issue out of it given our complicated relationship.

There may be a bit of a problem with Yuyu who's a student of our school, but... At best, it'll be due to her unauthorized absence. I know it'll somehow work out.

I alone was able to become the perpetrator thanks to my desperate provocation and the homeroom teacher's focused criticism of me. I was able to end it with just me.

"Maybe I'll study at home if I get suspended..."

It was at that moment when I was about to head home with such thought in my head.

"....."

I stopped at the sight of three girls who were blocking my way.

My classmate, my junior, and my little sister were looking at me with their mouths shut.

"Hey."

Smiling bitterly, I raised my hand in greeting playfully.

"Your face's a little bit funny now that you look like a delinquent student..."

Said one of the girls.

“G-Guests?! Four of them, to boot...!” As soon as we entered the café, the Manageress was greatly confused. “W-What would you like? I’ll make whatever you want! I’ll give you a special 50% sale!”

I sat down after giving the Manageress, who was babbling from her excitement, a good talking to as the café’s part-time employee. Yuyu, Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee took their seats as well, and we each chose a coffee from the menu and ordered them.

Two of her part-times were gone, so I was worried if things were going to be okay for the evening. Fortunately, it seemed her friend had come over to help her out. Although the Manageress was still exhausted, she started brewing the coffee.

We were close to silent. All four of us were just sitting still, unable to look each other properly in the eyes.

Eventually, the Manageress brought us the coffee personally.

“H-Here you are.”

“We didn’t order any cakes.”

“I-It’s service!”

“You can’t be giving four cakes as service!”

“B-But I’ll have to take them home and eat them all by myself if they don’t get sold anyway...”

“...I’ll pay for them later, so just leave them here.”

“Wow, you’re so manly... It makes me want to date you...”

Setting the coffee cups and cakes down on the table, the Manageress’ eyes shined brightly.

“By the way, Kyeong-hyun...”

“Yes?”

“...What is with this group?”

“...What does it look like?”

“A ha-harem?”

“.....”

“Is this r-really your harem? T-That’s amazing. Although I’ve had many crushes before, I’ve never had any boyfriends, but here you are with three girls at once... No, wait, my little sister’s in that harem!”

The Manageress, who was fidgeting with her face dyed red, pointed her finger and yelled.

“No! As her older sister, I won't approve of this! Rather, put me in your harem instead of Ka-ryeon!”

“Stop speaking non-sense and go get some rest!”

“Here sis, you’re tired from working too much today, right? Let’s go inside and rest.”

Smiling, Ka-ryeon dragged the Manageress into the staff room. There was a sound of a heavy thud for a second, but it became quiet shortly after.

“...This coffee is delicious.”

Yuyu muttered with a look of surprise as she sipped on the coffee that the Manageress had brought out.

“That’s a given. My sister’s coffee is on a whole different level than mine.”

Ka-ryeon, who just returned, said with a bright smile.

“I don’t like coffee very much, but this seems all right.”

Yeon-hee nodded her head in agreement.

“Whew...”

I felt my tired body starting to relax as I drank the coffee loaded with sugar and cream.

Smelling the aroma of the coffee fill up the old-fashioned café, I slowly raised my head.

“...So, ahem.”

I cleared my throat and opened my mouth. At that moment, the three girls who were sitting before my eyes stopped what they were doing and shifted their focus me, which made me feel a little uncomfortable.

“I’m sorry for everything. I mean it.”

I lowered my head and apologized.

“N-No! There’s nothing to be sorry about, Glasses! Rather, it’s me that...”

With a look of surprise on her face, Yuyu shook her head from side to side.

“She’s right. There’s no reason for you to apologize, Sunbae. We’re the ones who ought to apologize.”

“...I’m sorry, Oppa, for doing weird things.”

Both Ka-ryeon and Yeon-hee bent forward and apologized. However, I really had no desire to receive apologies from them.

“So, in regards to what we’re going to do from now on.”

As I said that, the three girls straightened their backs and tensed up for some reason. Were they feeling uncomfortable...?

“It’s weird for me to be even saying this but... Let’s all get along. Of course, I still like studying the best... However, we’re all acquaintances now, so let’s get along without any awkwardness between us. The past few days that I spent with you girls weren’t so bad.”

Myself and as well as the girls, every one of us were carrying our respective solitude.

Yuyu didn’t have a single friend at school. Ka-ryeon had sociophobia and was possessed by her fixation to become independent from her older sister whom she was relying on. Yeon-hee had lost her parents at an early age, and was afraid that she would even become estranged from me— her only family.

And it was the same for me as well. Perhaps it was because we had been living in such loneliness that we were trying form an indecent relationship with a person who could supplement ourselves.

There was no need to sever the relationship itself just because it wasn’t wholesome. Even if it’s an unwholesome relationship, if we can develop as a person through positive experiences from it, it’d be far better than a wholesome one.

That’s why we have to continue this indecent relationship.

“Yuyu, let’s keep eating lunch and studying together. We probably can’t use the Audiovisual Reference Prep Room anymore, but there should be somewhere else where it’s quiet. Let’s find it together.”

“G-Glasses...”

“As for you, Ka-ryeon, you’d better prepare yourself because I’ll educate you thoroughly on the mindset of a part-timer for the café once more. ...While we’re doing that, we’ll chat and have fun together.”

“Sunbae...”

“Yeon-hee, rely on me more and tell me if anything is troubling you. I’ll accept everything.”

“Oppa...”

...But there was something I’ve been curious about since earlier.

Their eyes were sparkling brightly for some time. Why? I felt an immense burden every time I met their eyes.

“O-Okay, Glasses! I’ll do everything as you tell me to do.”

“All right, Sunbae. Please train me as you please.”

“Okay. I’ll only trust and follow you, Oppa.”

Yuyu kept nodding her head with an expression as though she was deeply touched; Ka-ryeon had her hands together in front of her chest as if praying; and Yeon-hee was fidgeting with her face flushed.

“Y-Yeah. Let’s get along and help each other out if anything happens.”

I continued talking while inexplicably feeling pressure from the strange mood.

“When you girls find a boy that you like for real, I’ll do everything in my power to help you out.”

For some reason, the girls who were all upbeat stopped moving and froze in place.

“Yuyu, you should try talking to other boys, and who knows? There might be a boy that you really like.”

“.....”

The reason why Yuyu confessed to me in the end was probably because she didn’t want to lose a friend that she had made for the first time. Since it was unnatural for a boy and a girl to be together constantly in a secluded room, she probably thought she had to step up to being boyfriend and girlfriend. Although I think there can be friendship between two genders.

“Ka-ryeon, don’t compromise with simply the closest boy if you’re really considering becoming a NEET, and try to find a boy with better prospects.”

“.....”

Probably I’m the only boy who’s closest to her. Her school’s an all-girls school, and after school she only works at the café. She’d mistaken me as her fated person because I was the only closest boy to her and I was a senior, to boot. However, there were people in this world that were far better than me.

“As for you, Yeon-hee... To be honest, I don’t want you getting a boyfriend, but if you find a boy that you’re interested in, bring him to me. I’ll thoroughly check if he’s suitable for you.”

“.....”

She’d really gone too far this time. Although there was the possibility that we weren’t blood-related, for her to try to detain her brother by seducing him with her body... That’s something you should only do after building sufficient trust with the person you truly love. ...Tch. Imagining Yeon-hee would be doing that sort of stuff in the future with some guy made my stomach feel...

“Ah, I won’t be much of a help since I know next to nothing about romance, though. Hahaha.”

I’ve been doing nothing but studying so far with zero interest in romance. So if there was a test about romantic feelings, I’d definitely get a failing mark.

“So you’re better off not expecting too much from... What’s wrong?”

Only then I realized the girls sitting in front of my eyes were trembling. All the girls were gazing at me: Yuyu with her face dyed red, Ka-ryeon with an ice-cold look, and Yeon-hee with a deep sigh.

“T-This guy really... Despite what he’d said so boldly... I know he knows nothing except studying, but to think that it’s this bad...”

“I almost believed it, but you’re insensitive after all... Well, it’s our fault for lying to you at the start, and your misunderstanding can’t be helped since it’s not like we confessed to you properly, but...”

“Oppa... Do you know the meaning of the word ‘responsibility’? If you don’t, I’ll lend you my dictionary when we get home.”

...What’s wrong with these girls?

I wanted us to get along and cherish each other as a school friend, as a co-worker, and as a family from now on... Why were they so discontent?

“...There’s no other way.” At that moment, Ka-ryeon spoke as she shook her head. “I’ll have to teach you from the beginning. You really are a slow student in this subject, Sunbae.”

“W-What are you talking about?”

“Like I said, Sunbae, I’ll be—”

“Glasses!

Yuyu got up from her seat all of a sudden and yelled, cutting off Ka-ryeon.

“W-What is it?”

“You said you wanted to get along with me, right? That you’d help me, right?”

All worked up, Yuyu shot her questions at me, to which I nodded without thinking.

“T-Then next Saturday... G-Go out on a date with me!”

“...What?!”

What’s are you saying all of a sudden?!

“D-Date? Why?”

“Y-You don’t want to? You don’t want to go out on a date with a girl like me?”

“No, it’s just that I was planning on studying in peace starting from tomorrow...”

All the complicated matters had been settled, so I was thrilled that I was going to be able to focus on studying with a true peace of mind...

“N-No! People become insensitive if they only study! Studying is forbidden!”

“Ehh?!”

Don’t tell me you still haven’t given up on lowering my grades and stealing the first place in school ranks from me?!

“Wait a moment, Miss Yu Yuyu.”

“Don’t call me that!”

“He’s coming with me to the shopping mall to pick my underwear tomorrow. He won’t be able to accompany you, Miss Yuyu Yuyu.”

“My name’s not Yuyu Yuyu! Also, why is Glasses picking your underwear?! H-How indecent!”

“Sunbae, please pick a pretty underwear that suits your preference. You can even pick a really erotic one if that’s what you wish.”

“You’re not listening!”

While Ka-ryeon and Yuyu were having a quarrel, Yeon-hee who had been moving her chair furtively towards me grabbed the hem of my sleeve.

“Oppa, Oppa.”

“W-What is it?”

“Play with me tomorrow...”

...Hnng.

“Ah, the little sister is seducing Glasses with a cute face!”

“That pitiful stare looking up from below... It’s going to be super effective against a siscon like Sunbae. We have to stop her.”

Yuyu and Ka-ryeon drew closer to me in a hurry and clung to me. Yeon-hee, as though not to be outdone, grabbed and clung to my arm.

“W-What in the world are you girls doing?! Why are you acting like this?!”

“G-Glasses is going to hang out with me! He’s studied too much, so he needs a change of pace with me!”

“Sunbae, how about we visit the wedding exhibition next after we pick my underwear?”

“My brother, I won’t hand him over...”

As I desperately struggled to free myself, the Manageress, who had been watching the whole situation from the slightly opened staff room door, asked in shaking voice:

“H-Hey, Kyeong-hyun, this is really not a harem, right? It doesn’t seem very wholesome to me...”

“...It’s a wholesome relationship!”

Insisting with zero persuasiveness, I let out a deep sigh.



“Ah, I’m tired...”

Massaging my shoulder, I stepped inside my home.

Yeon-hee didn’t come with me. Apparently the girls had more to discuss among themselves. It was good that they were getting along, but I wondered what they were discussing. They said something about dividing the time again so they can decide tomorrow’s schedule, but they’re sure to be joking.

I headed to my room while trying to shake off the ominous premonition, but I realized that I had something that I’d forgotten.

“...Come to think of it, that thing is still inside the desk.”

The contraceptive that I’d found in the drawer. It was one of the main culprits that had really complicated the situation, but it was yet clear as to why that was inside my drawer.

But I think I know why such a thing was inside my drawer.

“Was it in middle school...?”

I'd heard a group of boys talking about it before: an old-looking guy would go and buy a load of them at once and share them between the boys. Not had plans on using them, but purely to satisfy their adolescent curiosity.

If it's that, you could have them even without the intention of using them for real. Probably there was a situation like that during the past three months and as a result they ended up inside my desk. I should be able to confirm with Sega later if I ask him right.

...As for the trace of being used, probably I'd opened a few to see how it looks like for my curiosity.

"That really had me confused..."

Letting out a sigh, I took off my outer clothing and tossed it aside, and then made my way to the kitchen to quench my thirst.

But on the way I stopped after noticing a flashing light in the living room. The telephone was flashing, apparently from a left message on the answering machine.

"Hmm?"

I was with Yeon-hee just a while ago, and the café wouldn't have called me.

...Perhaps a call from the school already?

"....."

I nervously pressed the button on the answering machine. The old cassette answering machine clicked to life and started spinning.

Then I heard a scratchy sound of a voice.

"...Ahn Kyeong-hyun."

"...!"

It was a girl's voice. She sounded around my age, and I didn't recognize her voice.

But for some reason, I felt like I was suffocating.

"Sorry, I know you told me not to contact you at home and to never leave a message, but I just can't bear it anymore since you won't even give me a call."

Her feeble, subsiding voice cut off for a moment.

"...Why didn't you show up at the promised place last Saturday? I waited for you. I waited for you for an hour. I even called you at home, but no one picked up the phone..."

Saturday. I was unconscious in the hospital at that time. There was nobody at home.

"You promised. Why didn't you show up? And you haven't called me at all after that..."

Every day I go to school, work part-time, and return home. I repeat this routine from Monday to Friday. In this routine, I spend my time with Yuyu, Ka-ryeon, and Yeon-hee.

But what about the weekend? What have I been doing on the weekend?

Who did I meet on the weekend?

“You’re not... fooling around with another girl, are you?”

The tone of her subsided voice changed all of a sudden.

“...If that’s the case, I will never forgive you.”

Her dreary voice gave me the chills.

“Then give me a call... I’ll be waiting.”

The recorded message ended and the cassette started rewinding itself.

I stood in front of the telephone without moving an inch.

There was no way. I knew nothing but studying. I had zero interest in romance. Even if someone were to ask me to go out with them, marry them, or cross the line with them, I was the type who’d never accept.

But this voice recorded on the answering machine told me something that I couldn’t deny at all.

It was still early to focus on studying in peace.

It seems that I still have another girlfriend.