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A Bittersweet Life

By Dong-Cheol Kim

One fine spring day...
a disciple looked at some branches
blowing in the wind.
He asked his master...
"Master, are the branches moving
or is it the wind?"
Not even glancing to where
his pupil was pointing...
the master smiled and said...
"That which moves is neither
the branches nor the wind... "
"It's your heart and mind. "
Sunwoo, you should
go downstairs for a moment.
Why?
There's some trouble.
Okay, I'll handle it.
I'm sorry, but
business hours are over.
Please get up and leave
before I count to three. One.
Two.
Three!
Sit down, stupid!
Min-gi, lock the door.
You son of a bitch!
See you tomorrow.
- See you tomorrow.
- Okay.
Yes, boss. I'll transfer
the money in the morning.
All right, we'll close
for the night, sir.
So, did you take care
of yesterday's business?
Yes, sir.
Good. You always seem
to get things done.
It looks like Chairman Baek's son
is the one making trouble.
Yes, it didn't seem like
Chairman Baek did it himself.
Chairman Baek's son used
to be a loan shark...

I heard he's interested
in this business.
Abalone, sir.
There's talk that he started
dealings with Southeast Asia.
Why?
He's pushing businesses to hire
Filipina girls instead of Russians.
Assholes. Like father, like son.
It's me...
Moon Suk.
I shouldn't have brought my car...
I hope I'm not interrupting?
Oh, it's okay.
What's that? Abalone?
Get another for me.
Yes, sir.
Hey, sorry about yesterday.
I can't believe that happened.
I just stepped out for a second.
You must have been busy
enough upstairs.
Those guys yesterday
were just local boys.
Nothing to worry about, sir.
What do you think you're doing?
Sir?
Is this how you do business?
- It was just...
- Get out now.
Get out and wait for me!
Be smart.
Things are going good for you now.
But the world is not easy.
You can do 100 things right, but
one mistake can destroy everything.
Okay, I'll keep that in mind.
I'll try to sort things out
with Chairman Baek.
Anyhow, the real reason
I asked you here...
I have to go to Shanghai
tomorrow afternoon on business...
I have a favor to ask

before I leave.
The thing is...
Pour me a drink.
Oh, yes, sir. Sorry.
The truth is,
I have a young girlfriend.
Someone I really care about.
She's not like you and me.
She's a special kind of person.
What, am I boring you?
Uh... Congratulations, sir.
Never mind "Congratulations. "
The problem is, I think
She's seeing a new guy.
Some young guy is hanging around her.
It's driving me crazy,
and I couldn't tell anyone else.
You know, you're the only one
I can really talk to about this.
No one else knows how much
this worries me.
So, I'd like you to watch Heesoo
for just three days.
Watch her?
Watch over her.
Take care of her.
See if she's really seeing someone.
Maybe the bastard's just bothering her.
See whether she's given him
her body and soul and all.
You know young people,
a hand could brush a shoulder...
then they hold hands, then kiss,
and then... you know...
These things happen.
But I can't stand thinking
about her like that.
Stupid, isn't it?
No, sir.
Stupid.
So... I want you to find out
who she's meeting.
And what she does when they meet.
Just for 3 days.

This is Heesoo's address
and phone number.
I hope she's not seeing him,
but if she is...
If they look like they're involved...
Call me right away.
Or finish them off yourself.
Excuse me?
You know I can't stand
being lied to, right?
Love isn't love if you're
being lied to.
You can contact me here
in Shanghai.
Directly.
Have a good night.
Do you have a girlfriend?
No, sir.
Have you ever been in love?
No, you haven't.
That's why I'm entrusting you
with this job.
That's why I like you.
Okay, let's go.
Goodbye, sir!
President Kang told me
to give this to you personally.
I'm sorry?
President Kang told me
to give this to you personally.
What's that?
Wow, it's so funny-looking.
It's so like Mr. Kang.
It's cute.
Don't you think so?
Hello, not yet.
Already? Hold on a second...
President Kang also said
I should drive you today.
Oh, I don't need a ride.
You can go, it's fine.
- He said I should take you myself.
- I'll let him know about it.
Well, then, I'll see you later.

If you need anything,
please contact me here.
It's okay, I don't need it.
Oh, give it to me anyway.
Goodbye.
Heesoo, Heesoo.
They sure like to get around...
Maybe it's because they're still young?
Why isn't she getting out?
Hey, Moon Suk.
Everything okay?
What?
President Baek, that asshole...
He keeps calling and bothering me.
Asking how could we do this to him.
He says he lost face
because of you.
He wants to meet you.
I said no, his guys were to blame.
But he insists on meeting you.
He's calling me every 10 minutes.
I think you should...
What the...
Who's bugging me now?
See? He's calling again.
I'm sick of getting it.
You take care of it now.
Hello, this is Kim Sunwoo.
Well, if you have something to say,
Come here and tell me yourself.
I'm hanging up.
I took care of it.
Hello, hello.
He... hello? Hello?
Fucker, hung up on me.
What a rude bastard. Hello?
Should I?
Leave it!
Laughing? You think that's funny?
Funny huh?
You go around smiling like an idiot...
That's why you get your ass kicked.
Damn you bastard, look at me.
Look at me, damn it.

Funny?

I'm sorry, sir.

Do you think it's funny?

Funny, funny, funny?

Funny?

Shit!

What hell were you thinking?

You're making it even worse!

Hey, this is your job.

I took care of it

because you weren't there.

This kind of thing is your job.

You should've taken care of it.

They just want to do business
with us...

...and beat us to the punch
before starting to deal.

Don't you get it?

What are you lecturing me now?

Hey, get the phone over here.

Yes sir.

Here, sir.

What an idiot.

What? Is this voice dial?

Don't you think we need
to press the numbers?

Should I dial it with my mouth?

Stupid motherfuckers.

Call Moosung from Samseongyo.

Yes, sir.

You didn't answer your mobile,
so I'm leaving this message.

If you have some time, I need
your help for a little while.

Just until 3 in the afternoon.

After that, it's fine.

If you get this message...

Yes, it's me. It's Sunwoo.

Ah, yes. At what time? And right now it's...

I'll be there in an hour
at the latest.

I'm on my way.

Mr. Kang said you're a scary guy.

Excuse me?

He did?

Yes...

You're an enforcer, aren't you?

I gave you my card the other day.

I work at a hotel.

So you're an enforcer for the hotel?

I'm not that kind of person.

You're so boring to talk to.

Can I ask you something?

Sure.

How did you first meet Mr. Kang?

- Wait a minute.

- Okay.

How much is the red lamp?

\$280

\$280?

- Okay, bye.

- Bye.

Let's go.

What were you saying?

You asked why I am seeing Mr. Kang?

Yes.

Why do you want to know?

It's just... you don't have
to answer.

- Hello.

- Hello.

I'll take that now.

I'm sorry.

For what?

Asking you those questions.

It's okay.

Thanks for your time today.

I didn't want to eat by myself.

If you'd like to take a look,
you can enter through that door.

How will you return home?

It's easy to catch a cab here.

You guys ready?

- Yeah, ready.

- Okay

Let's go.

Hi, Min-gi.

Someone came to see you

early this morning.

Who was it?

Oh Moosung. Do you know him?

He's one mean-looking guy.

Moosung? I don't know him.

Anything else?

Moon Suk is looking for you.

You want to talk to him now?

No, Min-gi, don't put him through.

I'll be going to the hotel soon.

Well, well, well.

Bottoms up.

Someone's coming.

Hey, Sunwoo, come over here.

Sunwoo?

Hello.

Come here, come.

Come.

Why don't you come over

here for a second?

Ji-hyun, this is Mr. Kim's seat.

Come.

Have a seat.

Hey, why are you always so
secretive about the thing you do?

What's up?

Have a drink.

Girls, get out.

What are you doing?

Don't ruin the fun.

Relax.

Say hello to President Baek.

From the Baek-Sang Management Agency.

Hi. I'm sorry I was rude
the other day.

- I guess we had a misunderstanding.

- Is that why you came here?

Yes, that and...

There was no misunderstanding.

Who do you think we are?

- Hey, Sunwoo!

- You be quiet.

Don't use your people
to mess with me anymore.

Sunwoo!

He's here as my guest today!

Damn it, how could you

do this to me?

I can do this because it's you.

Kim Sunwoo, do you think

the world is all yours?

Don't do anything you'll regret.

Aren't you going?

- You go first.

- See you.

Heesoo.

Hi.

Did you have a good date today?

Stop kidding.

Where did you say

you'd sleep tonight?

Thanks.

How should we do this?

I will call you tomorrow.

Just call me...

Yeah, Min-gi.

That asshole can't drive for shit!

I wasn't talking...

I wasn't talking to you.

What about Moon Suk?

Did you go down to the club?

Ok.

Who is it?

Who is it?

Seyoon, don't!

Seyoon!

Stop it!

You bastard!

You know who I'm calling, don't you?

Any last words?

You finish them off yourself.

Okay. This is what we'll do.

I'll give you a chance.

Listen. Both of you.

You must never see each other again.

All this today never happened

for any of us, including me...

This moment never existed.

Erase it completely.
Not just from your memories,
but from your habits, too.
Don't say it's hard...
Because this can get more serious
than either of you can imagine.
No point thinking about it
any longer so...
You, hurry, get dressed and leave.
Seyoon, don't do this.
- Seyoon!
- Heesoo, Heesoo.
Heesoo.
- Leave me alone!
- Listen to me!
Let me go!
Do you really believe we can just
forget about what happened here tonight?
- This...
- Do you... really... think so?
I was just looking
for the best way out of this.
Okay, you can go now.
Heesoo.
I don't have anything else to say.
You understand I can't say
anything, right?
Should I thank you
for saving my life or something?
Please leave now.
I'll do as you say.
Heesoo.
That's not the way it is.
You know it can't be erased.
Hey, open the window.
Hey!
That fucking asshole!
What's wrong with that guy?
Hey!
Asshole!
Who's there?
Get out here,
you pricks!
Come on out. Now.

Are you alone?
Let's just go one-on-one then.
I'm Oh Moo-sung from Samseongyo.
Whoever the fuck you are,
just get over here.
I'm sick of talking.
Calm down.
I only came to give you a message.
Did Mr. Baek send you?
Tell me.
Apologize.
Then nothing will happen.
"I. Was. Wrong. "
Three little words.
If you say those three words,
nothing horrible will happen.
"I. Was. Wrong. "
Just three words.
Fuck. Off. Asshole.
Think it over.
Stop talking shit and
get the fuck outta here.
Everyone's got to live their life.
Aren't you going
to answer the phone?
It's okay, it's not important.
Would you like some coffee?
No, it's okay.
I have to go soon.
Come over here.
You look pretty upset.
What's wrong?
No, I'm ok.
Hey!
But I'm moving out.
I put this house up for sale.
Do you know why I like you?
It's because you don't care
what other people think.
That's interesting.
I used to think you were too young.
But I still come
to see you, like today.
And you still make me look for you.

That's what I like about you.
What do you think it is?
Being young is a gift, too.
As you get older,
you lose patience.
Ma'am... ma'am...
Ma'am... ma'am...
Ma'am... ma'am...
Hey, Sunwoo.
Well, well...
What's a great guy like you...
...doing in a place like this, huh?
Oh my, you fucked up
pretty bad, didn't you?
Do you know what you're doing now?
Shit, fucking rotten.
Don't waste time,
just get rid of him.
This is really gross.
Where's the cocky Mr. Kim now?
Smile, like a professional. Smile.
We'll never forget about this.
You have no idea what's happening.
Keep your fucking head down, asshole!
Why'd you do it?
Why didn't you just call me?
It's not like you.
So what was the reason?
Don't feel like talking?
Want it to end like this?
This is how things work
in this business.
Don't blame anybody.
The world's a funny place.
You know what?
People don't matter for shit.
No one can ever see
what's coming next.
What are you going to do?
Relax and just sit tight.
Mr. Moon.
Yes, sir. Okay.
The boss is giving you a chance.
Why didn't you tell me?

Why did you make that mistake?
If the two of them
never meet again...
Go on.
If they can keep that promise,
I thought it would be best.
No... not that kind of thing.
Tell me the real reason.
Just be honest.
Was it because of her?
What?
You can't say?
Put Moon back on.
Yes, sir. Okay.
Yes.
Okay, sir.
Grab his arms.
Hey, what are you doing?
- Let me go, asshole.
- Bring it here.
What are you doing?
Let me go,
Hey! Hey, Moon.
Don't do this. Don't.
- Don't do this.
- Hold him tight.
Hey, Moon!!
Hey! Moon, ah, Moon, Moon.
Moon, don't do this.
You...
Was the hole too shallow?
Congratulations, anyway.
You survived.
There's a present for you
in the bag. Open it.
Don't play games
with another man's life.
Ha-ha. You asshole.
You're trying to be cool
to the end, huh?
Is this cool?
Do as I say, asshole.
He says you have 15 minutes.
Call him as soon as you figure out

what you should say.
Remember what happened
with Young-duk back then?
You probably told him
something like this...
"No turning back.
Just accept it. "
And you just cut his wrist.
It was awesome.
Spend your 15 minutes wisely.
Don't disappoint the boss.
You owe him your life.
They're probably digging the hole
three times deeper this time.
Here.
Yes, I see.
Did you beg for forgiveness?
So this is how it ends.
You're one lucky bastard.
Give it here.
What's this?
There's no battery!
Step back.
Stop digging.
We're so fucked.
Oh, those little shits.
Like they haven't done enough.
They're worse than we are.
Seems you have a lot of guests.
Yes.
He wants to run again...
Anyway, I heard the news.
How did this happen?
It's a long story...
You should have just left it
to us from the beginning.
I'm sorry. I was rude.
No, it's mostly my fault.
If the hammer is light,
the nail will rise back up.
Let's get things straight.
What would you like us
to do for you?
Years ago, a smart young man

was working for me.
One day I got him to do a simple job.
I guess he thought it was
no big deal. He made a mistake.
Thinking about it now,
it wasn't such a serious mistake.
I could have just told him off
and let it go.
But he was kind of strange.
He wouldn't admit
it was his fault.
He said he didn't do
anything wrong.
He could've been right.
It might have been my fault.
But what are families for?
If the boss says you're wrong,
then you're wrong...
...even if you didn't really do it.
Then it's over. Period!
But that guy lost his hand.
One promising guy's life ended
just like that one morning.
This time, one hand is not enough.
Hello? Just a second.
Min-gi!
Yes, hello.
Yes, I see.
Yes, President Won.
Don't you think it's been enough?
Are you all right?
Do I look all right?
He used to have a good reputation,
didn't he?
What about you?
Does your reputation fit you?
Why are you doing this?
I guess I misjudged him.
What are you going to do?
I don't know.
Reasons don't matter anymore.
I don't know...
I guess I'm going to put an end
to this anyway.

I'll see it to the end...
Who is it?
Who is it?
Let's see the money first.
Will this be okay?
Check if this is shady money.
Wait. Let me see
what kind of guy this is.
What are you going to use it for?
Do I have to tell you all that?
If we can't be sure,
we can't give it to you...
No matter how much money
you pay.
We gonna make a deal or what?
What shall we do?
I can't figure out this guy.
What if he's a rat for the cops?
Are you sure he's not a rat?
Dammit! Don't yell in my ear.
Hold on...
Let me think.
Tell him to come tomorrow by 4.
With the money.
Mikhail, if it were you,
would you come again?
Damn it!
Why are you saying
my name?
We said we wouldn't use names.
You moron!
How would you like it
if I said your name is Myung-gu?
How would you like it, asshole?
What? Asshole?
Yes, asshole,
I said you're an asshole!
Damn you bastard,
come here just a second.
Are you going to screw with me?
Try it, you idiot.
Ah, ok, ok.
Bastard. Go back to your country!
So useless...

Come here by 4 o'clock tomorrow.
You have to come alone.
Is there anyone
who can vouch for you?
We can't give you anything
unless we're sure about you.
Find someone by tomorrow
who can vouch for you.
All right, see you tomorrow.
Damn...
Hey, watch it!
Just shut up.
What's this?
I don't recognize this number.
Hey, Myung-gu, Myung-gu!
Hello!
Here's a new face!
Who did you say referred you?
President Han introduced me.
President Han?
Which President Han?
He says it's President Han
from Gyung-san.
Aha! Han Sang-shik...
What's your connection with him?
He supplies our place
with Russian dancers.
A nightclub, is it?
Yes.
I see. But why do you
need our merchandise?
I'm just following orders,
so I don't know the specifics.
What happened to your face?
Have you used this sort of
Merchandise before?
Yes.
Where?
I used to be a bodyguard.
You're a novice.
Well, I'm not the one
who'll be using it, so...
You know how to take apart
a gun and put it back together?

I've done it before.
Hey.
Hey, bring the guns over here.
Have you...
Have you ever seen anything
like this?
This is...
probably different
from what you used.
The finest gun manufactured
in Russia.
The Stechkin Automatic Pistol.
The KGB boys used to use it.
You brought the money?
Just a moment.
I think we need
to check you out first.
I told you already.
I heard what you said, but...
I'd like to hear what
Han Sang-shik has to say.
Hey, give Mr. Han a call...
On your way back,
bring the rapid-fire magazines.
It will only take a second.
Want me to teach you
how to use it while we wait?
All right, now watch me
and do what I do.
You have to be able to do this
to teach others how to use them.
Okay, look.
See?
Fast, fast, fast.
Take a good look.
Now, first...
unscrew this...
then push this up and in.
Easy, huh? Next...
load the magazine...
And then... bang.
Simple, isn't it?
Try one more time. Here.
Okay, let's see how well

you were watching.
They said they'll call back right away.
Alright, alright, one second.
Hey, look at this.
Let's start at the same time,
okay?
Hey, no bullets. Ready?
One, two, three.
Damn.
Hello? Who?
Ah, Mr. Han.
You sent me someone?
You know, the errand guy.
Huh?
What's with him? Drunk again?
Brother!
Why aren't you answering?
You not around?
I just arrived.
I'm bringing the merchandise.
I'll be there in about an hour.
See you then.
Stop staring at me
and call President Baek.
I don't have much time.
What are you doing?
Hurry up man...
The ice rink, right?
I've been waiting here forever.
Call me right away when you get
this message.
Damn, it's fucking cold in here.
Surprised?
Thought you'd never
see me again? Smile.
Hey, let's be professional.
I thought about it, and lots of
people have bad memories, right?
Memories that can never
be erased, no matter what.
But at least you can erase
the traces...
I mean, the people who caused
those memories.

What are you talking about?
Life is full of all kinds of shit.
Why are you acting like a child?
I'm saying that you're just
a shitty memory for me.
And I'm...
oh, never mind.
Let me ask you one thing.
Why did you do that to me?
Oh for fuck's sake...
Hey, Mr. Sunwoo...
You bastard.
Damn, you piece of shit!
You fucking asshole!
You thought I was an amateur?
What's that supposed to mean?
You think it's unfair? Unfair?
Can't you figure out
the reason for all this?
You keep looking
in all the wrong places.
Then you shouldn't have come to me.
Life is about suffering.
Didn't you know that?
Hey you, stand up straight.
Straight.
I'll teach you a lesson.
Stand up straight.
Just a moment. Wait.
Damn.
Ah, fuck.
What was that?
Oh, hi, how are you?
Did you hear some kind of bang?
The sound of a hole
being ripped out of life.
Huh? Oh, okay.
Things are tough these days.
Everyone's having hard times.
It's getting cold.
Winter's coming.
It's too damn hard to live.
I wonder what the politicians
are doing for us.

Because of the new bus-only lanes,
Driving downtown is harder.
Mister, please take me downtown.
Oh, okay.
You messed with the wrong guy.
Watch yourself.
Damn.
Untie the ropes.
Bring me a phone.
What?
Bring me a phone, you asshole!
I'll make it short.
You've seen Sunwoo, right?
You mean Mr. Kim?
That's right, Manager Kim.
You haven't seen him lately,
have you? Where is he?
How would I know?
Hey Mi-ae. I'm on my way now.
Yes.

[1 Missed Call:

Get out. Hurry up!
Hey! Hurry up!
I'll be downstairs.
So call me if something happens.
Here. That guy dropped this off
and just left.
How did it get to this point?
It's okay.
It's okay...
Moon Suk.
Who's that?
You can't come this way, sir.
Let's not make a fuss.
This is my last stop.
I've nowhere to go.
You really want to take it this far?
Why did you do that to me?
Tell me why.
You insulted me.
No, not that kind of thing.
Tell me the real reason.
Tell me.

I've been thinking about this
a lot, and I still don't get it.
Tell me, how did we come to this?
How did this happen?
Were you really going to kill me?
Were you really?
I've served you like a dog,
for 7 years.
Say me something.
Anything. Tell me!
What's gotten into you?
Was it because of her?
Don't do this.
But we can't turn back
time now, can we?
Hello?
Hello?
This is too harsh...
One late autumn night,
the disciple woke up crying.
So the master asked the disciple...
- "Did you have a nightmare?"
- "No. "
"Did you have a sad dream?"
"No," said the disciple.
"I had a sweet dream. "
Then why are you crying so sadly?
The disciple answered quietly,
while wiping his tears...
"Because the dream
I had can't come true. "
SkyFury