

MAMA

Leisure room – Day time:

As Winter came, the sunny days were nowhere to be seen. The yellowish garden has become coated with a white layer, covering the scenery's mystic beauty.

With patients being discharged by the end of every month, the leisure room itself lost color. It has become more of a gloomy area where the remaining residents both wandered and wondered if their salvation would come sooner than later.

In the said room, it took one scream to terrorize the residents and alert the staff "LEAVE ME ALONE!"

"I-I'm sorry Hoseok ... I just noticed that you haven't danced in a while and I wanted to know if something was bothering you ..." Lucy apologetically explained herself.

Hoseok glowered at her, "What's it to you anyways? What does it matter if I dance or not? Did I ever bother you? Did I ever ask you what was wrong with you?"

"Hoseok!" Jimin yelled out from the end of the room, "Don't be rude, I'm sure she meant well."

"No one asked her to, and who named you her lawyer anyways?" Hoseok countered.

The short bickering was interrupted by nurse Abby and some other nurses storming into the room, "What's going on? What's all this fuss about?"

"I did all of this for her. I did all of this to redeem myself, but we keep growing apart with every passing day," Hoseok unveiled as he fell on his knees in tears.

"There there, boy," Nurse Abby comforted him as she sent the staff away, "You will see her again in no time, you have my word."

Healing room – Day time:

Just like the leisure room, the white wide room that once brought comfort and peace to its visitors started gaining a dark color itself. Nevertheless, this did not stop the residents from gathering every week to talk about their feelings.

"When was the last time you saw your family?" V initiated the session. "I haven't seen my parents in months. The last call I received ... shattered me to pieces, but I couldn't do anything about it. I just lay in my bed, and thought of a way to mend it, to make it work. I'm still looking for a way."

Jimin followed, "I haven't seen my family since I was admitted. They tried to contact me but I chose not to see them. I swore to stay isolated until I have fully recovered, I don't want them to see me in pain. I don't want to see them in pain."

"When I first came here, my mother promised that she will visit me often." Hoseok shared, "Two phone calls in six months, that's all I got. She promised me to keep in touch and I promised her to be healthy ... Now, I am wondering if it's worth keeping my promise since she hasn't kept hers."

"My family doesn't know I'm here. They probably think I'm on vacation or something. I admitted myself because I realized that I needed help and, even if I wanted to explain this to them, I am not sure they will grasp it ... I want to be there for them, but for that I have to be here first. I hope that I will manage to save myself and protect my family. I would hate myself if I ended up being our own undoing." Lucy confessed with a heavy heart.

"I don't have a family," RM stated. "Even if I did, I don't think that they care that much about me to actually look for me, or just tell me who I am for that matter. I'm starting to think that I ended up here because of them, but I can't blame someone I have never met. I will get better, I will find out who I am and I will look for my family ... Even if they don't want me back, I want to find them and tell them that I survived; not for them but for myself. I'm here for a reason, we all are. This is not the time to let ourselves get overwhelmed. We can do this, we can save ourselves."

Doctor X's office – Night time:

Like every month, Hoseok brought up his mother in the individual assessment. Yet, tonight's session was slightly different because instead of waiting for her, he decided to go find her instead.

This is the individual assessment of Patient Hoseok J., Registration Number T1802, January log.

Please be seated and face the one-way mirror, your assessment will begin shortly.

You will be put under hypnosis to allow the evaluation to go smoothly.

Feel free to talk about your feelings and condition according to your current situation.

You may remain silent if you do not wish to share.

"I feel empty. I thought I was getting better for her sake, but I ended up fooling myself. I should get better for my own good, only then I will get better for her as well."

"I blamed her for the most part. I actually convinced myself that this was all her fault, that I'm the way I am because of her. Instead of finding solutions, I kept piling up excuses ... baseless excuses. She gave her all for me and how do I repay her? By losing control of my illness and throwing it all on her. She never wished to see me like this; she would rather take all of my pain and inflict it to herself if it meant that I will be happy.

"But I can't seem to stay faithful to one side, my mouth frowns the minute it feels the weight of a smile, I go from happy Hoseok to a mad man in the blink of an eye and every time, she's standing there, watching me and praying that this phase will soon end. I don't think pills are the answer, my brain belongs to me, I won't let chemicals dictate how I should feel and act.

"My mother promised me to visit on a regular basis, but I haven't seen her since the day I was admitted. Although she hasn't kept her promise, I will work hard on keeping mine. I want to get better- no ... I need to get better. That's the only way I'll pay her back for everything she has done for me: all these years, not giving up on me in my worst state ... That's how hard I need to work to find myself again, my true self.

"I think I am ready."

Leisure room – Day time:

The New Year started with a reset. The warmth of day melted both the snow and the sorrows within. Sunshine was never this appreciated as it crowned one more beautiful day in the institute. Officially becoming a routine within the corridors, another departure was celebrated on that very day: a set of flowers decorated what seemed to be a stage, and the asylum's tenants soon regained their seats as the performance was about to begin. Hoseok stood in front of his audience in his dancing outfit, an outfit that was last worn on the day he was brought to this place, in state of shock.

"Hello, my name is Hoseok and I'm bipolar. However, today I stand here before you with a promise to help cure my illness and free myself in the process. Growing up, my mother fully supported me and pushed me to follow my dream which was none other than dancing; I attended the most prestigious dance academy and built my way to the top. All was well until I started feeling unlike myself. I was two halves that could never meet in the middle; I was both vulnerable and dangerous. It started as a minor issue and grew to be a major problem. I started losing control and attacking people around me when triggered. One day, as I danced my heart out for an audition that would define my entire career, I landed hastily on my feet and sprained my ankle. The accident did not hinder my performance nor the judges' call but I felt incompetent. To my horror, I ended up lashing out on the one person that has made all of this happen: my mother. That's when my family realized I

needed help. I don't remember much of what happened after my breakdown, but I can recall being held by two strong men and dragged all the way to what used to be my ward room. I tried to overcome it, but I failed miserably. The time I spent here amongst you made me realize that we are the only people responsible for what we feel and fear. I hereby vow to not defy my illness, but rather accept it and slowly build myself around it: better, stronger, healthier, until I bid it farewell. I promise to be on my best behavior. Thank you for your constant love and support."

Ward T – Night time:

Lucy stood at the door, watching Hoseok packing his bags. He always had a special place in her heart, and as much as she was happy to watch him go, she was also saddened to see him leave.

"So I'm left out again, alone in a humongous ward," Lucy teasingly grumbled.

Hoseok looked her way and twitched his lips trying to make a cute face, "Not if you leave it next month."

"Oh, I am leaving it alright," Lucy sighed. "Probably to join the next potential team's dorm".

"That's good. It is not the path that defines your worth but the eventual outcome. No matter how hard it is, it will always get better. The sun may set today, but it will definitely rise and shine tomorrow," Hoseok encouraged her.

Lucy stood in her spot, barely fighting the tears that were escaping her eyes as she listened to Hoseok's appeasing speech. While wiping her tears, she was surprised to find him standing closely next to her.

"Here, this is for you," Hoseok offered her a complimentary token.

Lucy let out a shy smile as she accepted his gift, "A rose, for me?"

"This is both to say sorry and thank you," Hoseok clarified. "I shouldn't have let my worse half get the best of me when you were obviously trying to help me."

"Don't worry about that," Lucy conveyed. "I see that it's this ward's signature move and I don't mind it. As long as you're feeling better now, that's all that matters."

Hoseok met her plea with a genuine smile, "I do, I truly do and soon enough you will too, I trust that. I have to go now, my mother is waiting for me downstairs. Take care of yourself Lucy, you know best."