

## LIE

### Leisure room – Day time:

With half of its residents gone, the leisure area became lonelier than ever. The room literally lost its charm with the four remaining patients challenging one another in matters of gloominess. What was once their source of relief became their inner fears' trigger. The inmates usually spent most of their time in deafening silence, but one person was eager to let their voice stand out ... if only he could.

"What's on your mind?" Lucy startled a pensive Jimin on the couch.

"Huh?" Jimin looked up with a frown, "Nothing much, just the usual."

Lucy fixed his frown sideways with both of her index fingers, "Do you want to talk about it?"

"What is there to talk about?" Jimin let it all out, "The fact that I haven't sang a single note in months, that my throat is aching for that single high pitch I haven't been able to reach in almost a year, or that I am not worthy of my own talent because I didn't give it justice?"

"Jimin, don't be too hard on yourself," Lucy calmed him. "I'm sure that your talent is as flawless as ever, you just need to give yourself a break and stop worrying about what the others think."

"That's funny," Jimin chuckled mockingly. "How can I not worry when I AM "the others"? Nothing is ever good enough for me, and it's sickening me. Life's humor is surely dark for watching me put myself in this situation and become my own everlasting problem instead of fixing it, instead of fixing me."

Lucy was suddenly put in an awkward position after hearing Jimin's own verdict. Ultimately, she tried to pacify him by telling him that he will overcome it all but she was abruptly halted with a hand sign, "Save it Lucy. I know what song you're about to sing, and it's been the lowest pitch of my lowest state. I will overcome it the day my vocal chords recover."

"It's okay. Come on, when I say one, two, three forget about it all." Lucy started singing with probably one of the worse voices that have ever resonated through the institute's corridors.

As expected, her attempt ruthlessly set Jimin off, "Are you out of your mind? Do you think that you're going to make me feel better by messing up all the notes? STOP IT!" Jimin ended up worsening his throat's condition further with all the shouting, and stormed out of the leisure room.

"I'm glad you don't know what's wrong with me," RM snickered under his breath. "I wouldn't want you to attempt fixing me with such nonsense."

“She meant well,” Taehyung intervened. “I wish I had the courage to do the same”.

Meanwhile, Lucy stood still in her spot, unsure of what was going on inside her head when she sang for Jimin. All she wanted to do was to make him feel better about himself, but she ended up hurting both him and herself in the process.

### **Healing room – Day time:**

Seated in a quadruple setting, the four remaining team players gathered for another healing session. The assessment process became less and less appealing as the soothing stories lessened and self-doubt reemerged inside every one of them. On the bright side, RM was finally off his sedatives, which made him more open to group activities, should he choose to take part in any.

“One more weekly chatter for the win,” RM teasingly initiated the session. “What are we discussing today?”

This was RM’s first time to be seated this close to his inmates, and as much as it comforted him to feel part of the team, he kept wondering if he was still an active threat to the other residents.

“I think that we’re all thinking about the same thing lately, so why don’t we address that?” Lucy replied.

“Lack of leisure? I miss that, I can’t even be myself anymore,” Taehyung followed.

“I believe she was talking about self-doubt, but it looks like it’s something you’re going through as well,” RM addressed Taehyung “What is it?”

“I joined the institute for what feels like forever and I have always been positive. But lately, I can feel my positivity being drained out of me, and I don’t trust that I’m getting better anymore ... I don’t want this to be the reason why I am still held captive in this place,” Taehyung divulged.

“That’s perfectly understandable. You feel that your progress is hindering with the others’ departure, and you wonder about what solved their cases while yours is still pending. I feel the same. I feel that I have gained more baggage than I have lost ever since I came here,” Lucy shared his opinion.

“What about you Jimin?” RM redirected the question, “We haven’t heard from you in a while.”

Quietness filled the room as everybody was awaiting Jimin’s reply. Unfortunately, his silence was accompanied with the deadliest glare they have ever lay eyes upon.

“Jimin?” Taehyung tried to reach out to his inmate but Lucy held him back gently, asking him to back away with a nod.

“I have one imminent doubt,” RM turned the room’s attention to himself, “I wonder if I’m worth being saved from whatever happened to me. I came here chained and drugged, and remained that way for months; I may not know what really happened but I believe that the staff do, and although they’re trying to do everything to help me remember, I don’t know if I could survive it. I don’t know if I’m worth being saved.”

RM’s apathetic revelation turned the session’s aura from dim to plain dark, almost overshadowing Jimin’s rebellion. There was barely enough time to mediate as Nurse Abby entered the room announcing the end of the healing session.

“Well, that concludes today’s session,” Lucy stated. “Let’s meet here on better terms next time, shall we?”

#### **Doctor X’s office – Night time:**

Despite giving his fellow inmates a silent treatment that lasted for weeks, Jimin was eager to voice his aches to someone. In his case, the individual session was his only resort.

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*This is the individual assessment of Patient Jimin P., Registration Number S1310, March 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.*

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“How would you feel if you haven’t said a word in over a month ? I feel ... consumed.

“As if not being able to sing wasn’t bad enough, I denied myself the ability to speak. I just sat there in silence for the past month, throughout every leisure break and every healing session. The members talked about their worries and their weaknesses, while I sat there like a living corpse.

“Every time I wanted to partake, I found myself falling again in a compulsive rollercoaster of thoughts: ‘Don’t say this, you’ll look weak. Don’t feel this, you’re better than that. This is all your

fault, you wouldn't be here in the first place if you were good enough.' This is what has been on my mind for the past few weeks.

"I'm living in denial. I've been caught in a lie of perfection my whole life when all I needed was to be happy with myself. My family, my friends ... Everybody believed in my potential, but I failed myself and the rest of them when I decided to give in to my obsession.

"I tried to get better when all I had to do was feel better, and for once I have decided to redirect this obsession of mine: I should be obsessed about being healthy and compel myself to go through that process instead until I make it. I am worthy, I am talented, I am me and that's the best thing that I can be right now.

"I should start telling myself that it is okay to mess up. I wouldn't know how good I am if I didn't reach my lowest, so for that one horrible moment in my life I'm truly thankful. The start was very painful, but now, my vocals feel lighter as I've been secretly trying them out every night in my room after curfew and I am building my way up to reach the highest notes.

"I was wrong to let my obsession get the best of me through the most valuable thing I own. But this is the last straw: I want to be happy, and singing makes me happy. Even if it's crooked, as long as I'm pleased with it that's all that matters.

"I think I am ready."

#### **Leisure room – Day time:**

The arrival of Spring brought the asylum's garden back to life with a pleasant scenery that came just in time for the redemption of an additional soul. The staff formed a permanent party committee that celebrated every bittersweet departure. This time, a special prop crowned the stage: a microphone stand. The long awaited golden voice was finally going to be heard for the first time by the tenants, staff and patients.

"Hello, my name is Jimin and I have OCD. However, today I stand here before you with a promise to help cure my illness and free myself in the process. I have always leaned towards perfection my entire life and that one gleaming point became my undoing. My obsession ended up consuming me, and my strength suddenly became my weakness. I realized that I needed help for quite a while but being admitted for OCD felt somewhat pointless ... until it didn't anymore. One morning on the day of a crucial contest, I woke up with a sore throat due to an intensive training that I underwent for two consecutive weeks. I wanted to stand out on that contest, but instead I was disqualified without even trying out because of my greed. I lost to myself. 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 S – Night time:**

“Hey little prince, do you need help?” Lucy knocked on Jimin’s slightly open door.

Delighted by her presence, Jimin obliged, “Come on in Lucy, I was about to shut my suitcase.”

Lucy helped the boy with his packing while gazing at him with admiration, “I really enjoyed your performance today. I always knew you had it in you, but I never knew that you were hiding such an amazing talent. You could’ve performed alongside Yoongi or Hoseok back in the days.”

Jimin nodded “It was never about the performance, it was all about self-confidence which I obviously lacked.”

“But you clearly didn’t lack self-confidence either, you barely trained to retrieve ... I mean I assume that it didn’t take you a lot of time to get back on track, all you needed was a boost,” Lucy quickly rephrased her sentence.

“Thank you,” Jimin looked at her joyfully. “I know that you were listening to my daily rehearsals at night, I could hear your breathing behind the closed door.”

Caught red-handed, Lucy embarrassingly covered her face, “I apologize, I know that I’m the last person you’d want around you after what I did to you, but I couldn’t stay still and do nothing ... That was my way of paying back my heavy debt.”

“And you have paid it in full, don’t worry about it anymore,” Jimin comforted her.

Feeling relieved, she helped him pick up the rest of his stuff and they both headed towards the exit. As the two roommates were saying goodbye, Jimin handed her a note. The written lines brought instant tears to Lucy’s eyes.

*You’re not alone,*

*You can do it,*

*You’re okay.*