

## BEGIN

### Leisure room – Day time:

The leisure room started gaining color once again upon the sanctuary's latest addition. The area was painted pastel green and ornamented with white furniture. Different props were placed all over the room, fitting the residents' different tastes.

With the daily routines becoming repetitive, she grew tired of the whole process and wondered if she should give this method a chance. Slowly approaching her usual seat after the morning meal, she looked around the room: her inmates met her with an eager gaze that got more curious by the second, hoping for a minimum of interaction. Reading through their prying eyes, she let out a shy smile, thus finally breaking her lonesome barrier.

Taking a seat, she opened her diary, wrote today's date and jotted her reflections down. In front of her yet out of her sight, a young boy was in the midst of creating an artistic piece on his wooden canvas. While she was lost in her own thoughts, a presence over her shoulder awakened her from her usual daydreaming. Turning around, she was startled by the youngster resident who was caught eyeing her diary with interest, instantly pushing her to close it.

"I-I'm sorry ... I didn't mind to pry" the young boy bowed his head in embarrassment.

Failing to look him in the eye, she displayed a tight-lipped smile "That's okay, it's not your fault. I was admiring the horizon and forgot where I was for a second".

"Do you miss it?" he timidly engaged in the conversation "the outer world, do you miss it?"

His abrupt question amused her for a moment "Don't you?"

Her query woke a dormant pile of emotions inside him: of course he missed the outer world. He missed the thrill of being out there embracing his surroundings, the only moment he truly felt normal.

Their conversation was shallow but somehow appeasing. He felt at ease for being able to address a complete stranger without his mental state getting out of control, and she was glad about making the initiative, even if it meant letting the others reach out to her. After all, one can only stay silent for so long, for silence becomes maddening with time.

"This is nurse Abby. Please, step forward to the pharmacy and kindly receive your medication. Thank you" a soft voice was heard through the speaker.

“I guess this puts an end to our conversation” she said, almost saddened.

“It’s okay” the boy reassured her “We can still catch up in the healing room later this week”.

### **Healing room – Day time:**

Specifically designed by the head psychiatrist of the asylum, the healing room was created to enable patients with common traits to discuss their dreams, fears and even illnesses, should they choose to admit it. Since each patient shared a mutual love for art in all its shapes, the healing room gathered the designated residents, allowing them to say their piece even if it happened to be in pieces.

The healing room was a wide white space with eight cushions in the middle, rearranged as a round table. The particularity of this room lay in the fact that the assessing doctor was denied access. Instead, the session was monitored via cameras set in the four corners of the room, permitting details about every patient’s intervention to be recorded and saved in order to be used later on in the monthly individual assessment. The general scenery and the absence of a supervisor were meant to give the patients a certain feeling of liberation and safety. This would help them speak their minds truthfully and strengthen their bond by using art as a catalyst, hopefully making this sharing system of their dark colors with one another a healing measure.

Like every week, the round talk opened with a presentation following the wards’ order from B to R. However, the residents’ of Ward B were always one introduction short. Since there were no restrictions, the members decided to respect her hush and carry on the session on their own, exactly like they used to do before her arrival. The introduction round usually received applause as a way of encouragement after every member introduced himself.

“Hello, my name is Jungkook and I suffer of social phobia” said the youngster while regaining his seat.

Leaving his comfy pillow, the oldest followed and blew a kiss in the air “Hello, my name is Jin and they think I’m bulimic”.

As Ward T’s representatives stood up at once to speak up, they were surprised by a third person interrupting their turn “Hello ... my name is Lucy”.

Aside from Jungkook, this was the first time the rest of the residents could hear their fellow mate’s voice and know her name on the same occasion. They were anticipating the rest of her talk but, to their discontent, Lucy regained her seat with obvious shortened breaths leaving her chest.

“Nice to meet you Lucy” the boys replied in unison. The heartfelt hospitality, of course, excluded the resident evil’s participation.

Soon after, the pianist resumed his presentation “Hello, my name is Yoongi and I have DID” followed by his inmate “Hello, my name is Hoseok and I’m bipolar”.

“Hello, my name is Jimin and I have OCD” Ward S’s representatives accordingly followed “Hello, my name is Taehyung and I have ADHD”.

With this, only Ward R was left. The final resident’s introduction wasn’t the kindest one, but it always brought joy to the other patients since it was basically his only mean of interaction so far “Hello, I’m your Regular Monster, and I still have no idea what I’m doing here”.

Since the healing room was a zone of liberty, he was set free from his strait jacket, but as a precaution, the staff heavily sedated him in a way that would only put his physical movements on hold. Despite his dark vibes, the other residents felt safe in his presence; and to take a bit of that darkness away, they decided to name him RM instead, short for Resident Monster, which was still gloomy but at the same time less threatening.

With the introduction ring being complete for the first time since Lucy joined the mental team, the air felt lighter and the mood seemed brighter. The group would then spend the next couple of hours discussing their morning routines, their recent haunting issues and their common yet diverse love for art. The healing room was a form of recess from their asylum life, and they cherished it deeply.

With every passing day, the members felt closer and closer to Lucy and in return, she no longer felt like an outcast. This turn of events helped build a strong relationship inside the ward; the trick, however, was to allow them to shape this very same link in the outside world.

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

At the end of every month, patients were summoned to the supervising doctor’s office in order to evaluate their progress during the past few weeks. The doctor in charge was commonly known among the residents as Doctor X, which was mainly due to the fact that they have never seen his face.

For therapeutic reasons, it has been noticed that patients who build a personal relationship with their psychiatrists tend to develop a certain defiance that blocked their treatment process and eventually broke the transfer bond they used to have with their doctors. For that matter, as instructed by the head Psychiatrist, doctors who were in charge of profiling assessments were not to show their faces to any patient under any circumstances; this way, the patients would be more comfortable talking about their experiences because they could picture whatever face they’d like, giving them an upper hand on the situation confidence-wise.

The doctors in charge usually conducted the monthly evaluation behind a one-way mirror. They used an interphone with a voice modifier as a communication gadget and hypnosis as an analysis method. Again, just like the weekly sessions, the monthly evaluation was also videotaped: this procedure allowed several doctors to team up while evaluating the same patient in order to come up with an objective assessment of the situation. Subsequently, many residents of the asylum approved of this technique.

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*This is the individual assessment of Patient Jungkook J., Registration Number B0109, September 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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I suddenly remembered how everything fell apart, how the reason of my constant joy became my permanent pain, how I lost my ability out of fear and lack of control.

It's been a while since I felt this way, but surprisingly, I feel good. This month was well-spent; I have learned so much these past few weeks and I think that I'm getting the hang of my situation.

I realized that I was keeping myself from getting better. Hiding in these corridors was not the answer to my phobia, confiding in my inmates helped greatly, but I have to get back out there. I was golden once, I want to go back to that time and prove to myself that I can live up to my own expectations, regardless of what others believe. I need this and I need it now.

I think I am ready.

#### **Leisure room – Day time:**

It was a bright new day in the institute. A set of decorations was surrounding the leisure room, and a pile of chairs has been set up to welcome the attendance.

After the morning meal, a small crowd started regrouping in the room. The staff of nurses, bodyguards and doctors quickly filled the empty seats, joined by the fellow members of the Art team. For once, this performance actually served as a graduation ceremony as it were.

“Hello, my name is Jungkook and I have social phobia. However, today I stand here before you with a promise to help cure my illness and free myself in the process. I’ve been a performer since my teenage years, and due to a stage fright incident, I ended up developing a social anxiety that slowly killed my passion for spotlight. 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 B – Night time:**

A few knocks on the bedroom door woke Lucy from her sleep “Lucy, are you awake?”

“I am now” she answered, half-asleep “What is it, young man?”

“I wanted you to have this” he revealed a drawing tube that he was hiding behind his back “It’s a collection of my best work since I came to the asylum. I found my inner peace when I was drawing them and I was hoping it would give you the hope and strength you’re fighting to retrieve”.

“Jungkook I .. I can’t accept this. This is your artwork, it’s valuable” Lucy gently turned the boy down.

“I know” the young artist smiled “That’s why I wanted you to have it. I spent a year of my life here with the other boys and I got acquainted with them so quickly that I didn’t allow myself to heal because I felt at ease. Then you came, and your silence treatment made me reflect about my purpose in life, why I was here and what’s waiting for me out there. Indeed, my drawings are valuable, but you reminded me of the true value within me. You helped me think about what I really want to do with my life. For that, please accept this, I owe you this much”.

“One gone and seven to go” Lucy thought to herself. She hasn’t even come to terms with her condition to share the reason she was among her inmates, and a member was already exiting the territory. She felt regretful for not being more open about her situation, and she found herself even more conflicted to see that she was still able to offer help, in her current state.

Eventually leaving her bed, she faced Jungkook and took him in her arms, with a tear escaping her eye “If anything, I owe you this much and more. I may not have told you what has pinned me inside these walls, but know that you have helped cure me as much as I helped cure you. Take care of yourself, will you?”

Her response warmed the golden boy’s heart “Don’t be a stranger, Lucy”.