It's not cheating if He does it

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It's not cheating if He does it

by FallLover

Summary

After Han Yoojin is spooked by the photographer in his hotel room in New York, Sung Hyunje pays his partner a visit.

Set during novel Chapter 537: (1).

Notes

This was originally published on Archive of Our Own.

Guide on reading the novel and manhwa.

See the end of the work for more notes

Han Yoojin sat on his big hotel bed, staring at the now empty window, out into New York City. He felt a bit of chill from the encounter with the photographer, but wasn't up to looking for the room's temperature controls or seeing where he could find something warmer to wear. The bed under him was the proper mix of squishy and firm, and he decided he just wanted to stay *right* here for a bit, where he didn't have to think too hard about anything much, though it was a struggle. Thus far, he had *not* had what could be considered a *nice* time in New York. He'd been separated from everyone, had to deal with Chatterbox, been attacked by a bully, and spied on by a dubiously helpful stranger who leaned more towards creepy than useful.

His mind also kept circling around the idea that Sung Hyunje had let someone take a picture of him without consent and escaped, and what relationship Sung Hyunje possibly had with the scummy intruder. But the thoughts only made him more tired. For all Han Yoojin *had* slept on the plane, he felt exhausted, though he knew he couldn't sleep just yet. He needed to stay awake as long as possible for the jetlag.

There was a knock on the door and Han Yoojin sighed and pushed himself up, wondering if some staff members were here to bring him something else that was horrible, or if it was another person trying to make some kind of deal with him, or some other hidden trap from Chatterbox.

But when Han Yoojin opened the door, Sung Hyunje's tall and familiar form was smiling down at him.

For a moment, Han Yoojin was just *glad* to see a familiar face. To have someone there who wasn't trying to get the better of him or manipulate him. But Han Yoojin was too deeply in survival mode, and he looked around the hall for anyone else, but it was deserted. "What are you doing here?! This is against the rules!" Han Yoojin debated slamming the door in Sung Hyunje's attractive face.

"It isn't for me," Sung Hyunje said, gently nudging past Han Yoojin as he walked into the room, somehow managing not to knock Han Yoojin aside *while* making the whole process weirdly elegant. Tall as he was, he filled the open space far better than Han Yoojin did. Once he was inside, the sight of his broad shoulders was strangely calming, too.

Han Yoojin seethed and shut the door. "You're endangering everything! Why are you out here?" He imagined Sung Hyunje was just bored and messing around, but every one of their allies were at risk now!

"Your room is quite small," Sung Hyunje said as he walked to the kitchen and studied the facilities, while smiling. "I think Chatterbox is doing this as a personal insult."

Han Yoojin crossed his arms and glared at the man. "Where is Gyeol?" If Sung Hyunje was going to ignore Han Yoojin's questions, Han Yoojin would do the same. And how was Han Yoojin to know the facilities were small? He hadn't exactly stayed in many hotels in his life, and they were all in different countries, with different standards… It was nice enough for an American hotel, given it was the only one Han Yoojin had ever stayed in.

“Guarding our room,” Sung Hyunje said, primly. He turned to smile at Han Yoojin before walking over so they were standing next to each other. He gazed down fondly at Han Yoojin. “No kiss for me?”

Han Yoojin glared, refusing to be taken in. Sung Hyunje thought he could weasel his way through any consequences with his pretty face and awesome skills. Well, he was wrong! And Han Yoojin didn’t like the idea of Gyeol being left alone…

Sung Hyunje leaned down and placed a kiss over Han Yoojin’s forehead. When he stood up, he beamed. “You should take a shower. You smell like fear sweat.”

Han Yoojin’s face burned. “How do you…?”

“You had an intruder,” Sung Hyunje said, his eyes moving to the window. “A rat I’m familiar with. Things might get bumpier from now on, but it should be all right. We have an accord. Come on.” Sung Hyunje scooped up Han Yoojin, who struggled briefly in alarm, before settling in resignation. “Let’s clean you off.” Sung Hyunje’s grip was firm, and he seemed to have no issue carrying Han Yoojin at all.

“What accord do you have with a rat?” Han Yoojin demanded, even as he allowed Sung Hyunje to carry him into the obscenely large and well-equipped bathroom, covered in bright white tile and shining amenities, and a huge bathtub that could fit them both easily. “And how did you know about the break-in?” The room didn’t *look* invaded or anything. Han Yoojin’s intruder had been pretty clean.

“Abilities leave traces,” Sung Hyunje said with a dark smile. “And our accord is private. Now will you take off your clothes, or will I?”

Han Yoojin got out of Sung Hyunje’s arms and stripped on his own, and Sung Hyunje shortly followed suit. Once nude, Han Yoojin went to investigate the shower. It was definitely different than he was used to, though his set-up at the Breeding Center was pretty advanced. The place was shiny, still, and a bit overwhelming.

Thankfully, Sung Hyunje walked over and got the water for the shower started, filling the air with the soft spray noises of water shooting at ceramic. Sung Hyunje reached out to hold Han Yoojin’s hand for a moment before turning the heat up.

Han Yoojin hopped in a bit early, feeling too cool in the bathroom.

Sung Hyunje walked in behind him.

Han Yoojin ignored Sung Hyunje and frowned at the bottles in the shower, wondering if he should have investigated more before he got in. He wouldn’t put it past Chatterbox to leave some nasty surprises here, too.

Chains brought in different bottles to float near Han Yoojin’s face, and Sung Hyunje said, “Use this on your hair.”

Han Yoojin snorted and took the bottle nearest him, dumped some of the cream in his palm, and scrubbed. When he worked on his skin, he felt the need to scrub hard. All the cameras flashing at him, the news hungry for its entertainment, the foreign Hunters slavering for the kill, and that paparazzi hanging out his window… all of it seemed to press in on him. Reminding him he was never attractive enough or charismatic enough for attention. That he was an F-ranker pretending to be more than he was: a fraud. He could already imagine all the headlines and how they might target Han Yoohyun or Park Yerim…

Sung Hyunje grabbed Han Yoojin's hands. "Han Yoojin-ah, you're hurting yourself."

Han Yoojin breathed in deeply, realizing he'd been scrubbing so hard that he was creating marks on his body. He wasn't wearing Grace at the moment – she sat in his clothes – so she couldn't protect himself from that.

Sung Hyunje reached and rested his hand over Han Yoojin's nape, rubbing it soothingly. "What's wrong? Did that photographer say something odd?" His expression was dark, and Han Yoojin imagined that if he said something particular, Sung Hyunje would hunt the photographer down, secret accord or no.

"I didn't want to deal with someone like that," Han Yoojin said, not sure what else to start with. "I expected them when I got out of the car, and in the dining hall with the other Hunters, but… I didn't think they'd invade my bedroom…" He snorted, knowing it sounded foolish. This was the United States, their press was notoriously terrible, and Han Yoohyun couldn't control them in a way he could, to a degree, back home. "I was an idiot with that, as usual."

"You weren't an idiot," Sung Hyunje said, pulling Han Yoojin close. "There usually are boundaries for that kind of thing, but I think Chatterbox is ruining them just to get at you."

Han Yoojin leaned his head against Sung Hyunje's warm chest and shut his eyes, letting the water beat on his back. "Photographers and reporters used to follow me around, before the regression. They'd hound me a lot of places I went. Changing houses only stopped some of them, temporarily."

Sung Hyunje just held him, staying silent for once.

"I hate them," Han Yoojin said, quietly, almost unheard under the spray. "I hate every single one of them."

After a while, Sung Hyunje lightly kissed Han Yoojin's wet forehead, and then turned his face up to place their lips together.

Water coursed down Han Yoojin's back, and he wished he could clean all the crevices in his body, all the dark places he didn't want to show anyone, no matter how much he kept revealing as time passed. All the bitter thoughts he held back because he didn't want Han Yoohyun to be blasted in the news. All his fears about how terrible the bulletin boards would be if they *really* knew what Han Yoojin was like. All the things he thought when he lay in bed at night, unable to sleep, listening to some spam caller talk because at least it wasn't some reporter who'd gotten his number from Do Hamin, asking for his opinion on this or that piece

of gossip or begging for an interview, ready to report the next day, “Han Yoojin oblivious about basic logic,” or something.

Sung Hyunje wrapped his wet arms tightly around Han Yoojin, in a way that was nearly painful. But it reminded Han Yoojin that this wasn’t before the regression. Reporters still hounded him, and there were plenty back home with terrible agendas, but things were *better*. Han Yoohyun was on Han Yoojin’s side more openly, helping him. Sung Hyunje, Song Taewon, and Moon Hyuna dealt with the rest. The ceramic floor of the shower was firm and wet beneath him. Real, not a nightmare. And Sung Hyunje’s chains would keep people out.

When Sung Hyunje broke the kiss, they stared into each other’s eyes for a time, breathing hard.

“I saw the footage,” Sung Hyunje said, his expression dark. His hands cupped Han Yoojin’s face. “Of the meal. I wanted to rip them to shreds. But you did a commendable job on your own.” He reached out to wipe his fingers gently over Han Yoojin’s eyes. “It would be difficult for anyone, you know.”

“You’d be fine,” Han Yoojin insisted, hating how his throat felt hot and thick. Sung Hyunje always handled these things better. It helped when you were attractive, powerful, charismatic, and everything Han Yoojin *wasn’t.*

Sung Hyunje nodded. “But I’d have to resist killing them all. So that’s a different story.”

Han Yoojin snorted. “You act like that’s not something I have a problem with, too.”

“…I remember the stories,” Sung Hyunje said, making Han Yoojin twitch. “Some of them. I investigated you back when I was looking more into your brother. The media said some terrible things. I cannot imagine how much that must have impacted you, no matter how tough your armor is or was.”

Han Yoojin laughed, now staring at Sung Hyunje’s chest. He tried to imagine Sung Hyunje seeing all the crap people wrote and said about him before the regression. How pathetic Han Yoojin must have seemed. “I handled it badly,” he said. Alcohol, hiding even more than he had before. He walked through alleyways rather than sidewalks, wore hats and masks, ducked away from crowds, and self-isolated. He hadn’t been a hermit before Han Yoohyun left, but after the media started tearing into him, he became one as much as he could. It meant long days and nights alone when he wasn’t working, especially after what few friends he made died in the dungeons.

“How would you have handled it if you could go back?” Sung Hyunje asked.

Han Yoojin tried to look at it from that perspective, and everything he could think of depended on him having more than he had then: money, allies, power, room to *breathe.*… He hadn’t had the confidence he had now to stand beside one of his enemies and pretend everything was fine. But he still felt that things should have been different. “I don’t know,” he finally replied.

“We are not our worst moments,” Sung Hyunje said, quietly.

Han Yoojin frowned, heavily disagreeing with that. All he could see sometimes was Han Yoohyun sacrificing himself for his useless older brother. Another stupid decision of Han Yoojin's.

Sung Hyunje rested his left hand over Han Yoojin's nape, pulling him close again. "You are not *only* your worst moments. You are much more, Han Yoojin-ah."

Han Yoojin shut his eyes. He was here, wrapped in the embrace of one of the most powerful Hunters alive, in a rich hotel in a foreign country he'd never been to, surrounded by enemies and the jealous, facing an uncertain future. But the hotel was also filled with his friends and family, too. Allies. People he relied on. People who were looking out for him. And more were only a phone call away.

"I admit I came because I worried a bit about you," Sung Hyunje said with a quiet laugh. "I believe in your ability to handle all this, but…" He sighed. "My desire to take you away from here is strong."

"We have to stay," Han Yoojin said, though Sung Hyunje's thoughts were tempting.

Sung Hyunje sighed and said, "I know. But it's nice to imagine. You, me, somewhere quiet. Nothing and no one to bother us." His right hand drifted down to Han Yoojin's ass, giving it a light squeeze.

Han Yoojin's face warmed, and he said, "As if being here has stopped you."

"Oh it won't," Sung Hyunje said with a promising grin. "But it's nice to think about more relaxing places." He moved his hand back up and rubbed Han Yoojin's back, almost like a massage. His left hand rested over Han Yoojin's neck, lightly carding the shorter man's hair.

Han Yoojin snorted and then leaned his head more into Sung Hyunje's chest, letting the water trickle through his hair, and feeling the comforting movements of Sung Hyunje's hands. *Maybe this really is okay,* he thought.

End Notes

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