

Counting The Steps - Reading Again

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Counting The Steps - Reading Again

by [Arius_Starwalker](#)

Summary

"Dokja", he had said.

Only child.

A lonely existence.

She didn't want that, to deprive him of company in pursuit of excellence, alone in this big world.

She didn't want him to live like that.

"Dokja", she had said.

Reader.

Cushioning him with countless journeys, numerous experiences, different people.

Lee Sookyung's Viewpoint

Notes

Hello there, this is the second part of the fic I wrote for ORVBB!

It's Lee Sookyung's pov, hope you enjoy!

Also, look at these beautiful artworks TT >///<
[HERE](#) & [HERE](#)

Cry with me over them, they are just too good TT

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

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Reader.

Cushioning him with countless journeys, numerous experiences, different people. Existences that would always be with him beyond those black words, to whom he could fall back on, even during times when loneliness took over.

That was probably when their thoughts differed, somehow dooming their child to the fate of both names.

A lone reader.

Though, it wasn't like that before. Kim Dokja was a brilliant child, intelligent and inquisitive. Curiosity sparkled in his eyes, a myriad of stars glittering in those black orbs. He was a creative soul and inherited her passion for reading. She knew it would save him, teach him, and let him grow. Help him to see each side of the coin.

She had taught him to read again after all, to broaden his perspective and understanding. Introduced him to different aspects of the same story, the various point of views of characters.

Every person has a reason for their actions. Every character has a story to tell.

Yet, she never thought she'd not be heard.

On that fateful day, as red soaked the carpet, Lee Sookyung's mind raced. It was unbelievable, yet somehow she felt that it had been inevitable. She could feel it, both of them had had enough.

He was dead. But, what a mess he made even after that.

Her trembling child, covered in blood, kicked her mind into action. She placed his safety on top as she devised an escape route.

Her son, his future, his entire life was at stake.

She looked into those fearful, confused eyes. Irises so much like her own, now stared at her in panic, disoriented.

At that moment, Lee Sookyung knew what she had to do.

She approached her son, his small shaking form, and bent down. Leveling her eyes to his, she slowly unclenched those tight fists, removing his fingers from the hilt of the knife.

Such a strong grip, she wondered. How could such a small child possess this strength? Why does he need to pay the price for protecting his mother? How could his love cost his entire future?

Yet, evidence speaks for itself. Her husband, his father, was dead. A life was taken. Somebody was to blame.

Circumstances were not accountable.

Dokja should not be labeled as a murderer, she thought. He shouldn't take the blame for her mistakes. Not such a small life, which holds infinite possibilities in front of him.

Fate had never been crueler to her, to them.

She held the weapon, funny how it had just been used by her to chop the tomatoes still lying on the counter. Red spread on her hands. In the dark room, it almost appeared black, tainted. It was his blood, but she had to coat herself with his existence for this last time, no matter how it made her feel.

Later, he'd just be labeled a victim, a body among many. A lump of flesh whose fate was out of their hands, whether burnt or buried. Later, they'd just be connected to the act, not the life lost.

She closed his eyes before a last look at him. This was the man she had married and created a home with. The man who ruined everything. The man who made his son a murderer, inevitably saving himself from being one. He had his reasons, they had theirs, but at the end, none of that would matter.

A sigh escaped, ringing in the quiet hall, only accompanied by light whimpers of her child, so soft that it would've been lost if it wasn't so eerily quiet. Slowly, she got up, wiping her hands on her now soiled clothes.

"Dokja-yah."

She turned, knife in hand, blood all over her dress, a splash of crimson on her cheek mixing with the hues of the room, as she addressed her child, the only existence that mattered in her ruined world.

"From now on, I'll read it all again."

The words echoed in the dark room, sharpening the tone of her voice, drowning the slight tremble that escaped her lips towards the end.

Dokja stood there, eyes wide, whether shocked or frozen she didn't know. Maybe he was soaking it all in, maybe he was desperately erasing everything.

She put her hand on his little head, slowly sliding it down towards his cheeks, simultaneously making him look at her. A thumb extended, as she brushed below his eyes.

That was the last time she would touch him.

With that, she left him behind, to shield him from the cruel fate of imprisonment, of the realisation of taking a life. She wielded the knife, and with it, his sins. Taking it upon herself to save him, to not let him suffer.

Never again, after that, did she call him. Her son, her Dokja, her little reader, who always looked at her, his eyes searching her's, asking, enquiring. A validation she never uttered.

Dokja, as he walked back every time, felt lonelier. His small shoulders hunched further, getting smaller and smaller, trying to occupy the least amount of space. Shrinking his existence, as if trying to erase himself from this plane.

Every time he came, it was a test of patience. Her heart's desire had to be snuffed out of her expressions. Every time she had to look into those eyes, she witnessed a star die. Yet, she still couldn't hold back her lips from trembling, ever so slightly, as she stared at that small, lonely back.

She couldn't ignore it for long.

So, she read it again. And, this time, let the world read it with her.

Maybe she abandoned him then. It was probably the trigger for it all. Maybe that was why her words were never communicated to him. Or maybe it was at that time, when she prioritised his future, thinking instead of feeling, instead of consoling him. Instead of taking him in her arms.

He never visited again.

Every visitation day, she held onto that thin hope, to see that little being sit in front of her. And, everyday, the hope seemed smaller and smaller.

The news had reached her too late. It had been two months since the fall.

She had failed, she realised. Failed as a mother. Failed to protect her silver lining, her bright star. For his future, she had doomed his present, the present that would've shaped him, a loss that she couldn't ask forgiveness for.

He is just a kid, she had thought, the time she had touched him for the last time, feeling his soft cheeks that held his innocence. She had been convinced then, that the only way to protect it was to leave him, to keep him away from the stain as much as possible.

How could she know that the stain she tried so desperately to remove would instead be trampled upon till becoming unrecognisable?

He was just a kid!

But her anger was snuffed out, soaked into those monochrome walls.

Everything felt washed out, dried and without meaning.

Then, Dokja came back, to visit her.

He looked at her, eyes devoid of light, the sparkle long gone, irises holding not even a speck of hope as he quickly averted them.

An awkward silence enveloped the room, suffocating her, yet she steadily looked at him. Her star, he was right *there*. Right across the screen, with his little head down, brows furrowed, trying his

best.

She felt like a sponge, soaking it all in, her sight only registering that sole existence.

He was breathing, chest rising and falling in a rhythmic pattern. Those eyes had looked at her. Her child looked at her.

She never felt so lucky.

His lips parted slightly as he cleared his throat. Then, his voice flowed, filling the room, into her ears, as she registered the unfamiliar minute difference in it from before.

He had grown up. He had endured and grown up, yet he still chose to sit in front of her.

She never felt so proud.

"There is a book I found recently", he awkwardly uttered, breaking the stillness, his eyes peeking at her reaction then continued. "It is called Three Ways to Survive in a Ruined World."

A book.

A story.

A reader.

He was still a reader.

She had never felt so happy.

"So, Yoo Joonghyuk, that brat, he took out his sword for the n-th time, *yet again*", he complained, exasperated. "I don't know what he does with that brain of his, always brandishing that sword every time."

As he went on another tangent with his complaints towards the main character, she observed the fondness that laid beneath, tugging his lips into small smiles that he was probably unaware of.

But, the most stunning was definitely his eyes, because in it, there laid a universe.

And, in all her life, she had never felt so grateful.

Lee Sookyung didn't know what the future held, but right then, at that moment, she was content at being an observer, looking at her little star that held countless worlds inside of him, his eyes sparkling in the lifeless room as he held onto his reason for existing.

Quietly, she looked at him.

End Notes

I hope you liked it (and I hope it was not ooc)

KDJ resembles his mother a lot, and I find it really endearing (and worrying).
But they live at them end(?) So it's all good!

Glad to know where his sacrificial traits come from XD

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!