

Level 4 Human in a Ruined World #Chapter 231 - Read

Level 4 Human in a Ruined World Chapter 231

Chapter 231

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 231: The Imjin War (3)

Roaaaar!

The Korean Peninsula surged westward, slicing through the water.

“No way, is this even possible?”

Yeongwoo stood tall at the border between Yeongjongdo and Incheon Port, still unable to believe his eyes.

But it was clearly happening in real-time.

He could see the water continuously parting.

Like a giant ship, the entire landmass was sailing.

Therefore, somewhere north of the Korean Peninsula, it must be tearing away from the Chinese mainland.

Otherwise, there was no way Incheon could be moving toward China.

‘Then Japan must be rushing toward us, too?’

If this tectonic shift was happening simultaneously, that must be the case.

The Korean Peninsula would join China across the Yellow Sea, and Japan would cross the East Sea to join the Korean Peninsula...

‘Then what about places like Taiwan or the Philippines? And right below is Indonesia.’

Indonesia is a country made up of countless islands.

And that’s not all.

Below Indonesia lies another continent: Australia.

Australia could logically push Indonesia out of the way and end up right below the Korean Peninsula, or move west to join Africa or India.

‘The map is going to be a total mess. It’d be nice if we could see a world map to get a rough idea.’

Anyway, what was certain right now was that the west coast of the Korean Peninsula was heading toward the Chinese mainland.

And according to the conversation he had with his father earlier, the most likely region to border the western part of the Korean Peninsula was Shandong Province.

‘That’s where Jaham lives.’

Coincidentally, Shandong Province was also the territory of Jang Jaham, the only Chinese person Yeongwoo had a close relationship with.

Of course, given the current state of Sino-Korean relations, it was uncertain whether Jaham would welcome him.

Roooooar!

Yeongjongdo, now part of Incheon Port, continued to move westward, and it was only then that Yeongwoo realized.

‘Oh, it won’t connect immediately.’

Even the visible approach of Yeongjongdo took some time, so naturally, it would take a while to reach Shandong Province across the Yellow Sea.

‘How long will it take? 30 minutes? An hour?’

He couldn’t know the exact speed of the Korean Peninsula, but it seemed like it would take quite some time to reach Shandong Province.

“Hmm.”

So what should he do in the meantime?

‘Should I move to the edge of Yeongjongdo? It will be the first to make contact with Shandong Province.’

Just as Yeongwoo was about to move Negwig inward on Yeongjongdo with this thought.

Tat-tat, tat!

From behind Yeongwoo, in the direction of Incheon Port, several swift presences approached.

‘They’re coming.’

It was likely Incheon’s Strongest Swords.

Not wanting to start an internal conflict before meeting the Chinese, Yeongwoo deliberately did not draw his sword and turned around.

Just in time, he saw three men and women running toward him.

“Huh?”

“What’s that?”

“Is someone already here?”

As expected, the three were the Strongest swords from different parts of Incheon.

『Bupyeong’s Strongest Sword』

『Yeonsu’s Strongest Sword』

『Michuhol’s Strongest Sword』

‘How are they already gathered here? Were they preparing for this situation from the beginning?’

Yeongwoo wasn’t very familiar with Incheon’s geography, but even he knew it was almost impossible for the Strongest Sword from three different districts to meet in such a short time by coincidence.

Even if they had rushed over upon hearing the clash between Yeongjongdo and Incheon Port, there was a regional distance to consider.

This meant that the three must have been staying nearby from the start.

‘They must have been preparing for this situation, too.’

After all, the Pangaea incident had been predicted since yesterday, and for a port city like Incheon, this phenomenon was practically another catastrophe.

It was only natural that they quickly gathered.

“You all... were preparing for the Chinese invasion?”

Yeongwoo's chest swelled with a sense of camaraderie as he looked at the three Strongest Sword with eyes full of brotherhood.

The Bupyeong swordsman, who had been staring at Yeongwoo, tilted his head.

"Mister."

"...Yes?"

"Are you the Joseon's Strongest Sword? Joseon means... our country's best...?"

His tone was full of curiosity.

Apparently, the Bupyeong swordsman's image of the nation's strongest swordsman was quite different from Yeongwoo's current appearance.

Well, Yeongwoo didn't look particularly battle-hardened, and his manner of speaking was quite refined.

Of course, he was two meters tall and his body was well-developed with muscles.

"If it's the Joseon's Strongest Sword, isn't that right? Our country is Joseon."

"Didn't you know? I figured it out as soon as I saw him on the horse. Finally, the king has arrived."

"Oh, really? I never thought I'd see the Joseon's Strongest Sword in my life."

The three Strongest Swords chuckled.

They seemed completely unconcerned about the Chinese invasion Yeongwoo had mentioned.

'What's with these guys?'

Yeongwoo finally realized the situation he was in.

The people in front of him were just brats with brute strength.

In fact, Bupyeong looked to be in his early twenties at most, and Yeonsu and Michuhol appeared to be in their late teens or just twenty.

'Of course, being young doesn't mean they lack sense, but when you add tattoos, the story can change.'

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Yeongwoo noticed the intricate tattoos on Bupyeong's ankles and calves a bit late, realizing that while preconceptions aren't always correct, they often are.

"There's a coalition in Incheon, right? I assume there's a reason you were all gathered here... When will the coalition leader arrive?"

Yeongwoo asked this to find someone he could reasonably talk to, and Bupyeong, as if reading his mind, asked back.

"Why? You think you can't talk to kids?"

".....!"

This guy had an uncanny sense.

"Yes. That's part of it, but talking to the decision-maker would speed things up."

When Yeongwoo said this, Bupyeong grinned and looked around.

"Honestly, I have no idea. Does Joseon's Strongest Sword really mean the best in the whole country?"

"Um... well."

How should he explain that it's actually a title from North Korea without causing any misunderstandings?

After thinking for a moment, Yeongwoo simply nodded.

"Yes, it means something similar. It means I'm very strong."

"Oh...?"

At Yeongwoo's affirmation, Bupyeong's gaze changed noticeably.

Then, with a sly look, he narrowed his eyes again.

"But how do you know? That you're really the best in the country."

".....?"

"We've never seen you before. So you're not really the best in the 'whole' country, right?"

“Ah.”

Understanding his point, Yeongwoo couldn't help but chuckle.

He meant that Yeongwoo couldn't claim to be the best in the country without having fought anyone from Incheon.

‘Seriously, even after seeing Negwig and the Golden Trail, they're not intimidated?’

It was an attitude Yeongwoo couldn't understand, but it was still a form of courage.

“Yes... correction. I'm not the best in the country yet.”

“Yet?”

Predictably, Bupyeong seized on that word immediately.

It seemed he was eager to fight right away.

Yeongwoo, who might have drawn his sword in his younger days, restrained himself.

“We might have to fight the Chinese soon, so why are you trying to pick a fight with someone from the same country?”

He managed to pull off a mature remark, restraining his hotheaded nature.

Bupyeong gave an irrefutable reason.

“Damn it, look at yourself. You look like you're begging for a fight.”

“Huh...?”

Yeongwoo followed his gaze and looked at himself.

Shirtless, tattoos on his shoulders, a spiral flame tattoo on his chest.

And the new Dogo product, ‘Cosmic Etiquette,’ resting on his bare shoulder.

Not to mention the flying golden sword and the iron horse from another world adding the final touch.

‘Oh, I'm the real Incheon guy here!’

Tattoos, check.

Yeongwoo07.

In fact, even more tattoos, rougher and densely packed, were hidden under his pants.

In terms of tattoo quantity, Yeongwoo might outdo Bupyeong by a couple of levels.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I tend to draw attention.”

Yeongwoo sincerely apologized and bowed his head, prompting Michuhol, who had been glaring at him sharply, to nod and add.

“It’s not that we don’t like you, mister. It’s just that around here, if a weakling has a title, they don’t get any respect.”

“...?”

With that, Yeongwoo’s apologetic demeanor disappeared.

“How do you know I’m a weakling?”

From the very first day of the reset, Yeongwoo had been surrounded and slapped by people.

For him, being called a ‘weakling’ was practically a trigger.

“Well... you’ve been acting like one this whole time....”

Just as Michuhol shrugged with a nonchalant expression, the shirtless tattooed man suddenly pulled a gun from his waist.

Swoosh!

“Whoa?”

“This damn lunatic!”

The atmosphere heated up instantly.

And in that moment, Yeongwoo was pointing the ‘gun’ at the three Strongest Sword in turn.

「Evil Meter」 - Mythological Tool

【You can see the target’s level of evil deeds.】

【20% increased reduction of evil deeds due to good deeds】

But the problem was...

‘What the... they’re actually pretty good guys.’

The evil deed levels of the three Strongest Sword were only around 200 to 300.

Michuhol’s level was even as low as 12.

“Hey, mister? Calm down, we get it.”

Bupyeong waved his arms slowly, his face pale.

Although he was known for his aggressiveness in Incheon, faced with a madman who had appeared out of nowhere on a horse wielding a gun, he couldn’t help but become the most reasonable person.

“We’re sorry, we apologize.”

Michuhol, who had provoked Yeongwoo with problematic words, also bowed his head in a very careful apology, and even Yeonsu, who had the lowest evil deed level, was wiping cold sweat while trying to placate him.

“If we offended you, we apologize. We just talk tough... we’re not actually that bad.”

Of course, Yeongwoo believed Yeonsu’s words.

The evil deed levels were indirect evidence.

So just as Yeongwoo was about to lower the gun.

-Bzzzz!

Suddenly, the Evil Deeds Meter vibrated faintly, and a harsh voice boomed from a distance.

“You damn weakling, using a gun like a coward?”

“...!”

Yeongwoo, with his eyes full of whites, demanded an explanation from Bupyeong, who responded in a trembling voice.

“It’s... it’s the Incheon coalition leader. He’s a bit of a bad guy.”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 232

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 232: The Imjin War (4)

Incheon Metropolitan City.

Located in the western part of South Korea, Incheon is not only home to Incheon Port but also to Incheon International Airport, making it effectively a major gateway to South Korea.

With a population of 3 million, it is the third-largest city after Seoul and Busan, underscoring its significant importance.

This is especially true in times when it directly borders China.

“Sa... You shouldn’t just kill people! These are all our national defense forces!”

Even though Yeongwoo was half-crazed, he remembered that his country needed to secure as much power as possible.

So.

Clack!

Even after confirming through the evil meter that his opponent’s evil score was a whopping 1,200, he didn’t draw his sword.

Of course, the practical reason was...

“Kind of... ambiguous? Still, it’s on the higher side, right?”

Yeongwoo’s current evil score was a whopping 50 million.

So, it was natural for him to see 300 or 1,200 as equally small numbers.

‘Killing him wouldn’t even register on my evil score.’

He had hoped to meet the worst villain in Incheon, but reality was not so accommodating.

“ ... ”

As Yeongwoo lowered his gun in disappointment, the so-called leader of the Incheon coalition rushed at him at high speed.

“Stop right there!”

“Stop...?”

Perched atop the nether creature, Yeongwoo found the command baffling.

Whish!

When Yeongwoo landed on the ground to meet his opponent, Bupyeong, who was terrified, shouted at him.

“M-Mister! You can’t use weapons here! Not even guns!”

“What? Then what am I supposed to fight with...?”

As Yeongwoo turned to Bupyeong with a look of incredulity, a sensory alert appeared in his vision.

「Your sensory score has temporarily increased from 3,400 to 5,532.」

Finally, the Incheon leader had launched an attack on the outsider.

‘Wow, what the hell?’

Yeongwoo blinked as he saw his sensory score surpass 5,000 in an instant.

The opponent was indeed a formidable master.

Moreover, impressively enough.

Whizzzz!

The Incheon leader was swinging his fist, not a sword.

‘What the... is this bastard for real?’

Bupyeong Strongest Sword’s claim that weapons were not used here was true.

“So, Incheon fights with fists, not swords?”

Since the hologram warning of the opponent’s attack was right in front of him, Yeongwoo twisted his upper body to avoid the Incheon leader’s punch.

Swish.

The opponent's right forearm, heavily tattooed, narrowly grazed Yeongwoo's chin.

"You bastard...!"

The Incheon leader gritted his teeth in frustration.

Only then did Yeongwoo confirm the opponent's title.

『Namdong's Strongest Sword』

'So, even though he's the leader of Incheon, he's not Incheon's Strongest Sword?'

This meant that the best swordsmen in Incheon had never fought each other.

To become Incheon's Strongest Sword, one needed titles from at least three districts.

'What kind of people are they? Incheon?'

Culture shock.

Yeongwoo was so astonished that instead of countering with an elbow as the hologram suggested, he stepped back.

The Incheon leader interpreted this as a sign of being intimidated.

"Stop right there, you bastard...!"

Gaining confidence, he charged at Yeongwoo again.

Whoosh!

This time, a bold middle kick.

The martial art "Rohm's Bottom" that Yeongwoo was currently using advised him to swing his sword and cut the opponent's shin.

However.

'No, you crazy bastards. The opponent is unarmed. Isn't that too vicious?'

Though Yeongwoo had a evil score of 50 million, he wasn't evil enough to swing a sword at an unarmed opponent.

So instead of drawing his sword.

Clack!

He grabbed the Incheon leader's leg aiming for his side.

Then.

Shwish!

He delivered a fast punch to the opponent's cheek, making a sound of the air splitting.

Bam!

"Argh!"

The Incheon leader made a pitiful noise as he was knocked back.

But he quickly got up again and assumed a fighting stance.

"Ugh...?"

But even that didn't last long.

The effect of the Golden Retribution's pain induction had immediately activated.

"Wha-what did you do?"

The Incheon leader, who had only been slapped once, was trembling so much he couldn't stand properly.

Seeing something was off, the three from Incheon panicked.

"Mister! What did you do? Did you use poison or something?"

"P-Poison?"

Yeongwoo repeated this, scratching his chin.

"Poison... Are you not supposed to use that?"

At this, Bupyeong's jaw dropped.

"I told you, you can't use weapons! Poison is a kind of weapon too! It's even more despicable than a sword...!"

Despicable.

Only after hearing this did Yeongwoo clearly understand Incheon's duel rules.

Those kids had only said "no weapons," but it essentially meant no use of any equipment, including weapons.

"No swords, no poison or hidden weapons... Basically, no underhanded tactics."

Of course, the outsider currently at Incheon Port was Jeong Yeongwoo⁰⁷, considered the worst villain in Korean history.

He was a major advertising model for Dogo, a notorious company known for its universal weapon brands and for beating public officials to death.

"How are you supposed to duel without using swords or any equipment?"

When Yeongwoo protested, Yeonsu's Strongest Sword rebuked him.

"Do you kill someone every time you fight?"

"...!"

Yeongwoo's conscience was sharply pricked.

Even more so because the person who said this had an evil score of only 12.

From Yeongwoo's perspective, that was practically saintly.

And to be precise.

'Couldn't you kill someone with just your fists?'

While Yeongwoo was grumbling internally, Michuhol added.

"You have to fight with bare fists to see who is truly strong. Honestly, if you have good equipment, who wouldn't be strong...?"

"Uh... It's not wrong, but."

From a romantic point of view, it wasn't wrong, but in these times, it was a philosophy that could easily get you killed.

"But you would use weapons against the Chinese, right? If they invade?"

When Yeongwoo asked this, the three from Incheon, including Michuhol, nodded in unison.

“Yes. War is completely different from fighting.”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

“Not complete idiots, I see.”

At this, Yeongwoo finally nodded in agreement.

He could agree with this level of romanticism.

And as a western border region, it met the criteria.

There were enough top fighters alive, and their fighting spirit was commendable.

So the remaining task was.

‘If even outsiders with strong fists are recognized, it means they’ve adopted a romantic duel style, right?’

Yeongwoo dramatically began throwing his gear onto the ground.

First, he let the “Cosmic Etiquette” hanging over his shoulder fall to the ground.

Boom!

Then, he dropped all the bracelets, including the Serpent of Greed and Golden Retribution, from his wrists.

Next.

“Hey, I’ll even kick with bare feet. No complaints later.”

He took off his only footwear, “Illusion,” and tossed it far away.

Bupyeong pointed cautiously at Yeongwoo’s waist.

“That... gun too.”

“Oh, right.”

Yeongwoo readily agreed and unfastened his entire belt, throwing it away.

Everyone’s eyes changed.

“A complete lunatic has come.”

“Isn’t he crazy...?”

While the saying goes, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do,” they couldn’t help but admire the boldness of the outsider who voluntarily disarmed himself in a situation surrounded by four people.

Of course, in reality.

‘Hehe, idiots.’

Although he had only discarded his equipment, Yeongwoo, who was fully equipped with various catalog effects, still retained the benefits of dozens of equipment.

‘Still, it’s right to deactivate the toxic effects, ethically speaking.’

Yeongwoo deactivated the lethal poison and Golden Retribution’s pain effects, then clenched his fists.

Clack!

“Let’s go at it properly this time. I won’t use poison or anything.”

By then, the pain effect had somewhat subsided, and the Incheon leader, gritting his teeth, firmly guarded with his arms.

“Come on, you bastard. I’ll show you why I’m the coalition leader!”

Swoosh!

The sound of water being cut behind Incheon’s leader’s words came from Yeongjongdo.

The boundary between Yeongjongdo, where the five were standing, and Incheon Port was still sailing westward toward Shandong Province in China.

So, in a way, they were dueling on a moving ship.

Swoosh.

Yeongwoo slowly took a fighting stance and spoke to the man representing Incheon.

“This time, you’ll find out what’s been happening outside Incheon.”

* * *

At the same time, at Cheongsapo in Haeundae District, Busan.

Near the pier where a holographic dotted line was blinking, a dozen masters from Gyeongnam Province were standing, each holding their weapons.

They were known as the “Southern Union,” an alliance of swordsmen from Gimhae City in Gyeongnam, Ulsan, and Busan.

They had come to fight the anticipated Korean-Japanese war today.

But for the moment, Japan was the least of their concerns.

“Is this really happening?”

“How long will this continue?”

They were focused on the rapidly receding seawater in front of the pier.

Due to the western part of the Korean Peninsula moving to meet Shandong Province in China, the speed of the southernmost part of Korea, including Busan, had increased dramatically.

In effect, the Southern Union gathered at Cheongsapo were now on what felt like a massive speedboat.

“At this rate, the pier might break.”

Someone expressed a realistic concern, to which Busan’s Strongest Sword, Kang Gyowon, responded.

“Let’s step back for now. We don’t see any Japanese yet anyway.”

“Yes, let’s do that just in case.”

“Even a seal wouldn’t survive being swept away there.”

Indeed, the current in front of Cheongsapo was visibly strong.

Just as everyone was about to move their formation inland.

Crack!

A disturbing sound came from the edge of the pier.

Bang!

The concrete forming the pier's surface began to crack.

The pier was indeed breaking apart.

“Bad luck.”

Park Seongjun, the Strongest Sword of Gijang and an actual fisherman, wore a frustrated expression as he sheathed his sword.

And at that moment.

“Huh...?”

As he shifted his gaze to the distant sea, Park Seongjun's eyebrows twitched.

The horizon looked unusually thick.

Soon, others noticed the same thing and started murmuring.

“Is that...”

“Looks like it, doesn't it?”

At this, Ulsan's Strongest Sword, Kim Chaena, pushed through her comrades and approached the half-broken pier.

Then.

She peered through the binoculars in her hand at the suspicious horizon.

「Binoculars」 – Epic Compass

【Once a day, you can look into a desired region.】

Even with its special function exhausted, her binoculars retained their basic 10x magnification.

And what she saw with that 10x magnification was.

“Those bastards... they're really prepared for an invasion.”

She saw at least dozens of Japanese swordsmen standing in a line along the coastline, moving toward Busan as if riding on a moving piece of Japan like a battleship.

“Everyone, prepare for battle! At that speed, they'll be here within an hour!”

As Chaena shouted almost in a scream, Busan's Strongest Sword issued orders from behind the port.

"Send people to Seoul, Suwon, Changwon, Incheon... Let's inform the major cities that a war with Japan is likely."

Then Kim Chaena added to Kang Gyowon's command.

"Seoul! Send the fastest person to Seoul! The most useful people are likely to be there."

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 233: The Imjin War (5)

Swiish!

A greenish-brown trajectory once again narrowly missed Yeongwoo's chin.

'Not bad at all. You would've definitely been the strongest in Incheon with your fists.'

As Yeongwoo admired this, the Incheon leader from Namdong-gu gritted his teeth and spat out his lines.

"Stop messing around and come at me seriously!"

Namdong's Strongest Sword, Kim Yongkwan04.

He was feeling both anger and fear simultaneously.

It was because he knew that the outsider in front of him was deliberately maintaining a defensive stance.

Every time Yongkwan charged aggressively, his opponent would backstep precisely that distance, and this unbelievable sense of distance was the source of Yongkwan's fear.

'Woah, did this guy originally do boxing or something? Local swordsmanship doesn't guide you on stepping like this.'

Especially since Yongkwan's specialty was the check hook.

This is a type of counter that can only be used when the opponent actively attempts to attack, and the constant maintenance of a subtle distance was frustrating for Yongkwan.

“Hmph!”

Yongkwan then threw a bold middle kick to provoke an attack from his opponent.

Whoosh!

Kim Yongkwan’s left leg swung like a whip.

In response, Yeongwoo slightly hunched his upper body while firmly guarding, extending his left palm to the predicted strike point on his right side.

Then,

Thud!

As a result, he blocked the middle kick with both his right arm guard and his left hand, dispersing the impact.

“.....!”

Yongkwan couldn’t help but be surprised.

It was clearly a kickboxing defense technique.

And then, like lightning,

Whoosh!

Yeongwoo’s right low kick countered.

Thwack!

The counter landed precisely on Yongkwan’s right leg, the one holding him up, and he realized at that moment.

‘This guy... he’s been going easy on me this whole time...?’

After taking the low kick and collapsing to the ground, Yongkwan quickly rolled backward and stood up.

Whoosh!

Then, he saw the outsider—no, the Strongest Sword of Joseon—casually taking a combat stance again, not even bothering to chase him.

‘Joseon’s Strongest Sword’

Finally, the opponent’s title hit him.

‘Could he really be from that Joseon?’

His mind understood it, but it was hard to accept the title of Joseon’s Strongest Sword, which he had never encountered before.

However, after taking a single low kick, his blood started pumping quickly, and his heart began to race.

Yongkwan’s heart also started to acknowledge his opponent’s presence.

The serious thought that he might be in a duel with the strongest in the Korean Peninsula.

“Damn it... He’s really something else.”

As Namdong’s Strongest Sword, Kim Yongkwan, said this and reignited his fighting spirit, Yeongwoo turned his head slightly to look behind his opponent.

New faces were appearing there.

『Gyeyang’s Strongest Sword』

『Seogu’s Strongest Sword』

“Gyeyang, Seogu... counting the ones who came earlier, almost all of Incheon’s Strongest Swords are here, right?”

As Yeongwoo asked this, Yongkwan’s face momentarily showed fear.

“Why, what is it now?”

“Now that all the witnesses are here, it’s time to settle this. We can’t keep fighting until we reach China.”

“...What?”

Yongkwan frowned and asked back, but he actually understood the situation clearly.

The reason Joseon's Strongest Sword had been holding back was purely because there weren't enough spectators yet.

"How do you determine the winner in a duel in Incheon?"

".....?"

"You're fighting with fists because you don't want to kill each other, right? Then how do you decide the winner? Knockout? Surrender?"

As Yeongwoo said this and finally lowered his guard halfway, Yongkwan flinched unconsciously.

"It's... It's similar to a street fight. It ends when one side stops wanting to fight."

"Is that so? Then shout 'surrender' when you want to stop. The sooner you do, the better. Honestly, I've already killed people with my bare hands before."

".....!"

An utterly menacing line.

Thud!

Yeongwoo extended his right foot forward.

It was the first forward step he had taken in this fight.

Seeing this, Yongkwan's jaw dropped.

'What, what is this?'

A peculiar energy he had never felt before emanated from his opponent.

No matter how strong an opponent was, they still exuded a certain animalistic aura, but the man before him felt like a dense fog.

A massive fog that stealthily enveloped his ankles and neck without him realizing.

"Huh...?"

And in reality, he was astonished to see that the Strongest Sword of Joseon had already approached right in front of him.

"Speak before it's too late, got it?"

The Strongest Sword of Joseon, who had silently closed in within striking range, made a sudden move.

Smack!

Suddenly, Yongkwan's upper body was lifted momentarily as a flash exploded before his eyes.

"Ugh!"

A right straight.

Yeongwoo had struck Yongkwan's face like a flash of light.

Then,

Thud!

He kicked the guy's solar plexus with his left foot, sending him flying backward.

Whoosh!

This time, he fired a middle kick with his right foot.

"Watch your ribs..."

Yeongwoo kindly warned of the target point, and Kim Yongkwan barely managed to lower his guard in time to block the kick from Joseon's Strongest Sword.

Smack!

Of course, it was quite different from when Yeongwoo had blocked a kick earlier.

"Gah!"

As soon as he blocked the kick, Yongkwan's mouth spewed bile, and his body was thrown sideways.

"Huh?"

"This is insane...!"

"How is that even possible?"

The five other Strongest Swords of Incheon, watching the fight, could instinctively tell that the results were different even though both had exchanged middle kicks.

‘He’s getting destroyed.’

‘Who is this guy? Is he really Joseon’s strongest?’

‘Why is a nationwide champion here?’

In effect, Kim Yongkwan was taking a beating on behalf of the other Strongest Swords of Incheon.

Meanwhile, Yeongwoo’s shadow moved swiftly once more.

Tap tap!

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Following the opponent, who had been pushed back by the kick, Yeongwoo launched a rapid one-two punch.

Thud!

“Guh!”

An overwhelming attack that pierced through his guard with sheer force made Yongkwan’s upper body sway.

Despite that,

“You bastard!”

Yongkwan’s voice, full of unyielding determination, spat out as he threw a punch at Yeongwoo.

Whoosh!

Of course, Yeongwoo easily dodged by slightly turning his head.

‘He’s truly remarkable.’

Yeongwoo admired Yongkwan’s swollen eye as he thought.

If he fought this well with bare hands, how strong would he be with a sword?

But given the situation, this duel needed to end quickly.

Even while fighting Incheon's leader, Yeongwoo kept an eye on the horizon beyond Yeongjong Island, noticing that the horizon was becoming increasingly distinct.

"Let's stop here. It looks like we're almost to China."

After announcing this, Yeongwoo dodged his opponent's straight punch.

Swoosh!

Then he grabbed the arm aimed at his head and wrapped it around his body.

Like fastening a seatbelt to himself.

Next, he flowed seamlessly into a throw, rotating his upper body.

Thwack, boom!

An enormous sound echoed as Kim Yongkwan's back hit the concrete floor, and this sound made Incheon's Strongest Swords reflexively reach for their swords before stopping.

It was humiliating to have an outsider take Incheon's title, but if the opponent was indeed Joseon's undefeated swordsman, it was a natural order of things.

Incheon, known for insisting on bare-knuckle fighting to determine true strength, had a profound respect for true strength compared to other regions.

In other words, if you fought fairly and won, you became Incheon's leader regardless of your origin.

"Damn it."

When Yongkwan, planted on the ground, found himself staring at the sky, he stopped struggling.

"Is that a surrender? If we continue, you'll get seriously hurt. Since you didn't draw your sword, I don't want to see blood either."

Yeongwoo asked softly, looking down at Yongkwan, who finally spoke respectfully.

"Yes, I surrender. I surrender, sir."

"....."

With his title immediately changing to 'sir,' Yeongwoo couldn't help but chuckle.

Then he extended a hand to help Yongkwan up.

“Sorry for hitting you. And for everything else.”

“What do you mean by everything else?”

In response, Yeongwoo scratched his chin.

A gesture he usually made when he was contemplating or in trouble.

Then, as if deciding something, he pointed to his head with his index finger.

‘Joseon’s Strongest Sword.’

“This, actually means North Joseon.”

“.....?”

* * *

Joseon’s Strongest Sword.

The highest title, signifying the supreme warrior north of the Korean Peninsula.

More precisely, it should be the highest title in North Korea.

In any case, Yeongwoo gathered the Strongest Swords of Incheon, who had a notably high proportion of tattoo bearers, and briefly explained the events that had transpired.

How he became Joseon’s Strongest Sword and why he had come to Incheon.

“Mister, then who is the strongest in our country?”

Upon hearing the story, the Strongest Sword of Bupyeong raised his hand and asked.

Kim Yongkwan, still with a swollen face, rebuked him.

“What were you listening to? Our brother here is practically the strongest in our country.”

Of course, he had to add the qualifier “practically.”

It was true that he was the strongest in practice, but his title was still “Joseon’s Strongest Sword.

“Then what is the highest title in our country? Daehan’s Strongest Sword?”

This was the opinion of the Strongest Sword from Michuhol.

Then the Strongest Sword of Yeonsu, two steps ahead, raised an intriguing question.

“Then is there possibly an integrated title for the Korean Peninsula? If there really is, there might be a next level too...?”

“Ho.”

A plausible inference.

Since there were titles for each region within a country, there might also be an integrated national title.

Perhaps something like the Strongest Sword of Korea-China or the Strongest Sword of East Asia.

“Or maybe the Strongest Sword of the East... I don’t know.”

Yeongwoo scratched his chin again.

But that wasn’t the immediate concern.

“You all know we’re about to reach the Chinese border, right? So I also came to see the situation in Incheon, but it’s very different from what I expected.”

“Why? Do we look too weak?”

The Strongest Sword of Bupyeong immediately bristled.

“No, that’s not it.”

Yeongwoo looked around at Incheon’s Strongest Swords, whose average age seemed to be in their early twenties, with a troubled expression.

He knew their combat strength wasn’t ordinary, but they were still just barely adults.

To someone in their mid-thirties like Yeongwoo, they looked like kids.

‘Well, the fact that I’m a candidate for the strongest in our country is more of a problem.’

Yeongwoo carefully observed those who would now become the guardians of the western border of Korea.

Then the Strongest Sword of Michuhol pointed with a slightly displeased expression at Yeongwoo’s belt, which was lying far away.

“Um, mister.”

“Yeah?”

“Can you put your clothes on now?”

“Oh.”

Come to think of it, he had thrown off all his clothes for the duel.

“But I can’t wear a top anyway, so it doesn’t make much difference.”

“Why can’t you wear a top...?”

Michuhol looked shocked.

But they couldn’t hear the answer.

Rumble...!

Yeongjong Island, which had been cutting through the Yellow Sea, suddenly shook violently.

“What, what’s this?”

“What is it? Is there a problem?”

While everyone was startled and looking around for something to grab onto, Yeongwoo, sensing something, turned his head towards the sea.

‘It seems like we’re slowing down.’

And sure enough.

“.....!”

The horizon looked much thicker than the last time he checked.

‘We really are almost there. That must be Chinese land.’

To the naked eye, it was still just a thick horizon, but at five times magnification, the story would be different.

Yeongwoo immediately activated his “clairvoyance” to examine the horizon again.

Flash!

Then he saw countless Chinese people gathered along the coastline, presumably the southern tip of Shandong Province.

‘...My God, are they preparing for war?’

As someone from the Korean Peninsula, frequently invaded by foreign powers, Yeongwoo assumed the worst.

But what happened next completely overturned his pessimistic imagination.

Moments later, a banner written in Korean was raised among the Chinese crowd, and it read,

“Shandong Province welcomes your arrival... Shandong’s Twin Evil, Zhang Jaham.”

[TL/N: Contextually correct name would be zhang since that’s more of a real chinese name than jang which is kinda korean, so that’s the name we’ll use in future.]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 234: The Invincible Sword (1)

Blood ties, regional ties, academic ties.

There are countless connections in the world, but this was a first for Yeongwoo.

‘Should I call this a different kind of bond...?’

Yeongwoo double-checked the banner held by the Chinese, unable to believe his eyes.

《Shandong Province welcomes your entry.》

– Shandong Twin Evils, Zhang Jaham

The peculiar wording of “your entry” was almost certainly referring to Yeongwoo himself.

The banner’s direction, towards the southeast coast of Shandong Province—essentially facing the Korean Peninsula across the Yellow Sea—made it clear.

Zhang Jaham, having identified Yeongwoo's passage across the Yellow Sea through territorial markings, hastily prepared these banners.

Shandong Province needed to quickly convey that they had no intention of fighting against Korea's Strongest Sword to avoid disaster.

'Wow, this guy wasn't just any Strongest Sword but a regional magnate, it seems?'

There were at least several hundred Shandong residents mobilized just to hold these banners along the coast.

Numerous banners were erected at regular intervals along the shoreline.

This was an unprecedented show of hospitality.

'He really meant it when he said we should go to the next dungeon together.'

Yeongwoo reproached himself for not acknowledging Zhang Jaham's sincerity.

And once again, he learned a valuable lesson.

Diplomacy indeed stems from military strength.

"What's that? A banner?"

"What does it say?"

Eventually, the Strongest Swords of Incheon, seeing the banners lined up along the Shandong coast, widened their eyes in astonishment.

At first, they thought it was a battle flag, but as time passed, they realized the writing on the banner was in Korean.

"Welcome to... entry?"

"Who's Zhang Jaham?"

"How did they know we were coming and write that in advance?"

Suspicious of the unexpected hospitality from the Chinese side, the Strongest Swords began murmuring, prompting Yeongwoo to speak in a calm tone.

"He's an acquaintance of mine. But just in case, don't let your guard down completely."

Although Zhang Jaham was welcoming them with open arms, one could never be too sure of the world's unpredictability.

‘Of course, seeing how they’ve deployed residents at the forefront, it seems like they truly are welcoming us.’

Rumble...!

Meanwhile, the tremors around Yeongjong Island grew stronger than before.

They were significantly reducing their cruising speed.

In fact, the distance to Shandong had decreased so much that they could now distinguish not only the banners but also the faces of the people holding them.

“There’s a huge crowd gathering...?”

“Is that all a welcoming party?”

It became clear that the people on the Shandong coast were waving small flags as well as holding banners.

The fact that they were holding such harmless items instead of weapons unequivocally indicated Shandong’s unconditional welcome or even surrender.

Naturally, all eyes turned to the “Strongest Sword of Korea.”

Who was this outsider whose reputation had spread across the Yellow Sea to China?

“How do the Chinese know you, sir?”

“...Explaining it all now would be too complicated. Just know that there’s an Olympics-like event where representatives from each country showcase their strength.”

Yeongwoo was referring to night dungeons, but for the Strongest Swords of Incheon who had no dungeon experience, this was difficult to grasp.

“Showcase strength...?”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Does that mean our country won that Olympics?”

Yeongwoo pointed to the Shandong coast, now only about a hundred meters away.

“Well... something like that. To be precise, Zhang Jaham saw me winning.”

Rumble rumble rumble!

At last, Yeongjong Island made a violent tremor akin to an earthquake as it rapidly decelerated, causing the Chinese waving flags on the opposite shore to begin retreating.

And then.

Boom!

With an earth-splitting roar, Yeongjong Island connected with the southeastern part of Shandong Province.

“Wow, damn....”

“The land actually connected.”

“Is this really okay?”

The Strongest Swords of Incheon stared in disbelief at the junction between Yeongjong Island and Shandong.

It was surreal enough when Yeongjong Island connected to Incheon Port, but now, it had even connected to China, creating a land route.

“Uh... sir, what happens now?”

The Strongest Sword of Bupyeong instinctively called for Yeongwoo, who then pushed through the dazed Strongest Swords of Incheon.

Step, step.

Right up to the boundary between Yeongjong Island and Shandong.

There, the hundreds of Chinese holding the “Welcome to Our Country” banners hesitated and stepped back.

Though they were following Zhang Jaham’s orders to offer a warm welcome, they were meeting Yeongwoo for the first time.

Consequently, they couldn’t help but feel vague fear and reluctance.

After all, in terms of population and landmass, China was the relatively ‘large country,’ and the implementation of Pangaea had taken the form of the Korean Peninsula being attached to Chinese land.

In the eyes of the Chinese, it was only natural that Korea could be seen as refugees or invaders.

'It seems they are all dumbfounded.'

Yeongwoo scanned the eyes of the Shandong residents, which were not particularly friendly, as expected.

Then, suddenly, a dark figure sprang up from within the crowd and landed right in front of Yeongwoo.

Swoosh!

Anyone could see that this was the movement of a Strongest Sword, and sure enough, the person's identity was.

"Long time no see, Master Jeong...!"

It was Zhang Jaham of the Shandong Twin Evils.

Though somewhat hot-tempered and dismissive of Taiwan, he was undoubtedly a master of diplomacy, more skilled than any other Chinese person.

Thump!

Zhang Jaham initiated a martial salute, forcing Yeongwoo to awkwardly reciprocate.

Then, glancing at the banner still held high, he asked cautiously.

"What is all this...?"

"As you can see, it's a welcoming greeting. How could we not come out to greet you when you're coming directly?"

"..."

Zhang Jaham's speech was overly polite, as if drenched in honorifics.

For some reason, he was putting excessive effort into welcoming Yeongwoo.

Yeongwoo bowed slightly, pretending to greet him, and whispered in a low voice.

"Why are you overreacting like this? It's making me uncomfortable."

Zhang Jaham also bent down and whispered in Yeongwoo's ear.

"You're not here to wage war, are you? I have no intention of fighting with you."

In Zhang Jaham's memory, Jeong Yeongwoo⁰⁷ was the absolute demon who had summoned a mutant army to gang up on the giant Gameta.

While thinking of how to utilize this demon to effortlessly conquer dungeons, he suddenly saw an alert yesterday that two of the Dandong's Three Swords had been stripped of their titles by Jeong Yeongwoo⁰⁷.

Then, the very next day, he saw the territorial mark attached to Jeong Yeongwoo, or rather Master Jeong, crossing the Yellow Sea.

In this situation, Zhang Jaham could only think that this demon had marked China as his first target.

On the other hand, Yeongwoo was inwardly celebrating.

'What's this, I'm going to get the western border without shedding a drop of blood.'

This was a good thing for both Shandong and Incheon.

If the border areas were on bad terms, the damage would directly affect ordinary citizens.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Of course, this didn't mean he should act overly submissive.

"Well... China has frequently invaded the Korean Peninsula in the past, and with the lands connecting, I did come prepared for a fight."

Yeongwoo said this while subtly indicating the Strongest Swords of Incheon behind him.

"Internally, there was also a dominant opinion that we should prepare for war."

"Ah... is that so."

Zhang Jaham's gaze reached the young Strongest Swords covered in elaborate tattoos, and he made a face that said, 'I see.'

"But since you have welcomed us like this today, I will discuss it internally. There's no need to fight with friendly people."

The last line of Yeongwoo's speech was sincere.

There was no reason to torment those who came out friendly.

Moreover, having a potential ally on the western border was extremely important.

Currently, only Zhang Jaham, who had directly witnessed his prowess, was favorable to him, not the entirety of China.

“By the way, is the whole of Shandong really welcoming my ‘entry’?”

When Yeongwoo asked this, a troubled look appeared on Zhang Jaham’s face, as expected.

“Actually, I have something urgent to tell you regarding that.”

“ ... ”

I knew it.

Yeongwoo nodded as if he had fully anticipated this.

However.

Swish!

He didn’t expect another master to ambush him from within the crowd at this moment.

“I am Wu Qingjin of Shandong Twin Evils! I will test if you truly deserve to set foot in Shandong!”

Swoosh!

A middle-aged man charged forward, thrusting his sword while shouting confidently.

“What is this now?”

An ordinary Strongest Sword might have been enraged at Zhang Jaham for not informing him of this ambush, but Yeongwoo was different.

『Shandong’s Twin Evils』

He noticed that the title ‘Shandong Twin Evils’ was also attached to the man who introduced himself as Wu Chengjin and immediately understood the situation.

It wasn’t the whole of Shandong that was welcoming his entry.

‘Of course, since there are two Twin Evils, it makes sense.’

The two great evils representing Shandong.

One, Zhang Jaham, knew exactly who Jeong Yeongwoo was, but the other didn't.

So, it was only natural for the other to send a very different kind of greeting.

'That means this ambush must have been discussed with Zhang Jaham in advance.'

In the moment when Wu Chengjin's sword was flying at him, Yeongwoo confirmed that Zhang Jaham was retreating.

Indeed, this ambush was a sort of verification process approved by Zhang Jaham.

It was an unavoidable discourtesy meant to demonstrate the strength of the demon Jeong Yeongwoo to everyone.

Slash!

In that moment, the tip of Wu Chengjin's sword reached Yeongwoo's bare chest, right at the position of his heart.

"....."

So, Yeongwoo...

Swoosh!

He reached out like lightning and caught Wu Chengjin's sword between his index and middle fingers.

He was mimicking a scene he had seen in martial arts novels before.

Displaying a level of skill that could catch a sword with his fingers would ensure obedience without question in the future.

'Judging by the senses I've gained, he's a total amateur. At best, he's only average among Seoul's Strongest Swords.'

Yeongwoo had calculated this performance attempt and succeeded in it.

The blade that was about to pierce his chest came to a halt.

".....!"

"Huh?"

"Ah!"

Zhang Jaham, the residents of the Shandong coast, Incheon's Strongest Swords, and even the attacker Wu Chengjin gaped in astonishment.

Catching a named swordsman's ambush with bare fingers was an unimaginable feat.

However, shortly thereafter...

Creak!

The seemingly halted blade in Wu Chengjin's hand twitched.

"What the...?"

"Oh...!"

There was a variable Yeongwoo hadn't accounted for in his desire to put on a performance that would captivate everyone present.

It was the fact that...

Creak!

Some masters prioritize other attributes over sensory skills.

'What? This isn't right.'

The blade caught between his fingers began to move again, and before Yeongwoo could respond, it pierced his chest.

Swoosh!

NG.

It was a catastrophic mistake that should never have happened.

"Mister?"

"No, that idiot!"

"Damn, I knew this would happen."

As the Strongest Swords of Incheon, witnessing the fall of their pillar, simultaneously drew their weapons, and even Zhang Jaham was reaching for his sword in the face of this unexpected disaster.

Clang!

At that moment, a clear metallic sound echoed from inside Yeongwoo's chest.

"Huh?"

"What was that?"

"What...?"

The source of the metallic sound was so obvious that everyone's eyes were fixed on Jeong Yeongwoo's chest, where the blade was embedded.

Even Yeongwoo, who was as surprised as anyone, quickly looked down at his chest and realized.

The sword hadn't penetrated the 'Heart of the Poison Dragon.'

'Wow, what's this?'

So, what should he do next?

Smoothly, with a now calm expression, Yeongwoo raised his head, pulled out the sword with his bare hands, and shouted.

"Did you see that? I am the invincible sword, Jeong Yeongwoo!"

[PR/N: Dugu Qiubai?]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 235: The Invincible Sword (2)

Shouting "The Invincible Sword" in the birthplace of martial arts was an absurd act, but its effect was truly extraordinary.

"Oh, my goodness."

"What the...?"

"I definitely saw it pierce his chest."

Perhaps it would have been less surprising if the blade had not penetrated the skin at all.

Everyone has imagined skin so tough that a blade couldn't cut through it.

But...

"Didn't that sound just come from inside his chest?"

"Could it be that his heart is made of steel?"

"Is that the issue here? The blade definitely went through his heart. So why is he still alive?"

Can this truly be called martial prowess?

Regardless, at least hundreds of people witnessed the abilities of the Strongest Sword of Joseon and had no choice but to acknowledge it.

If they didn't want to lose their heads, they had to welcome this demon's entry.

No one understood this better than Zhang Jaham.

He wasn't the only one, though.

"That... that sword..."

Wu Qingjin, one of the Two Evils of Shandong, mumbled while trembling slightly, prompting Yeongwoo to ask.

"What did you say?"

Suddenly, Wu Qingjin knelt on the ground and cupped his fists.

Thud!

"I, Wu Qingjin of the Two Evils of Shandong, greet the invincible swordmaster Jeong Yeongwoo...!"

"...Ugh!"

Yeongwoo had to bite his lip hard enough to draw blood to suppress the laughter that threatened to escape.

Although blood trickled out, the wound healed quickly, thanks to his insane regenerative abilities.

The gash in his chest from Wu Qingjin's blade also healed completely.

"Please stand. You seem much older than me, calling me a master is too much."

As Yeongwoo helped Wu Qingjin to his feet and returned his sword, Zhang Jaham knelt and cupped his fists as well.

"I committed a grave offense! Please forgive me! Have mercy!"

Seeing this, hundreds of Chinese people on the beach, who had been holding their banners, also knelt and shouted in unison.

"Have mercy!"

Where do they even learn this kind of thing?

'One after another, they're causing a scene.'

Yeongwoo glanced around before gesturing for everyone to stand.

"There's no need for mercy. Who could fault Shandong people for trying to protect Shandong?"

"...Is that truly your stance?"

Wu Qingjin looked incredulous, but Zhang Jaham, who had spent a few hours with Yeongwoo in the dungeon, sensed something was off.

However, he couldn't interrupt as Yeongwoo continued.

"But your efforts are no longer needed. You don't have to try to protect Shandong yourselves anymore."

".....?"

Wu Qingjin's expression changed subtly.

"What do you mean by that?"

"What I mean is, from now on, I will protect Shandong."

As Yeongwoo said this, he placed his hand on the scabbard at his waist, causing Wu Qingjin's mouth to drop open.

He finally realized that the Korean in front of him was not a hero but a demon.

“All you need to do to maintain a good relationship with me is.”

Pa!

This time, Yeongwoo held up two fingers.

“Twenty million.”

“.....!”

When Yeongwoo uttered “twenty million,” some Chinese people whispered among themselves, wondering if he was talking about twenty million karma.

A few sharp individuals knelt down again, realizing they were still being threatened.

“Jeong... master... if you still hold a grudge, we can...”

Wu Qingjin began to negotiate, but Yeongwoo cut him off by spreading his chest wide.

“A grudge? Look, my wounds have already healed, as if I never had any grudge to begin with.”

Pa!

As Yeongwoo boldly bared his chest, the Chinese people stepped back, examining where the wound had been.

“It’s true, he’s healed?”

“How did it heal so quickly?”

“Is he immortal...?”

A heart that couldn’t be pierced by a sword, and a level of physical regeneration that seemed beyond human.

Everyone reconfirmed that there was no way to expel this man through martial prowess alone.

“Mr. Jaham.”

“Yes, what is it?”

“Before the reset, what was the population of Shandong?”

Yeongwoo asked, making Zhang Jaham sweat nervously and roll his eyes.

“Uh... it was just over a hundred million.”

“Then a daily defense expense fee of twenty million karma is not excessive at all, is it?”

“Daily... you say?”

“Of course. Each district in Seoul, with a population of at most 500,000, pays 5 million karma as defense costs every day.”

“Oh... I see.”

Zhang Jaham nodded in understanding but muttered inwardly.

‘Damn it. I’ve brought in a thief.’

Strictly speaking, they had avoided the worst-case scenario.

If they hadn’t known the true nature of this marauder in advance, all of Shandong would have been drenched in blood today.

Though it hurt his pride, it was better to pay tribute than to die.

“You should be able to come up with the money quite easily if you opt for the 30,000 karma provision. Just send the money to Incheon by 6 PM every day.”

After conveying this to the Shandong side, Yeongwoo added a supplementary explanation to the leader in Incheon.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

“At 6 PM, someone from Seoul will come to collect the money. You keep 5 million of the 20 million, and give the rest to my person.”

“Y-You’re giving us 5 million?”

Incheon leader Kim Yongkwan’s eyes widened in surprise at the unexpected bonus.

The other Strongest Sword of Incheon were equally astonished.

Yeongwoo spoke calmly.

“After all, you have to meet with the Chinese and receive the money. Consider it your fee. And since it’s a border area, it makes sense to strengthen you more than other regions.”

“T-Thank you, brother!”

The Incheon Strongest Sword were thrilled at the prospect of handling the huge sum coming from China, as if it were a scene from a movie involving secret transactions.

‘Since 5 million is 25% of the total amount, they shouldn’t have any other thoughts. And it’s also prudent to strengthen the border swordsmen in case the Chinese side changes their minds.’

Yeongwoo had started to see things in a broader perspective.

He wasn’t sure if it was because the sums he dealt with had grown so large, or if it was due to the dragon heart he possessed, but he had become bolder.

‘Now the remaining issue is...’

Yeongwoo’s gaze returned to the two strongmen of Shandong.

Even if it was a ‘defense expense fee,’ the tribute couldn’t continue indefinitely.

Sooner or later, discontent would arise within Shandong, and when the shock of ‘The Invincible Sword’ wore off, there would be a coup.

‘Well... even if that happens, I can suppress them again with force, but that would mean losing a buffer zone.’

He couldn’t afford to forget.

Before the reset, China’s population was a staggering 1.42 billion, and Shandong, with its 100 million people, was the only friendly region.

Failing to maintain a cooperative relationship with Shandong would mean that all the selected strongmen from the 1.42 billion people would head straight for Korea.

‘With North Korea almost destroyed, the northern border is virtually open. So I must at least secure this area well.’

After some consideration, Yeongwoo asked the two Shandong strongmen.

“Suddenly paying the defense expense fee might feel like a loss, right? Is there anything I can do to help in return?”

The ‘Two Evils’ exchanged glances before carefully speaking up.

“Well... could we ask for one favor?”

“Of course. Anything.”

When Yeongwoo nodded readily, the Two Evils made a bold request.

“Could you turn Beijing into a sea of blood?”

“What? What kind of sea?”

* * *

Beijing. Also known as Peking.

The capital of China and a well-known wealthy area, it was once a city only accessible to the upper class.

It was akin to Pyongyang in North Korea.

And more importantly, it was home to the Great Hall of the People, a symbol of power.

Yet they were asking to turn such a city into a sea of blood...

‘Is it anger towards the upper class or the party?’

When he was tasked with assassinating Kim Jong-un, it made sense for various reasons, but this request was somewhat puzzling.

“What’s in Beijing?”

When Yeongwoo asked for clarification, Wu Qingjin lowered his voice and replied.

“That person is in Beijing.”

“That person...?”

Yeongwoo still seemed confused.

Zhang Jaham, appearing to have made a decision, approached Yeongwoo.

“It’s Im Dupyeong.”

“What...?”

Im Dupyeong.

[PR/N: Talked with the tl, searched on google for hours, and this is a fucking euphemism for that one president of china who removed term from constitution of china in 2018.]

He was the President of China right before the reset, essentially a dictator.

By removing the term limit clause from the Chinese constitution, he had maintained his position as the top leader for over a decade.

“Im Dupyeong is in Beijing? In what capacity?”

The dictator of 1.42 billion people, Im Dupyeong.

There was no way he survived the extinction vote during the reset.

‘Then is he staying in Beijing as a mutant? Is that even possible?’

Considering the case of Kim Jong-un, it wasn’t entirely impossible.

But for a former dictator to occupy a city alive, he would have had to overpower all the local martial artists.

Yet Shandong Province was intact, and he had even encountered the Dandong Three Swords who had crossed the border from North Korea.

‘So, not all the experts in China were wiped out... Is Im Dupyeong just too strong for anyone to deal with?’

As Yeongwoo pondered various hypotheses to make sense of the situation, Zhang Jaham provided an answer.

“You don’t quite understand, do you?”

“No. If Im Dupyeong is really occupying Beijing, how are you all still alive? If he were a mutant, he would have...”

“He’s not a mutant.”

“What?”

“Im Dupyeong is not a mutant; he’s human.”

“That... what do you mean?”

It was rare for Yeongwoo to look puzzled, but an even rarer event was unfolding in the Chinese capital.

“President Im Dupyeong survived the extinction vote.”

“How is that possible? So, he was a candidate but didn’t get enough votes to be eliminated? That doesn’t make sense.”

“Well, none of us have ever been candidates. But if it happened, it must be possible.”

“Good grief.”

Yeongwoo covered his mouth in shock. It was beyond his imagination.

Even assuming he somehow passed the extinction vote, what about the subsequent individual filter stage?

He would have faced at least tens of millions of killing attempts.

‘No, maybe even hundreds of millions.’

And Im Dupyeong had survived all those attempts.

How many karma points did he have?

‘The world really is vast.’

As Yeongwoo marveled inwardly, Zhang Jaham cleared his throat and continued.

“And there is a crucial reason why you must conquer Beijing.”

“...What is it?”

“We are already paying tribute to Beijing.”

“What, you’ve been sending my money to Beijing?”

[PR/N: Yeah buddy, YOUR money.]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 236: The Invincible Sword (3)

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

The highest practical authority in China before the reset, and this largely remained unchanged after the reset.

Surprisingly, Im Dupyeong, the President and General Secretary of the Central Committee, had survived.

Of course, a President is only meaningful as long as the 'state' exists.

Due to the reset, the entire country had turned into a lawless zone, and dozens of large regions had escaped the Party's control, rendering the title of President Im Dupyeong effectively meaningless.

So Im Dupyeong's policy of regaining power from his base in Beijing was 'One China.'

"One China? Isn't that something they advocated before?"

Yeongwoo tilted his head as he made a remark, to which Zhang Jaham agreed.

"Yes. But now it means something different. Because China is no longer one."

It's not even a federal state.

Even in Shandong Province, relatively close to Beijing, they were trying to kill the President using an expert from Korea.

In a way, the reset had given the people their freedom.

Before the reset, the idea of killing the nation's leader was unthinkable.

"Is Im Dupyeong that strong? So strong that multiple regions can't do anything?"

"That we don't know."

"Hmm...?"

"We only know that he exists; we've never met him directly."

"What? So, you're paying tribute to someone you've never even met?"

Yeongwoo asked incredulously, and this time Wu Qingjin spoke while looking south.

"The ones who notified us of the collection are the members of the Central Politburo. They are Im Dupyeong's hands and feet."

And according to Wu Qingjin, they couldn't last even three rounds against them.

Thus, it was clear that Im Dupyeong, who commanded them, was the strongest expert in Chinese history.

‘If nothing else, that much is certain.’

Yeongwoo also agreed with Wu Qingjin to a large extent.

Even without considering the martial skills of those so-called Politburo members, it was clear that Im Dupyeong was strong.

[PR/N: Politburo is the principal policymaking committee of a communist party.]

‘It’s a mystery why he wasn’t filtered out in the first phase of the vote, and even more so in the second phase. How did he survive all those assassinations? Did he really have hundreds of millions of karma points?’

If that were the case, then as Wu Qingjin said, Im Dupyeong would be the strongest expert in history.

Imagine blocking countless assassinations and taking the remaining karma points to the exchange.

Im Dupyeong might have started with hundreds of millions of karma from day one of the reset.

‘None of this makes any sense.’

Even Yeongwoo, who had visited dungeons on alien planets multiple times, couldn’t fathom the background of Im Dupyeong.

“So, how much tribute have you been paying to Beijing?”

Yeongwoo asked about the tribute amount, and Wu Qingjin suddenly hesitated, looking at Yeongwoo nervously.

“That is...”

“How much is it?”

When Yeongwoo slightly raised his voice, Zhang Jaham kneeled again as if to share the damage.

“Thirty million per day, Master Jeong!”

“Man, these guys have such cheap knees.”

Thirty million per day.

That's ten million more than the defense expense fee Yeongwoo had demanded.

'No wonder they were willing to pay up so easily.'

There was indeed a reason.

From Shandong's perspective, it was a ten million gain to make a pact with Yeongwoo.

"So, you asked me to do something about Beijing just because of money."

Yeongwoo said this with a somewhat disappointed look, and Zhang Jaham, still kneeling, made a fist and spoke.

"That's not it! Im Dupyeong is a dictator... We would have had to rebel against him someday."

"But you said you couldn't last even three rounds against the Politburo members, right? How can you be sure I can defeat someone who commands such monsters?"

It's a hard question to counter.

But the two masters of Shandong overcame this conundrum with a touch of romanticism.

"Invincible Sword...!"

"We believe that Master Jeong can surely do it!"

Their gazes were fixed on the 'Golden Trail' shining behind Yeongwoo.

Not only was Yeongwoo himself at an invincible level, but even the automatic hunting greatsword he wielded appeared to be a marvel to the Chinese.

Without understanding its mechanism, it seemed no different from swordsmanship performed with telekinesis.

In other words, Yeongwoo was now a superhuman who had reached the realms of invincible swordsmanship, automatic healing, and an immortal body.

Therefore, the two masters of Shandong had no choice but to bet that Yeongwoo could take Im Dupyeong's head.

'What started as just wanting to pull some foreign currency has blown up into something huge.'

Yeongwoo scratched his chin.

Of course, if Im Dupyeong was really alive and still enforcing 'One China,' he would eventually become an opponent Yeongwoo had to face.

He was, after all, a thief who had dared to plunder China's assets.

Thanks to the doctrine of territoriality, his presence was already significant enough that Im Dupyeong wouldn't just sit back and watch.

"First, let's cut off that tribute. When do they come to collect it?"

When Yeongwoo asked this, Zhang Jaham bowed his head.

"There's no fixed time, but... they usually come between five and six in the afternoon."

"Hmm."

It seemed that they started collecting after solving all the mutant problems.

'This complicates the routes a bit.'

Yeongwoo blinked as he quickly spun his thoughts.

Today's essential task was to return to Gangnam before 1 PM to deal with the mutants.

And if possible, he had to inform about the defense expense fee issue of Shandong Province beforehand.

He needed to get the money through a trustworthy person.

'Then I'll have to return to Shandong Province around 5 PM to meet the collection team. Looks like I'll have to collect today's defense expense fee myself.'

However, this was contingent upon being able to subdue the collection team without any issues.

Coincidentally, it seemed he would have his skills tested from the very day the agreement was made.

"....."

As Yeongwoo calmly scanned the hundreds of people with fearful faces by the seaside, Wu Qingjin cautiously opened his mouth.

“Master, what are your thoughts? We can’t pay tribute to both sides. 50 million is far too large an amount.”

His implication was clear: if Yeongwoo did not intend to fight Im Dupyeong, it would be difficult to pay the defense expense fee.

And this was, of course, a reasonable statement.

If peace could not be maintained, why should they pay the defense expense fee?

So Yeongwoo said,

“Don’t worry. From today onwards, you only need to pay me 20 million karma.”

“Oh.....!”

“Really?”

A large thief instead of a colossal one.

Nevertheless, the two masters of Shandong couldn’t hide their relief.

Politically and financially, it was better to make an agreement with Korea’s Strongest Sword to deal with their own dictator.

“Then, when will the decisive battle with Im Dupyeong be.....?”

Wu Qingjin, already eager for the outcome of the agreement, asked, and Yeongwoo shook his head.

“If Im Dupyeong truly survived the vote, his martial prowess must be immense. So, I need to meet him at my full strength.”

First, he needed to handle the mutants in Seoul and then think carefully.

Could he surely win against Im Dupyeong?

‘I only have one life, so I must be cautious.’

As Yeongwoo was steeling his resolve and taking a deep breath, an unexpected notification flashed across his vision.

Flash!

「Our national title, Strongest Sword of Gimhae, has been stolen!」

“...Huh?”

Having only ever stolen others' assets, this was Yeongwoo's first time seeing a notification about being stolen from.

“What? Wait, Gimhae means...”

Gimhae. In Korea, the name “Gimhae” refers to Gimhae County in Busan Metropolitan City.

It happened to be the time when ‘Pangaea’ was active as well.

Something major had occurred in Busan.

And soon.

Taang!

A loud warning sound rang, and for the first time since the reset, an alarm of territoriality for South Korea was triggered.

『Territorialism: South Korea』

| The assets of South Korea have been stolen! The location of the invader is now revealed. Track them down and punish them.

* * *

At the same time, in Cheongsapo, Haeundae-gu, Busan.

The Strongest Sword of Busan, Kang Gyowon, sensed that something was seriously wrong.

Not just because the head of the Strongest Sword of Gimhae, Park Seongjoon, had been cut off in one blow.

“Waaah!”

“Kyahhh!”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

The difference in individual combat power wasn't that significant, but the sheer number of enemies was overwhelming.

“How did they gather so many?”

Even the mere sight of nearly thirty swordmasters and Strongest Swords from various regions of Japan was staggering.

In contrast, the total number of the Southern Alliance gathered today was only eleven.

The Southern Alliance thought they were well-prepared, but Japan had come ready for a full-scale war.

Especially, the giant who had just beheaded Gimhae’s head was imposing.

“Haaaah!”

This man, standing at least 2 meters tall, easily beheaded Donggu’s Strongest Sword who rushed in for revenge and locked eyes with Gyowon.

『Yamaguchi Swordmaster』

‘A swordmaster. So that’s a higher title. The swordsmen are relatively weaker.’

It was evident just by seeing Ulsan’s Strongest Sword, Kim Chaena, battling three swordsmen nearby.

Of course, Ulsan was known to be stronger than Gimhae or Donggu’s Strongest Sword, but could the difference be that vast?

‘If she fights that swordmaster, Ulsan won’t last long. And more importantly....’

Gyowon glanced around the darkened Cheongsapo, filled with the shadows of Japanese swordsmen.

Swordmaster aside, they were vastly outnumbered.

Staying here would be suicide.

So Gyowon ultimately decided.

“Retreat! Withdraw from the battlefield immediately!”

He made the call for retreat, even though he was still staring down the Yamaguchi Swordmaster.

It felt like his pride was being crushed under a cigarette, but it was unavoidable.

“What? Retreat? Do you even know what that means?”

As expected, Kim Chaena, who was entangled with the swordsmen, gritted her teeth and asked.

Retreating from Cheongsapo meant immediately falling back to Haeundae.

Essentially, retreating from here meant giving up Haeundae.

However, Gyowon did not reverse his decision.

Because—

Slash!

The troublesome swordmaster suddenly shifted his gaze towards Kim Chaena and grasped his sword tightly.

‘He’s moving again...!’

Seeing this, Gyowon dashed in and pulled Kim Chaena out of the battlefield.

“Meaning? Staying here will only mean dying meaninglessly!”

Gyowon nearly crushed Chaena’s forearm as he dragged her, attempting to get out of Cheongsapo.

But—

Snap!

Kim Chaena shook off Gyowon’s hand with incredible strength and pierced an approaching swordsman with the tip of her spear.

Thud!

“Can’t you see? We have no escape route. Where do you think we’re going?”

Indeed, the rear of Cheongsapo was already occupied by Japanese swordsmen.

Given their numbers, forming a siege wasn’t difficult.

“Just be prepared to kill as many as possible. Someone will come to reclaim this place eventually.”

She suggested reducing the number of Japanese forces for any possible reinforcements.

“Damn it.”

Unlike Chaena, who had resolved herself, Gyowon had been planning for future battles.

He looked around with a grim expression.

The messengers dispatched before the land masses connected would have barely reached major cities by now.

Even if they succeeded in persuading the Strongest Swords of those cities, by the time they arrived here...

“You’re right. Reducing their numbers is the best we can do.”

Finally, when Gyowon’s voice lost its will to survive, Chaena smirked bitterly.

At that moment—

Clang!

The powerful swordmaster, who had been slicing through the Strongest Swords of the Southern Alliance, stood before them, looking back and forth between them.

“Why didn’t you gather more forces? It should have been well-known that today the lands would connect. Fairly speaking.”

This was not just a matter of combat strength but also a taunt about their preparedness.

Kim Chaena furrowed her brow, pointing her spear at the man’s face.

“You’re an island, but we’re a peninsula, you idiot. We’re surrounded by enemies.”

Japan’s population was also more than twice that of Korea.

Even taking that into account, it was clear the enemy had meticulously prepared for this invasion.

In the world after the reset, where asymmetrical forces were rare, the side with more swordsmen would inevitably win the war.

‘Damn, we really lost this. We should have requested nationwide help earlier.’

Just as Gyowon clenched his teeth, his pride stung by the swordmaster’s provocation, a strong wind blew from behind him.

Whoosh!

Kim Chaena, who had been glaring at the Yamaguchi swordmaster, saw his pupils suddenly dilate in surprise.

“What, what’s happening?”

Unable to turn around due to keeping the swordmaster in check, Chaena asked, and soon a corpse flew in from behind.

Thud, splat!

The body, as heavy as a sack of rice, crashed to the ground with a large hole in its forehead.

It was a Japanese swordsman.

“Oh...!”

Whoever it was, they were an ally from within the Korean Peninsula.

Even if they weren’t an ally, it didn’t matter.

As long as they were an enemy of Japan, it was enough.

“Who, who is it...?”

Gripping her spear tightly, Kim Chaena glanced sideways.

She saw another spear blade glimmer in her peripheral vision, accompanied by a voice that sounded like it had just passed through puberty.

“Ah, not here either.”

Unable to contain her curiosity, Chaena turned her head.

“Who, who are you looking for?”

A towering high school student, at least two meters tall, filled her vision.

“Huh...?”

Chaena’s eyes widened in surprise.

The massive spear wielder surveyed the battlefield with a troubled expression.

“Well, if he’s still alive, maybe the Seoul’s Strongest Sword...? But he’s not here, so...”

Sighing, the spear wielder continued.

“He’s either dead or neglecting his duty.”

At this, Gyowon, who had been staring at the corpse on the ground, asked the spear wielder.

“Excuse me, but may I ask who you are and where you come from?”

He asked this because he saw no title above the spear wielder’s head.

The unknown spearman looked around at the Japanese swordsmen surrounding them, then violently thrust his red spear into the ground.

Thud!

“The Japanese invaders have attacked, and many towns have fallen. The people, unaccustomed to fighting, could not withstand their blades.”

“What...?”

“1592-1598, the Imjin War. I still remember the passage because it was a question on last week’s exam.”

Then, leaving the members of the Southern Alliance behind, he took a step forward alone.

“Allow me to introduce myself. I am Kang Yechan, the Strongest Spear of Gyeongbuk. And I am an anti-Japanese advocate.”

[PR/N: OFFICIAL RACISM?]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 237: The Invincible Sword (4)

“The Strongest Spear of North Gyeongsang...?”

“Is there such a thing as the Strongest Spear?”

“No way. Titles are fixed.”

The Strongest Sword of the Southern Union murmured among themselves.

Not only was this the first time they had heard of the title ‘Strongest Spear,’ but also the fact that the person before them didn’t have anything indicating his title above his head was odd.

Of course, they couldn’t question the person who had come to save them.

And this was also the position of Ulsan’s Strongest Sword, Kim Chaena, who prided herself as a master of the spear.

“So... you’re saying you’re from North Gyeongsang?”

She asked cautiously.

The self-proclaimed Strongest Spear of North Gyeongsang, Kang Yechan, grinned widely and replied.

“Yes, I’m a direct disciple of the Strongest Sword of Gumi, Jeong Yeongwoo.”

“Oh... I see.”

Chaena forced an awkward smile.

She had responded out of politeness since he proudly mentioned his master, but she had never heard of the name before.

‘And Gumi... isn’t that a rather small city?’

A seemingly unremarkable spearman who followed someone called the Strongest Sword of Gumi.

“.....”

Chaena looked at the tall high school student skeptically.

He seemed to have enhanced his physique with karma, but the lack of any title continued to bother her.

‘From what I saw earlier, he doesn’t seem to lack skill.’

He had killed a Japanese swordsman with a single strike, indicating he wasn’t ordinary.

Even if that strike had been purely ‘luck.’

However, there were still nearly thirty Japanese swordsmen present, and particularly...

『Yamaguchi Sword Emperor』

Among them was the Yamaguchi Sword Emperor, who had already cut down two of the Union's Strongest Sword.

'It's really great that he came to risk his life for us... but can he actually win this fight?'

No matter how high his abilities were, a nameless person with no title couldn't possibly defeat someone as skilled as the Sword Emperor.

Nameless warriors couldn't receive the combat guides from regional swordsmanship.

As dozens of swordsmen surrounding them exuded killing intent and readied their weapons, Chaena asked with a desperate tone.

"Are more people coming?"

"No. It's just me. There aren't many people left in North Gyeongsang."

"....."

Chaena's expression twisted in dismay.

"What about your master, the Strongest Sword of Gumi?"

"If he's not here, I don't know. He might still be in Seoul, or..."

Dead.

Chaena recalled what this spearman had said when he first appeared.

He mentioned that the person he was looking for was either the Strongest Sword of Seoul by now or had died.

'Then he must be dead. I haven't heard of a Strongest Sword of Seoul or even a Strongest Sword of Gumi.'

Despair clouded her vision.

Meanwhile, the Yamaguchi Sword Emperor pointed his sword at Yechan with a sneering smile.

"You people are truly pathetic. The Strongest Sword of Busan hiding behind a child."

He was referring to Kang Gyowon, the most prominent figure among them, the Strongest Sword of Busan.

“You bastard.”

Gyowon growled and charged forward, but he was stopped before he could get far.

Yechan grabbed his shoulder.

“Stay put, old man.”

“Ugh!”

The immense strength he felt on his shoulder was shocking.

Gyowon, who like Chaena didn’t expect much from the self-proclaimed Strongest Spear, was taken aback.

‘What the... why is this high schooler so strong?’

He didn’t stop because Yechan restrained him; he was forcibly held back by the overwhelming strength.

Watching this, the Yamaguchi Sword Emperor rushed forward, swinging his sword.

“Fools. I’ll take on both of you!”

Tatat!

True to his reputation as someone who had cut down the Strongest Sword of Ulsan and Dong-gu in a single strike, his movements were formidable.

And most importantly...

『Territorial Sovereignty: Republic of Korea』

| Assets of the Republic of Korea have been stolen! The intruder’s location is now revealed. Pursue and punish them.

The red sword-shaped mark of territorial sovereignty above his head was infuriating.

Especially for 19-year-old Kang Yechan, who harbored the strongest anti-Japanese sentiment.

“I, Kang Yechan, the Strongest Spear of North Gyeongsang, will judge your sins today!”

Swoosh!

As Yechan raised his spear and took a combat stance, the Yamaguchi Sword Emperor momentarily laughed.

But only for a moment.

Whooosh!

Black energy surged from Yechan's entire body, his hair flaring up like flames, leaving no one in the crowd able to laugh.

"What... what is that?"

"Is he transforming?"

The Southern Union was terrified by the sight of their 'ally' turning into a black demon, while the Japanese swordsmen reacted differently.

"A yokai...?"

"A... a yokai!"

They called Yechan a yokai and began to back away.

But amidst this, the leader of the invading force, the Yamaguchi Sword Emperor, showed a different reaction.

"Don't be fooled by appearances! He's still human!"

True to his role as the vanguard, he plunged his sword towards Yechan, whose body was now blackened.

Swiish!

The sword that had easily torn apart the Strongest Sword of southern Korea now aimed at the nameless spearman.

'Hmm, quite fast.'

Yechan quickly lowered his body and swung his spear from below upwards.

Swish!

The Sword Emperor, who was thrusting his sword at Yechan, was lifted off the ground by the spear.

“You...!”

Contrary to the Sword Emperor’s expectation of a direct clash of blades, Yechan used his long reach to lift him into the air.

Like a rhinoceros beetle.

Whoosh!

The Yamaguchi Sword Emperor, momentarily airborne, tried to regain his posture.

However.

Swish!

Yechan, as if waiting for this moment, thrust his spear, giving the Sword Emperor no chance to recover.

Thud!

In an instant, the spearhead pierced the Sword Emperor’s chest.

Splash!

Blood spurted from the Sword Emperor’s back, splattering the surrounding swordsmen with red dots.

Drip!

At this, the remaining Japanese swordsmen, already intimidated by the bizarre appearance of the spearman, saw their will shrink to the size of a pea.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

The moment their leader was killed in one strike, they turned from invaders into fleeing enemies.

Moreover.

“Take my spear, you Japanese bastards...!”

With newfound confidence after killing the Sword Emperor in one blow, Yechan began to rampage.

Swish!

Charging at the remaining swordsmen, still with the Sword Emperor's body impaled on his spear.

"The... the Emperor...!"

"You insolent bastard!"

This was a great provocation for the Japanese, who held the honor of their leaders in high regard, but the problem was.

Smash!

The martial prowess of the spearman, who was desecrating their leader, was extraordinarily high.

About a dozen swordsmen attacked to retrieve the Emperor's body, but all became corpses in less than five exchanges.

Thanks to this, what remained in Cheongsapo was now...

'Half the number compared to the beginning. This means... there's a chance of victory!'

Kang Gyowon, seeing the noticeably reduced number of Japanese swordsmen surrounding them, gripped his sword tightly.

Honestly, the monstrous spearman seemed capable of sweeping up the rest by himself, but Gyowon had a gut feeling that letting him do so would be a mistake.

No matter how much of an enemy they were, someone who could desecrate a corpse without a second thought couldn't be in their right mind.

If the spearman resolved this battle alone, who knew what he might demand afterward.

"Let's fight too! After all, this is our territory!"

Gyowon shouted courageously, lifting his sword, and Yechan, still hunting swordsmen with the Emperor's body on his spear, turned to look at him.

Then, in a bandit-like tone, he warned.

"Don't try to join in and get hurt. If you're bored, prepare your ransom in advance."

"R... ransom? What do you mean by that?"

Gyowon asked, bewildered, and Yechan's fearsome face, shrouded in black flames, turned cold.

"If it weren't for me, Busan would have fallen, right? So you owe me your lives."

"Wh... what kind of logic is that? Even among fellow Koreans...!"

Gyowon protested, emphasizing nationalism, and Yechan pointed his finger to the sky.

"My master would have done the same. I'm just doing what I was taught. If you don't like it, beat me in a fight or bring my master here."

"Who is this master of yours...!"

* * *

At the same time, on the outskirts of Yongin.

"Huh? What's this?"

Startled by the Territorialism Mark, Yeongwoo hurriedly stopped Negwig on its tracks.

-Screech!

The mark that had been clearly visible in his sight just moments ago had suddenly disappeared.

"Where did the mark go?"

Yeongwoo turned around and asked, but neither the Golden Goblin nor Pofu Tenta could provide any useful answers.

"Is it dead?"

Yeongwoo began to speculate on his own.

"How many alarms went off earlier? I think there were two."

Gijang and Dong-gu.

Yeongwoo remembered correctly; there had indeed been two alarms.

"So, there were some strong opponents on the Japanese side, but they must have been killed by someone."

Since the Territorialism hadn't reactivated, it meant there had been no additional casualties on their side.

'It's frustrating not having a communication network. If there aren't any major issues in Busan, it's better for me to head back to Seoul.'

Busan was a concern, but by 1 PM, mutants were expected to appear all over Seoul.

'Hmm.'

The current time was around 10 AM.

With about three hours left before the mutants appeared, Yeongwoo couldn't be sure he'd make it back to Seoul on time if he rushed to Busan now.

Negwig couldn't maintain a full sprint indefinitely, after all.

'Busan seems to be either in a stalemate or in a winnable situation, so leaving it alone could be an option.'

But the fact that the opponent was Japan made Yeongwoo uneasy.

Imagine if Japan occupied the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula because he left Busan unattended and then started advancing north.

'...That can't be allowed.'

So, what should he do?

Yeongwoo naturally looked up at the sky.

This time, it had nothing to do with Dogo's advertisement; it was purely personal.

But what if he sincerely prayed for a solution?

Maybe the advertisers would offer some help.

'It feels like I'm asking for too much to make the impossible happen.'

Despite thinking this, Yeongwoo had already spread his arms towards the sky.

He was ready to pronounce 'Dogo' in a transcendent language if necessary.

Just as Dogo, the universal weapon brand, was on the verge of being reduced to a mere errand service in this cosmic scale...

Flash!

A signal came from the sky first.

“Oh?”

A small token shot down in front of Yeongwoo’s chest along with a streak of light.

“What’s this?”

When Yeongwoo picked up the mysterious token, a tooltip appeared before his eyes.

「Zargal Cross-section Token」 – One-way ticket

【You can board the Guppy Express.】

|Fee: 13 million Karma

“.....!”

Upon seeing this, Yeongwoo immediately understood.

Dogo, for the sake of its corporate image, couldn’t intervene directly, so they were providing indirect assistance.

‘If I really want to go to Busan, they’re saying to use my own money, not the company’s.’

And the price was...

‘13 million for a one-way trip.’

Not a round trip, just a one-way ride on the Guppy Express cost a whopping 13 million Karma.

* Available Karma: 23,538,500

Yeongwoo currently had 23.5 million Karma.

‘Are they crazy? If I take this, I’ll only have 10 million left.’

But to save the citizens of Busan from the Japanese blades... what did money matter?

Pop!

Ultimately, Yeongwoo held the token high in the air and shouted.

“Is it okay if I pay once I arrive in Busan? I’ll make the money quickly and pay you back!”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 238: The Twin Evils of Joseon (1)

[TL/N: The title actually says ‘Twin Peaks’ but i took the creative liberty to name it ‘Twin Evils’ so don’t hate me hehe.]

The price of a life.

How can anyone dare to put a price on a human life? But in this world, it was entirely possible.

‘If you’re really about to die, you’d pay anything to stay alive...’

For Yechan, this was a valuable lesson and experience.

‘Other people must feel the same way. If you’ve saved someone’s life, you deserve some compensation.’

And the person who taught him this was:

“How much of your 170,000 karma are you willing to give me for your life?”

Jeong Yeongwoo07.

The first adult Yechan met in this reset world, and the man who first demanded a life price from him.

In hindsight, it wasn’t normal for Jeong Yeongwoo to be extorting money from a high school student on the first day of the reset.

But when it mattered most, he made a remarkably magnanimous choice.

He chose the “30,000 karma supply,” an option no one had selected before, over the mutation eradication reward.

‘Giving up 3 million karma on the first day of the reset... Could I have done that?’

Yechan had only spent a day with Jeong Yeongwoo, the Strongest Sword of Gumi.

A day is far too short to truly know someone.

Yet, Yechan considered Jeong Yeongwoo his teacher because of the Golden Ratio incident.

Whether intentional or not, Jeong Yeongwoo always succeeded in achieving good results.

‘I want to be like him. He seems weak but isn’t actually weak, and though he appears impulsive, he sees farther ahead than anyone.’

Maybe he was idolizing him too much.

But it didn’t matter.

To Yechan, Jeong Yeongwoo was now an ideal figure.

A textbook on how to survive in this world, the epitome of a survivor.

“

Thinking of the now distant figure of Jeong Yeongwoo, Yechan stabbed his spear into the back of the Japanese swordsman crawling on the ground.

Thud!

The man let out a groan and collapsed, his face buried in the dirt.

‘My first kill is a Japanese. It feels somewhat significant.’

Yechan looked around at the now quiet surroundings, having just finished off the last of his enemies.

A battle against thirty opponents.

Normally, it would be an impossible feat, but not for Yechan.

He had monopolized the mutants in most of North Gyeongsang and parts of Chungcheongbuk-do and Chungcheongnam-do, making his overall stats immense.

And the number of merchants he had encountered was incomparable to other Strongest Swords.

‘Just five days of intense training made such a difference? There don’t seem to be many strong people around.’

He had been facing ten mutants a day, almost never encountering another person.

So he had an unrealistic view of other Strongest Swords, but today, that illusion shattered.

Slash, stab!

Yechan silently went around stabbing the corpses of the Japanese with his spear, causing Kim Chaena, who had been watching in a daze, to ask cautiously.

“What... what are you doing?”

“Confirming they’re dead. What are we going to do with these bodies? We can’t bury them on our land, so we should burn them or something, right?”

“What...?”

Chaena was taken aback by the unexpected suggestion.

“We can’t just leave the invaders’ bodies here.”

It was unthinkable to bury the invaders’ bodies in their precious land, so Yechan suggested burning them or disposing of them in the sea.

“Well, that’s true, but...”

“Burning all these bodies?”

The Strongest Swords of the Southern Alliance looked troubled.

Wham!

Suddenly, a loud noise came from the sky.

“What is it now?”

“Could it be reinforcements?”

“The sound is coming from the sky.”

As someone pointed out, the mysterious noise was indeed coming from the sky.

Given the current situation, it couldn't be an airplane, so logically, it was either a mutant appearance or something extraterrestrial.

'But it's not time for mutants to appear, and it's even less likely for a merchant to show up now.'

Even Yechan, now self-proclaimed the Strongest Spear in North Gyeongsang, looked up at the sky with a tense expression.

He could handle any enemy on the ground, but an unknown presence descending from the sky was unpredictable.

'What's coming? Did Japan have something more?'

Given the circumstances, he could only assume it was a follow-up unit from Japan.

So Yechan,

Thud!

He gripped his spear firmly and took a throwing stance, ready to intercept whatever it was.

And shortly after,

Boom!

A massive cloud in the sky burst open, and from within,

Wham!

A clunky machine, resembling a mine elevator, fell.

"Wha—?"

"What, what is that?"

"Japan! Isn't it the Japanese military?"

Although they still didn't know exactly what it was, everyone could see that the elevator was filled with something, so naturally, all eyes turned to Yechan.

He was the one who had decided to collect a price for their lives.

Now was the time for him to earn that money.

“Quickly, do something!”

“Hurry up! The Strongest Spear of Gyeongbuk!”

The people of the Southern Alliance urged Yechan, calling out a title that didn’t even exist.

At this moment, Yechan:

“Hoo.”

He held his breath and aimed the tip of his spear at the problematic elevator.

And finally,

Whoosh!

He swung his right arm strongly, sending the spear flying.

Swoosh!

The red spear flew with a sound like a fighter jet taking off.

Having seen Yechan single-handedly slaughter thirty Japanese soldiers, no one in the Southern Alliance doubted the power of the spear.

Even Yechan didn’t think his attack would fail.

However,

Swoosh...!

Yechan’s spear, which made a fierce sound as it pierced the air, suddenly vanished as soon as it touched the inside of the elevator.

It neither pierced through the elevator nor bounced off.

“...?”

“What? Where did the spear go?”

While everyone was looking around for the suddenly disappeared spear, Yechan alone broke out in a cold sweat.

‘...No way. This can’t be happening.’

People thought the spear had disappeared, but it only looked that way because the elevator was falling rapidly.

In reality...

‘Did someone actually catch my spear? From inside?’

As Yechan stared in disbelief, the mysterious elevator crashed into the middle of Cheongsapo.

Boom!

And from inside, enormous aliens with reddish skin began to pour out.

Rumble...

The sight of them rolling out like boulders made the Strongest Swords of the Southern Alliance instinctively step back, including Yechan.

“.....!”

He had to struggle to keep his right foot, which was unconsciously trying to retreat, planted in place.

But still, his primary weapon, the spear, was inside that elevator.

‘I’m confident I can fight better than anyone without a weapon...’

But that was only against other humans.

Especially since inside that elevator was an expert who had easily caught the spear he threw.

Was it just luck?

No. It couldn’t be.

‘Damn it.’

Just as Yechan was about to ask Kim Chaena, the Strongest Swordswoman of Ulsan, to lend him her spear,

Step!

He heard a different kind of footstep from inside the elevator.

A sound like someone walking barefoot on the floor.

“Uh...?”

Yechan, sensing a familiar sound, turned his head back toward the elevator, and soon an unexpected voice came from within.

“Is this the only weapon you have?”

A human voice.

No, it was a voice that couldn't be described simply as human.

“...Huh? Huh?”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

As Yechan, almost in a daze, took one hesitant step after another toward the elevator, the figure inside finally emerged.

Holding the red spear that Yechan had thrown in his left hand.

Step!

A man, half-naked except for the pants he was wearing.

However, the title above his head overwhelmed everyone present.

『Strongest Sword of Joseon』

“Joseon...?”

“What kind of title is that?”

The Strongest Swords of the Southern Alliance widened their eyes.

Some of them were already cautiously putting away their drawn weapons.

Having confirmed that the Strongest Sword of Joseon was holding the weapon thrown by the self-proclaimed Strongest Spear of Gyeongbuk, Kang Yechan, they quickly realized that someone far more skilled had appeared.

Even bringing along aliens who were clearly not ordinary beings.

Meanwhile, Yechan:

“Ah, Uncle? Is it really you?”

Still in disbelief, he continued to approach the elevator.

And then,

-Kwaah!

The reddish aliens, the Mon-O Warriors, who had previously jumped out of the elevator, blocked his way.

“...?”

Yechan glared at them momentarily, but the Mon-O Warriors responded with unyielding, rock-like gazes.

They really felt like literal rocks, or more accurately, immense walls.

It felt like not only would he not be able to defeat these guys in a fight, but he wouldn't even be able to scratch them with his spear.

‘Are these guys the uncle's bodyguards?’

If so, what kind of being had “uncle” become to command such monsters?

“Let him through. He's a very close colleague of mine.”

When Yeongwoo, standing in front of the elevator, said this, the Mon-O Warriors, who had exuded a paralyzing sense of intimidation just moments before, stepped back and made way.

Rumble.

At this moment, Yechan realized.

In just five days, Uncle had ascended to a level that ordinary Strongest Swords couldn't even dream of reaching.

‘I knew he wasn't an ordinary person...!’

Indeed, he was someone worthy of being a mentor and role model.

“Uncle!”

Finally, Yechan ran down the wide path opened by the Mon-O Warriors to his mentor in this insane world, Jeong Yeongwoo.

Tap tap!

Yeongwoo also spread his arms to welcome the boy who had been his first companion.

“Oh, yeah...!”

Clap!

With his arms wide open, Yeongwoo rolled his eyes in thought.

Exhausted from the journey, he couldn't exactly remember the boy's name who was approaching with such a happy face.

‘Chan? What was it? Ohchan?’

But the boy was already right in front of him, so Yeongwoo decided to go with it.

Hug!

He tightly embraced Yechan, letting half of the name drift away in the air.

“...Chan! You're alive!”

“Uncle...!”

It was an emotional reunion between mentor and student.

“What have you been up to all this time? What is all this?”

Yechan asked, looking around at the elevator and the Mon-O Warriors, and Yeongwoo scratched his chin.

“Well... A lot of things happened.”

Then, as if he had just remembered, he handed the spear he was holding in his left hand back to Yechan.

“What about you? What have you been doing? You've gotten incredibly strong.”

Yeongwoo was equally surprised by Yechan's state.

When he had caught the spear earlier, he had sensed that Yechan's total ability level was a staggering 7,000 through his sensory deprivation technique.

Judging by the power of the flying spear, it was clear that his strength was abnormally high.

This meant Yechan's average ability level far exceeded Yeongwoo's.

"Well, I..."

Yechan couldn't hide his smile after being praised by his mentor.

However, their conversation couldn't continue.

-Kwaah!

One of the Mon-O Warriors approached Yeongwoo and tapped his shoulder with a blunt finger.

Yechan immediately furrowed his brows and glared at the Mon-O Warrior.

"What is this, rude fellow?"

Even though they were aliens unaware of Earth's customs, how dare they touch his revered mentor's body without permission?

"What are these guys?"

Yechan, showing his displeasure, asked his mentor, the Strongest Sword of Joseon, Jeong Yeongwoo, who covered his mouth and whispered to Yechan.

"Be quiet!"

"...What?"

"If you don't want to get beaten up by them, stay quiet."

"What? Aren't they your subordinates?"

"No. I hitched a ride on credit."

"On credit?"

Yechan, startled, inadvertently raised his voice, and Yeongwoo grabbed his shoulder tightly.

Then he glanced at the people of the Southern Alliance, who were staring at them with frightened faces.

“We need to collect some money from those people to pay for the fare.”

“Fare...?”

Yechan looked at the Mon-O Warriors and then at the elevator that had fallen from the sky.

Then he sighed deeply.

“How much is the fare?”

“13... no, 15.”

“150000 Karma? What’s the problem...?”

“Of course, it’s in the tens of millions.”

“What? So, 15 million?”

At the unimaginable fare, Yechan exclaimed loudly.

In contrast, Yeongwoo responded with a puzzled expression.

“Why? There are so many Strongest Swords here. If you collect 1.5 million per person...”

“No, that’s not it.”

Yechan scratched his chin and whispered to Yeongwoo.

“I’m supposed to collect some money too. Isn’t double-charging a bit too much?”

“What? What money are you collecting? What did you do?”

Yeongwoo jumped at the mention of money, and Yechan pointed to the corpses of the Japanese soldiers scattered around with his finger.

“Oh.”

Yeongwoo immediately understood the situation.

Then he asked in a businesslike tone.

“How much were you planning to collect?”

“Well, 3 million...?”

“30? That’s too much for a public service. Just collect 15 million today. Add my fare, and the total will be 30 million.”

Yeongwoo cautiously showed three fingers near his belly button, indicating ‘30’, and this time, Yechan furrowed his brows.

“What are you talking about? I fought 30-to-1 and came all the way here. How can I take only 15 million?”

“How much do you make a day? No, how much tax do you pay?”

“Tax?”

At the word ‘tax,’ Yechan faltered, and Yeongwoo, sensing an advantage, grinned wickedly.

“If you’re unsure, take half today. In return, I’ll show you the world of an interstellar entrepreneur.”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 239: The Twin Evils of Joseon (2)

The cost that the Southern Union had to pay for calling upon the two masters to defeat the Wokou was 30 million karma.

[PR/N: Wokou/Wako means Japanese pirates, it sounds cooler this way.]

Of course, the people of the Southern Union had never agreed to this cost.

It was a figure arbitrarily set by the two scoundrels who would take the money.

In fact, strictly speaking, Yeongwoo hadn’t even fought the Wokou.

“That man didn’t even fight... So why should we pay?”

“Isn’t this basically robbery? Thirty million is no joke!”

The Strongest Swords of the Southern Union whispered among themselves, expressing their dissatisfaction.

Hearing their murmurs, Yeongwoo stepped forward and shouted,

“Thirty million!”

“...?”

“Of course, it’s a large sum. But is it larger than the lives of the citizens of Busan?”

“Well, even so, that’s just too much...”

When some still seemed unable to accept this, Yeongwoo changed his strategy.

“The thirty million you will spend is not just a one-time survival cost.”

“Excuse me?”

“What do you mean?”

Everyone tilted their heads at his unexpected claim.

Wasn’t this money the reward for Yechan stopping the thirty or so Wokou?

But Yeongwoo’s argument was entirely different.

“This money ensures that you survive twice.”

“Twice?”

“How does it become twice?”

Some wondered if he meant they would be killed if they didn’t pay, but Yeongwoo wasn’t that much of a villain.

Though he was certainly cunning enough.

“Half of the thirty million you will pay is for them.”

When Yeongwoo said “them,” pointing to the Mon-O warriors, all eyes turned to them.

-Growl.

Standing three meters tall, these red-skinned rock-like aliens were heavily armored and wielding large clubs, looking like space thugs.

“While stopping the enraged Chinese in Incheon, we realized the Japanese were invading. But as you know, the distance between Incheon and Busan is enormous.”

Thus, Yeongwoo explained, they had no choice but to borrow external, or rather extraterrestrial, help to fly over.

“Anyway, the important thing is this.”

Bam!

Yeongwoo pointed to the lift lying on the ground.

“If you don’t quickly pay and send them away, you’ll be fighting these aliens instead of the Wokou.”

“.....!”

At that moment, the Mon-O warriors made threatening gestures, striking their clubs against their palms, making everyone flinch.

“Are you saying they’ll attack us?”

“Of course. Don’t you know how violent workers can get when they don’t receive their pay?”

Yeongwoo added,

“Hurry and gather at least fifteen million first. Let’s deal with them safely.”

In other words, he was asking for his share of the money.

Yechan, realizing Yeongwoo’s true intention, looked at his mentor with wide eyes.

“Ah, sir...?”

He was astonished by the seamless flow of deceit.

But even Yechan didn’t know one more fact.

Which was.

「Zargal Cross-section Token」 – One-way ticket

【You can board the Guppy Express.】

|Fee: 13 million Karma

Double deceit.

Yeongwoo had even tricked Yechan.

The fare for the Guppy Express wasn't 15 million but 13 million.

Therefore, the remaining 2 million would go straight into Yeongwoo's pocket.

"Alright, let's hurry. Everyone, open your wallets. Let's gather at least fifteen million first."

Yeongwoo then walked among the Strongest Swords, actively collecting money.

"Uh, I only have this much right now..."

"Really? What's in your coat pocket? Move your hand."

While Yeongwoo, holding 'Bastard' in one hand, was intimidating the Strongest Swords, Yechan realized there was still something inside the lift.

"What is this?"

As Yechan approached the lift, a fairly large figure walked out from inside.

Clank, clank.

It was none other than.

-Squeak!

A metal four-legged animal with two slaves on its back.

-Snicker!

-Cough...!

"What on earth is this?"

"What on earth is this?"

Yechan, startled, barely managed to steady himself before falling on his backside.

Just then, Yeongwoo, who had been pouring the coins he collected from the Strongest Swords onto the ground, glanced at Yechan and the four-legged creature.

"Oh, it's a gift."

"From whom?"

“From the sponsor.”

“Sponsor...?”

Another new concept for Yechan.

However, Yeongwoo couldn't explain in detail because collecting money was more important at the moment.

“Is this all? This is a problem.”

The money collected from all the Strongest Swords amounted to only 6.4 million karma.

This was thanks to Busan's Strongest Sword, Kang Gyowon, who had a few high-value coins on him.

“It looks like you'll have to collect some money from your jurisdictions.”

When Yeongwoo said this, Kang Gyowon asked cautiously,

“It will take quite some time to raise the funds. What about those guys?”

He was referring to the Mon-O warriors.

Yeongwoo shrugged as if he couldn't help it.

“We'll manage the remaining amount somehow. Just hurry up and collect the funds.”

“Understood!”

The faces of the Southern Union, including Busan's Strongest Sword, brightened.

They realized that although they would ultimately lose their money, at least they could immediately get rid of those alien thugs.

“Do you have any money?”

Next, Yeongwoo began checking Yechan's balance.

But Yechan wasn't a businessman, so he didn't carry large sums of cash.

“No... Usually, I don't have money in the morning.”

This was the typical case.

After all, mutants and monsters dropped karma after 1 PM, so there was no need to carry money in the morning.

“Ah... So, I’m ending up doing charity work again.”

Although he intended to get the money back somehow, it was inconvenient for Yeongwoo to see his balance decrease because he had taxes to pay and equipment to collect.

“What will you do? The fare is 15 million, right? So, you still need...”

8.6 million karma.

Although it was actually 6.6 million, it was still a large amount.

“I’ll cover the shortfall for now, so get the money from them and come up to Seoul.”

“Seoul? Where should I go?”

Called to Seoul, his master Jeong Yeongwoo’s base, Yechan felt his heart race without realizing it.

Having lived a natural life fighting mutants in Gyeongbuk, he was finally heading to Seoul.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

“Come to Gangnam in Seoul. There’s a hotel called the Parnas Hotel near Samseong Station. Bring the money bag there, and the staff will guide you.”

“You live in a hotel in Gangnam, giving orders to the staff?”

“Uh...?”

Yeongwoo scratched his chin at this unexpected comment.

Now that he thought about it, it wasn’t wrong.

Moreover, by the time Yechan arrived in Gangnam, Strongest Swords from all over Seoul would also be bringing their money bags to the hotel.

“If you time your visit right, you’ll see something interesting.”

After saying this, Yeongwoo had the golden goblin take out 6.6 million karma.

The goblin opened a spatial pouch and poured out countless crimson coins.

-Squeak!

Clink!

With the 6.4 million karma collected from the Southern Union's Strongest Swords and Yeongwoo's personal contribution of 6.6 million karma, a total of 13 million karma was handed over to the Mon-O warriors running the Guppy Express.

"Please give my regards to the owner of the Guppy Express."

When Yeongwoo greeted the Mon-O warriors collecting the coins, one of the large aliens nodded.

-Growl.

And at the same time,

Pop!

* Available Karma: 16,938,500

Yeongwoo's balance dropped sharply.

"Don't forget. Bring back 8.6 million karma."

Yeongwoo reiterated, and Yechan, looking toward the Japanese land connected to Cheongsapo, said,

"It won't take long to collect the money, but do you have somewhere else to go in the meantime?"

After all, Yeongwoo had mentioned earlier that he was in Incheon and had hurriedly flown here.

But now he said his base was in Seoul... Yechan couldn't figure out his master's routine.

"Me? I have to go to Seoul now. The mutants there are quite formidable. So I need to be there."

And more importantly, with dragons starting to appear, he needed to be in Seoul at 1 PM to await his mother and uncle's appearance.

"Then I..."

“You must have your jurisdiction too, right? Sort things out there and come to Busan to get the money, then head to Seoul.”

With these words, Yeongwoo looked above Yechan’s head.

“Huh, there’s no title?”

“No. I’ve never directly killed a Strongest Sword.”

The only titles he held were those of Japanese sword emperors and masters, and those they had killed, including Gijang and Dong-gu Strongest Swords.

In other words, Yechan was a pure figure who had never killed a fellow countryman.

“Even now, I keep getting notifications to choose a title.”

“That’s amazing. So, what about swordsmanship? You’ve never used regional sword techniques, right?”

“Right. That’s why I’ve been buying martial arts from merchants to use.”

“My goodness, what an incredible world this is.”

Yeongwoo couldn’t help but be impressed.

Although it was an incredibly unlikely scenario, Yechan was living proof that one could become strong even with the title of “Unknown.”

This exemplified the initial guidance that one could transcend their innate rank.

-Growl!

The Mon-O warriors, having confirmed that the fare was properly paid, lined up and extended their fists toward Yeongwoo.

“...?”

Yeongwoo, puzzled, instinctively extended his fist.

Then,

Tap.

He bumped his fist against the large fists of the Mon-O warriors as a greeting.

One by one, the Mon-O warriors who bumped fists with Yeongwoo began boarding the elevator.

The fist bump was a form of farewell gesture.

-Growl!

Once all the Mon-O warriors had boarded the elevator, a huge chain descended from the sky, much like what Yeongwoo had seen in the dungeon the previous night, and grasped the elevator.

Clank, clank!

Yeongwoo waved to the Guppy Express employees.

“See you again, Guppy Express!”

-Growl!

The Mon-O warriors responded to Yeongwoo’s farewell with a thumbs-up, just like Guppy would.

Then,

Whoosh!

Following the rapidly retracting chain, they disappeared beyond the sky.

“This is unbelievable.”

Standing in the middle of the now-deserted Cheongsapo, Yechan stared blankly at the spot in the sky where the Guppy Express had disappeared.

Just then, Yeongwoo quickly mounted Negwig and looked around Cheongsapo.

“Alright, it’s all over now, right? I’m heading to Seoul first. I barely have enough time if I hurry.”

Though he had come with the Guppy Express and hadn’t even had a proper sword fight with the Japanese raiders, he had unexpectedly met Yechan and connected with the Strongest Swords of the South, so it wasn’t a loss.

‘And I’ll get my money back anyway.’

While Yeongwoo checked his balance again, Yechan glanced at the spot where the elevator had been.

The bodies of the Japanese raiders were so mangled that they were unrecognizable.

“Mister, do you happen to have any ability to burn things?”

“Huh? What are you talking about?”

Yechan pointed to the scattered corpses.

“I was wondering if I should burn these or drag them into the sea.”

“Oh, really? When will you ever move all these bodies? Just erase them.”

“Erase them?”

“Wait and see.”

From atop Negwig, Yeongwoo looked up at the sky again.

Then he shouted loudly,

“General, are you ready?”

“General...?”

The eyes of everyone, including Yechan, filled with fear again.

And soon,

“Earth! 063, 152...!”

Yeongwoo began to recite the coordinates of Busan.

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

Chapter 240: The Twin Evils of Joseon (3)

“Hey, mister! W-wait a minute!”

As Yeongwoo was almost done calling out the coordinates, Yechan hurriedly grabbed him.

Taa!

“Why? What’s up?”

“Just what do you think you’re doing?”

Yechan’s gaze was already directed towards the sky as he asked this.

Though he didn’t know exactly what, he instinctively felt that his master was about to summon something terrifying from the sky once again.

“You said we need to get rid of the bodies. So, I was going to erase them.”

“So, what exactly do you mean by ‘erase’...?”

Yeongwoo was about to talk about the laser cannon while casually looking at the corpses, thinking it was obvious.

He meant that if they used the laser bombardment here, the troublesome corpses would instantly evaporate, and it would also convey to the Southern Alliance people why they must prepare funds.

But before that.

“Oh!”

“...?”

“Hey, Chan, you did well to stop me. That was almost a big mistake.”

“W-what do you mean? By yourself.”

“The bodies. If I’d requested the bombardment immediately, we would’ve been in trouble. We need to collect the loot, don’t we? If they get hit by the bombardment, the equipment and everything will disappear.”

“Uh...?”

Only then did Yechan realize.

The insane bombardment his master was about to request had the power to not only erase bodies but also equipment.

“You’re saying the equipment would disappear?”

“Yeah, since it’s not mine, I was just going to erase it.”

“.....”

Yechan found it hard to believe.

In this world, wasn't equipment considered nearly indestructible material?

That's why there was a special equipment effect specifically for destroying equipment below a certain grade.

“How exactly are you going to destroy the equipment?”

“With a laser.”

Swish.

As Yeongwoo nonchalantly pointed a finger at the air, Yechan's jaw dropped.

So, when he was talking about requesting bombardment from the general or whatever, he was referring to laser bombardment.

“Quickly gather the equipment. I won't take that away out of conscience.”

When Yeongwoo said this, Yechan, who had been standing in a daze, belatedly started scavenging the corpses of the Japanese soldiers.

He realized that his master's talk about erasing equipment with laser bombardment was not a joke.

“That's really absurd. You can destroy equipment with bombardment...?”

As Yechan stripped anything that looked like equipment off the Japanese soldiers' bodies, Yeongwoo mumbled while looking at the 'Serpent of Greed' coiled around his wrist.

“If you knew who was firing that bombardment, you'd find it even harder to believe.”

Right now, Yeongwoo was using the Serpent of Greed to check if there was any loot Yechan might have missed.

Though he was a bandit and a delinquent master, he genuinely cared for Yechan, who had chosen to be his disciple.

That's why he was even doing something he normally wouldn't, like leaving some loot behind.

“Got everything? I don't have much time.”

“Y-yes. I think I got almost everything.”

“Then move back. The impact range is quite wide.”

At Yeongwoo’s words, not only Yechan but also the Strongest Swords of the Southern Alliance, who were standing in line behind him, hurriedly stepped back.

Then.

“Earth! 063, 152, 4675 17!”

Yeongwoo finished calling out the coordinates he had started earlier, and soon.

KABOOM!

With a roar that seemed to tear the sky apart, a laser beam really shot down from somewhere in space.

Fwoosh!

“Huh?”

“What, what is that?”

“It’s a laser...!”

The Strongest Swords instinctively took a step back as they watched the massive laser beam piercing through the sky.

Even the battle-hardened Yechan stared with his mouth agape at the Japanese soldiers’ corpses, which began to turn white.

‘Is this for real? How can a person do this in just five days?’

What were the limits of his master, Jeong Yeongwoo07?

KABOOM!

Everyone was left speechless as they watched the laser beam obliterate the corpses, leaving no trace behind.

At the same time.

‘If that were to fall on our heads...’

‘Its original purpose must’ve been to kill people, right?’

‘Did he say he was from Seoul? What kind of place is Seoul?’

Everyone became fearful of Jeong Yeongwoo and Seoul.

It was clear to anyone that the bombardment was not just for erasing corpses but was a lethal weapon.

Whoosh!

Finally, the laser beam that had enveloped the battlefield ceased, and as expected, nothing was left where the corpses had been scattered.

“Is it done now? Wrap things up and come up to Seoul.”

Yeongwoo said this to Yechan and then added something as if he had almost forgotten.

“And if you have any unused equipment, come to Seoul and sell it to me.”

“Unused equipment...?”

“Yeah. Whatever it is, sell it to me. The more equipment I have, the stronger I get.”

He was talking about his collection, but there was really not much time left.

Taa!

Yeongwoo immediately pulled the reins to move Negwig’s head north and said,

“Since this is an important border area, I won’t collect defense fees. But you must send the promised travel expenses today.”

Although it was practically a one-sided promise, there was no reason for the Southern Alliance to not prepare the travel expenses.

Hadn’t everyone just seen it?

The scene of the laser cannon shooting down from the sky.

What on earth was up there?

While everyone was looking at the sky, Yeongwoo started to ride north again.

* * *

Day 6 of the Reset.

So much had happened in that time that Yeongwoo felt like he had lived not six days but sixty.

It was probably because he had lived each day divided into minutes.

That was one of the few ways to survive in this crazy world.

‘I never knew a day could be this long before.’

As he watched the scenery quickly recede, Yeongwoo checked the time.

Swish.

Current time: 12:38 PM.

In about 20 minutes, the sky would open again, and all sorts of monsters and mutants would pour down.

And right now, Yeongwoo was passing through Seongnam City, the southern gateway into Gangnam.

Smash, smash!

Because he had been running non-stop from Busan, Negwig’s speed had noticeably slowed.

But Yeongwoo couldn’t afford to let the creature rest.

“.....!”

Finally, the sky over Seoul, which was starting to become visible, was dyed red.

“Ah.”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]

That must be...

“...Dragon ceremony.”

Before the first dragon, ‘Poison Dragon Im Kwangho,’ appeared in Seoul, the sky had turned red like that.

And the reason for this phenomenon was none other than to find an opponent.

‘So, marking wasn’t exclusive to the Poison Dragon. Any dragon would come seeking an opponent.’

As Yeongwoo exited Seongnam and entered the outskirts of Gangnam, he saw thunder and lightning in the blood-red sky.

—Hahaha!

Along with a hearty laugh.

The laughter reverberating from the sky was undoubtedly from a high-risk mutant in Seoul on the sixth day.

‘Another dragon is coming today.’

As Yeongwoo was running, looking at the blood-red sky, the voice echoed again.

—No one is stepping up? Disappointing.

Hearing this, Yeongwoo could roughly guess what had been happening in Seoul.

The high-risk mutant of the sixth day had been seeking an opponent long before he arrived in Seoul.

But with the strongest being absent, there was no one in Seoul willing to stand against the dragon...

‘So, how long has this been going on?’

Rumble!

Another round of thunder and lightning struck.

And a voice that seemed genuinely disappointed resounded from the sky.

—If no one steps up...

At this, Yeongwoo immediately raised his bastard sword high and shouted,

“I will!”

—...?

“I will fight! Send the mark!”

When Yeongwoo mentioned the 'mark' first, the opponent was so taken aback that they paused for a moment.

After a while.

—...Who are you?

The once arrogant voice now asked cautiously.

Seoul had been cowering with its head down in fear all this time.

Now, suddenly, someone with a formidable aura had appeared, surprising the dragon.

So, Yeongwoo pondered how to introduce himself and then borrowed the phrase from Broker Kubu.

"I am the master of the Bastard, the dragon slayer, Joseon's Strongest Sword, Jeong Yeongwoo07!"

The reaction was immediate.

—What? Slayed a dragon...?

This indicated that the opponent, who was only projecting their voice, was also a dragon.

However, having already defeated a dragon once and having broken through dungeons in space every night, dragons didn't seem that formidable to Yeongwoo.

To him, a dragon was just a big lizard that would provide his next heart.

Of course, there was no denying that dragons were quite strong.

"If you have nothing more to say, send down the mark quickly. I'm busy."

When Yeongwoo, in a disinterested tone, demanded the next sequence of events, a voice, clearly insulted, shouted from the sky.

—What the hell, you punk?

"...?"

Surprised by the suddenly low-class language, Yeongwoo hesitated.

—Do you even know who I am to act like that? Are you not scared?

Though the dragon's growl was intimidating, Yeongwoo was equally fiery.

"What are you saying? Aren't you just another spoiled rich kid?"

—What?

Stunned by the accurate jab, the opponent paused momentarily before shouting in an enraged voice that shook the sky.

—I am Song Taeho, the rightful heir of Jinhyeon!

"What?"

Jinhyeon.

The second-largest conglomerate in the country.

While the opponent mentioned it purely to refute being called a "spoiled rich kid," it struck Yeongwoo differently.

"Jinhyeon? The one where Song Jiseon is the chairwoman?"

Jinhyeon was the family of Yeongwoo's biological mother, Song Jiseon.

And as expected...

—So-Song Jiseon...!

The voice from the sky practically had a seizure at the mention of Song Jiseon's name.

While the opponent claimed to be the rightful heir of Jinhyeon, the actual history was entirely different.

Nicknamed the "Iron-Blooded Empress," Song Jiseon had been the youngest of the candidates for Jinhyeon's succession but had defeated her two older brothers in the battle for management rights.

Yeongwoo had read articles about this.

So the opponent was...

'The eldest son of Jinhyeon Group is named Song Taeho.'

The only name Yeongwoo knew from Jinhyeon Group was the famously renowned Song Jiseon.

It was only after the world turned upside down that he learned the name of the family's eldest son.

And in about ten minutes, he might even meet him in person.

"So... you're saying you're the eldest son of Jinhyeon, Song Taeho?"

When Yeongwoo asked for confirmation, the opponent marked Yeongwoo's head with the character for "General."

Fwoosh!

「General」

—Now do you understand who you're daring to challenge?

Still sounding quite angry, Song Taeho was met with a shocking piece of news from Yeongwoo that would immediately cool his anger.

"Do you know who I am?"

—What? You, you're obviously...

The master of the Bastard, the dragon slayer, Joseon's Strongest Sword, Jeong Yeongwoo07.

But naturally, Song Taeho couldn't recall that introduction precisely.

It was as absurd and surreal as his own transformation into a dragon.

But Yeongwoo wasn't asking to remind him of that sentence.

Snap!

Yeongwoo halted Negwig and interjected his voice amidst the opponent's bewildered breathing.

"It's late, but let me introduce myself. I am the illegitimate child of Jinhyeon Group Chairwoman Song Jiseon."

—.....?

"And I am also the son of Kim Jeonggu. My name is Jeong Yeongwoo."

—Song... Kim... Jeong? What kind of nonsense are you talking about?

Not a single surname matched among the three names.

—And who the hell is Kim Jeonggu?

Now, Song Taeho's voice was laced with displeasure.

Yeongwoo could only say:

“He's the man who had a one-night stand with the chairwoman in her youth.”

—What? Had a what?

“Anyway, I'll see you soon, uncle.”

[Translator – Night]

[Proofreader – Gun]