Chapter 41 : Chapter 41

Chapter 41 : Execution

The head of the North Sea Ice Palace’s Elders.

The Chairman of the Ice Council, Seol Un-gang, raised his eyebrows as everyone’s gaze focused on him.

“Silence! How dare you spout such nonsense in this sacred presence!”

It was truly a case of a thief raising a club.

I curled the corners of my lips at the sight of Seol Un-gang losing his temper.

“Elder. I keep telling you, the witnesses are right here, aren’t they?”

Step, step.

It was warm.

A warm breeze began to blow in the Palace Lord’s Hall, which had always been chilled by the north wind.

At the same time, flames erupted from my entire body.

“Kughhh—”

The assassins of Blood Tears, who were still gagged, groaned in agony.

The reason the assassins of Blood Tears feared me, even though I hadn't done anything yet, was simple.

‘Because of the Extreme Yang Qi.’

The assassins of Blood Tears must be tasting the pain of their qi centers burning right now.

“Are you going to feign ignorance until the end?”

“It is a frame-up! It is a plot by the Demonic Cultist Hyeokryeon Yeom to infiltrate deeper into the affairs of the Ice Palace!”

Chairman Seol Un-gang was no longer looking at me.

He began to plead his innocence to everyone gathered in the great hall.

“I am innocent!”

—Tsk tsk, he’s quite good at acting.

—If someone else saw this, they might actually think he’s innocent.

It was enough to make even the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen click their tongues.

“We’ll get the answer if we ask them.”

Grrrk—

The assassins of Blood Tears raised their bodies.

“I may look like this, but I’m actually quite confident in torture.”

Fwoosh!

The gags in the assassins' mouths burst into flames.

“Kuuughhh!”

Being well-trained, the assassins were enduring the pain.

But they wouldn’t last long.

Why?

‘Because they’ve likely never felt the pain of burning alive.’

Seol Un-gang’s eyes flashed as he watched the assassins suppressing their groans.

“They are the assassins who attacked the Ice Palace!”

Whoosh!

Chairman Seol Un-gang’s palm strike pounced upon the assassins of Blood Tears.

Splat—!

The heads of the Blood Tears assassins exploded.

Some of the martial artists watching frowned at the sight.

I didn't intentionally stop the assassins from being killed.

They were scum who deserved to die anyway.

Rather,

"Did you just... silence the witnesses?"

"Silencing the witnesses? Me? This Elder simply killed those who deserved to die."

Dead men tell no tales.

Seol Un-gang was one of the people who knew that fact all too well.

And for someone of Seol Un-gang's status, killing a person or two here wouldn't cause anyone to say anything.....

Crack, crackle—

There was someone.

The headless bodies of the Blood Tears assassins froze exactly as they were.

"...What is the meaning of this, Young Palace Head!"

"Chairman, you had absolutely no hesitation in killing these men."

"That is because it is clear they are the ones who attacked the Ice Palace....."

"Exactly!"

Whoosh—

Extreme Yin Qi soared from the Young Palace Head's body.

Crackle—

A chill as bone-cutting as the north wind froze the space around us.

"Just as the Small Snow Squad Captain said, it is clear that you, Chairman, placed the request with Blood Tears."

Rumble—

“Un-gang.”

The Ice King, Seol Baek-ho, rose from his seat.

“Did you want to sit in this seat..... until the very end?”

“Palace Lord, I... am innocent.”

Seol Un-gang claimed his innocence without a single change in his expression until the end.

“The assassins testified, and you even silenced them yourself. Are you saying you will plead ignorance even after this?”

“You insolent brat!”

Chairman Seol Un-gang could no longer hold back and rushed toward me.

I, too, was already fully prepared.

Just as I was about to swing my sword at the charging Seol Un-gang.

Bang!

“Cough!”

Seol Baek-ho dropped from the air.

“Wasn’t it this throne you coveted? If you coveted the position of Palace Lord, you should have fought me. Why do you touch my innocent son-in-law?”

I looked at Seol Baek-ho’s back.

A dignity I had only ever felt from the Heavenly Demon, Hyeokryeon Hwi, was radiating from the Ice Palace Lord.

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The heads of the Five Great Clans stiffened as they saw the Ice Palace Lord personally block Chairman Seol Un-gang.

‘The Palace Lord, who always remained seated, has risen.’

The Clan Heads knew all too well what happened when the Ice Palace Lord left his throne.

Bang!

Seol Baek-ho, having fallen from the sky atop Chairman Seol Un-gang, pressured him with his massive weight.

“Kuhuk!”

If the Demonic Cult followed the principle that the strong reign supreme.

The Ice Palace followed the law of the jungle.

“The strong rule the weak.”

Chairman Seol Un-gang’s surname was ‘Seol’.

He clearly shared the same surname as the Ice Palace Lord, Seol Baek-ho.

That meant they were blood-related family, yet one became the Palace Lord and the other became the head of the elders created by the Council of Elders.

The stark difference in status must have led to endless comparisons between the two.

“Miss Seol. What is the relationship between Chairman Seol Un-gang and the Palace Lord?”

“He is my uncle.”

It meant he was her father’s younger brother.

The younger brother of the Palace Lord, Seol Baek-ho.

One was the Lord of the North Sea Ice Palace.

The other was the Chairman of the Council of Elders, the Ice Council.

The apparent difference was producing a distinct result.

“He lost.”

Seol Un-gang was always the weaker one.

Was that why?

His attempt to overthrow the Ice Palace seemed to be for the sake of dragging down the Ice Palace Lord, Seol Baek-ho.

“Khehehe— Brother, are you going to cast me aside this time as well?”

“Cast aside?”

“Ever since you became the Palace Lord, you never once sought me out. Even though I became an Elder, all your attention was on your daughter, the Young Palace Head. You didn’t even care about me, your own family!”

Seol Un-gang shouted as if screaming in spite.

Raising his qi was useless.

Seol Baek-ho and Seol Un-gang would have basically learned the same martial arts.

It is the nature of Yin Qi to be devoured by the qi of the stronger one.

That was why Seol Un-gang could never surpass Seol Baek-ho in his lifetime.

But I knew.

‘He didn’t care?’

When he is alive and well like that?

From Seol Baek-ho’s perspective, Seol Un-gang was no different from a future threat who could stab him in the back at any moment.

If it were the Demonic Cult.

‘He would have already been dead and buried in the ground.’

Glancing sideways, I saw Hyeokryeon Mu wearing an expression that said he also couldn't understand.

Hyeokryeon Mu likely thought that if he became the Cult Leader, he would have to kill Hyeokryeon Geuk and me.

Because no matter if they are blood brothers, there can only be one sun.

In other words,

‘The very fact that Seol Un-gang is alive right now means Seol Baek-ho cared deeply for him. Even if he didn't show it on the outside.’

—Tsk tsk, this is why it’s much better to have no siblings.

The Sword Venerable clicked his tongue upon seeing Seol Un-gang’s wailing.

It seemed the Sword Venerable had a similar experience.

—I can understand Elder Seol, too. Coexisting with the Palace Lord is a difficult thing.

If Seol Un-gang had been a man who understood this, he would have taken Seol Baek-ho's place as a sturdy pillar when Seol Baek-ho was away.

But Seol Un-gang seemed to always harbor an inferiority complex toward Seol Baek-ho.

Because he believed that if not for Seol Baek-ho, he would have become the Palace Lord.

The Clan Heads were also looking at Seol Un-gang with pitying eyes.

As contemporaries of Seol Baek-ho, they were the ones who would have competed with him.

Others who were not family understood with what heart Seol Baek-ho had kept his brother alive.

I, having realized the full truth of all this, had no choice but to step forward.

Step— step—

"I apologize, Palace Lord. For interrupting so rudely."

I apologized to my father-in-law first.

Piercing through the snowy cold that was blowing like a blizzard, I stood next to Seol Baek-ho.

"Small Snow Squad Captain?"

"I will intervene for a moment from here."

Leaving those words behind, I stood in front of Seol Un-gang.

"Chairman."

"Yes, you bastard. It is because of you! If only you hadn't come to the Ice Palace, Seol Ye-rin would have died, and I could have pushed aside Seol Baek-ho, who would have been lost in grief, and become the Palace Lord myself!"

Seol Un-gang was... giving up on everything and destroying himself.

Madness could be seen flickering through his white hair.

Although words likely wouldn't reach someone who had already gone mad from his own ambition.

“That is incorrect. Even if I weren't here, you could not have become the Palace Lord, Chairman.”

“What?”

“And since you seem to be thinking wrongly, I dare to point something out. Consider yourself lucky.”

“……What?”

“Brother, if you became the Young Cult Leader, who would you kill first?”

My question was directed at Hyeokryeon Mu.

“Well... you, Yeom, or Hyung-nim (Hyeokryeon Geuk).”

“Did you see that? If you, Chairman, were from Our Cult, you would no longer be a person of this world. The fact that you are alive right now is proof of how much the Palace Lord cared for you.”

At my words, Chairman Seol Un-gang’s expression began to stiffen gradually.

“Stop it, Small Snow Squad Captain.”

“I apologize, Palace Lord. I think I need to speak a little more.”

My eyes turned cold.

“Everything you are enjoying right now. I am telling you that the person who considered and cared for all of that was the Palace Lord. Yet, you failed to recognize such grace and instead planned to kill the Palace Lord and even your niece? You ungrateful bastard.”

Fwoosh—

Flames soared.

“Hyeokryeon Yeom!”

“I apologize.”

There is something I realized after dying once.

‘Those who will remain as future trouble must be dealt with.’

If you show mercy, you never know when they will aim for your back again.

And the father-in-law I have experienced so far is a man with much affection.

He is just a person who cannot show it on the outside.

‘The various tests he gave me, who is no different from the benefactor who saved the Young Palace Head, must be in that same context.’

Because of his desire for me to be recognized in the North Sea somehow.

Thanks to that warmth, I was able to establish myself in the Ice Palace.

So,

‘I must do what the Palace Lord cannot do.’

That is what a live-in son-in-law is for.

And it is the fate of the person who will become the Young Palace Head’s sword in the future.

Fire Art Sword First Form.

“Flame Flash.”

The Flame Extreme Sword, drawn in an instant, rushed toward Seol Un-gang’s neck.

Flames blocked all vision.

The only ones who could witness this were Seol Un-gang and myself.

The final moment.

I faced Seol Un-gang’s eyes.

The eyes that sensed death contained deep regret.

Slash—

Thud, roll.

Roar!

Flames soared up.

“Hyeokryeon Yeom!”

“As the Captain of the Small Snow Squad protecting the Young Palace Head, I have executed the Chairman of the Council of Elders’ Ice Council, Seol Un-gang.”

Leaving the burning corpse of Seol Un-gang behind me.

I knelt before the Ice Palace Lord, Seol Baek-ho.

“If it was a wrongful action, please punish me. I will sweetly accept any disposition.”

I committed an act that no one in the Ice Palace had dared to do.

Seeing that, Hyeokryeon Mu grinned.

Moyong Geum widened his eyes.

And,

“I believe the Small Snow Squad Captain’s action was appropriate, Palace Lord.”

The Young Palace Head, Seol Ye-rin, defended me.

Now, all that remained was the judgment of the Ice Palace Lord, Seol Baek-ho.

The gazes of everyone gathered in the Palace Lord’s Hall turned toward Seol Baek-ho.

The man with the title of Ice King, the Lord of the North Sea Ice Palace, silently stared at his brother's burning corpse.

Would he punish me for killing his brother?

Or would he give a reward for executing the culprit who attacked the Ice Palace?

Seol Baek-ho’s choice was,

“...General Manager.”

“Yes, Palace Lord.”

“Prepare for Chairman Seol’s funeral.”

He gave no answer.

Chapter 42 : Chapter 42

Chapter 42. Calling Each Other Brother

Chairman Seol Un-gang was killed by the Captain of the Small Snow Squad.

It was essentially no different from an Elder being killed by a demonic practitioner, but no one who had witnessed the sequence of events could speak of it in that way.

Baek Il-sang, the Head of the Ice Wolf Baek Clan; Gwak Un-cheol of the Snow Tiger Gwak Clan; Han Myeong-gwang of the Cold Blood Han Clan; and Jang Un-seong of the Guardian Jang Clan were gathered together.

“It feels like a rotten tooth has finally been pulled out.”

The Clan Heads actually seemed to welcome Chairman Seol Un-gang’s death.

“Now that the Chairman is dead, the Elders’ dominance will finally come to an end.”

“If only the Palace Lord hadn’t told us to leave it be, we would have dealt with it long ago.”

“I never expected the North Wind Seol Clan’s nuisance to be sent off like this.”

The Heads of the Five Great Clans, excluding the Palace Lord Seol Baek-ho, had convened.

“We must acknowledge his decisiveness, at least.”

“I agree. To sever Chairman Seol Un-gang’s head right there... that was no ordinary boldness.”

“He realized it was already a detriment.”

“His declaration that he would kill his brothers immediately if he became the Young Cult Leader was also a bit concerning.”

Han Myeong-gwang of the Cold Blood Han Clan replied to the story from Baek Il-sang, the Head of the Ice Wolf Baek Clan.

“In any case, rumors about the Small Snow Squad Captain have started spreading throughout the entire Ice Palace because of this incident.”

“What kind of rumors?”

“That he executed an Elder of the Ice Palace. That he blocked the invasion of the Demonic Cult. Or that he has a certain relationship with the Young Palace Head.”

“Those don’t seem like just rumors, do they?”

“Rumors tend to be a mix of some truth and some falsehoods, don’t they?”

“That isn't what’s important. Doesn't the fact that interest in the Small Snow Squad Captain is growing mean his influence could become stronger?”

That was correct.

Although both the Ice Palace and the Demonic Cult adhered to the principles of the strong reigning supreme and the survival of the fittest, there was a principle even more important than that.

It was the culture of respecting the opinion of the majority.

Many people say that the North Sea Ice Palace is led by the Ice Palace Lord and the Heads of the Five Great Clans.

But in reality, that was not the case.

The Five Clan Heads, including the Palace Lord, respected the opinions of the Ice Palace citizens living within the palace as much as possible.

It was truly good that they had established such a fine system and culture.

‘Things started to go awry when cases of abuse arose.’

The representative example was the Ice Council.

The Ice Council, a gathering formed by retired Elders, was a group that deliberated on the major and minor affairs of the Ice Palace through meetings and made suggestions to the Ice Palace Lord.

Although they claimed it was the result of meetings, in reality, they were enticing the Ice Palace citizens to lead the Ice Palace in the direction they desired.

There was no one who didn't know that.

However, since he was essentially the second-in-command of the North Wind Seol Clan and under the protection of the Palace Lord, no one could touch Chairman Seol Un-gang.

“It might be bitter to swallow, but it is true that we will no longer be dragged around by the Elders.”

“Is it true that Seol Un-gang placed the request with Blood Tears? With the horse bandits and all, the attacks feel frequent.”

“Seol Un-gang might have been involved, or he might not have been.”

They had blocked the attacks of the horse bandits and the assassins of Blood Tears.

They considered it proof that the Ice Palace was still standing strong.

“Let us stop talking about Seol Un-gang. More importantly, you must be aware that once trade with the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild reopens, the Central Plains might start watching us again.”

“With the Palace Lord’s changed attitude, we might be able to regain our past glory.”

“The fact that we are about to form a blood alliance with the Demonic Cult might actually work as a blessing in disguise.”

At the words of Jang Un-seong, the Head of the Guardian Jang Clan, all the Clan Heads thought of one person.

The Small Snow Squad Captain, Hyeokryeon Yeom.

Because the starting point of all these changes began when he came to the Ice Palace.

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“Rest well before you go, brother.”

I came out to the front gate of the Ice Palace to see off Hyeokryeon Mu and his entourage.

I was with the Small Snow Squad and the Young Palace Head, Seol Ye-rin.

“It doesn’t feel like I rested, though.”

“No, this brother is very pleased to see his younger brother grown enough to effortlessly kill an Elder of the Ice Palace.”

“...Please take care of yourself.”

“I will tell Hyeokryeon Geuk that you are doing well.”

At Hyeokryeon Mu’s words, my expression stiffened.

Because I thought I shouldn't meet Hyeokryeon Geuk just yet.

“Please give my regards to the Cult Leader, brother. And... absolutely avoid anything even slightly related to the Ten Emperors.”

“Hmm? Ten Emperors?”

Hyeokryeon Mu made a strange face at the sudden, out-of-the-blue remark.

But for me, I had no choice but to say this.

‘Hyeokryeon Mu... gets killed by the Blade Emperor, one of the Ten Emperors, due to Hyeokryeon Geuk’s scheme.’

Since I couldn't tell him this directly, telling him to be careful was all I could do.

This amount of advice was the best I could do as Hyeokryeon Yeom for someone whom I could no longer share joys and sorrows with in the Demonic Cult.

“I spoke because I had a dream.”

“How bland. It seems I won’t see you at the engagement ceremony. Let’s see each other if you happen to hold a wedding.”

Hyeokryeon Mu’s gaze turned to Seol Ye-rin.

“I hope my unlucky sister-in-law stays well too.”

“...I hope you trip on your way and smash your nose on a rock.”

“Kuhahaha! My, she’s a sister-in-law I like. See you next time. Let’s go.”

“Yes!”

Whoosh—

I stared at Hyeokryeon Mu’s back as he and his entourage departed.

“It feels somewhat wistful.”

“Hmm?”

“He appeared as a threatening brother to me, but it seems he isn't to the Third Young Master.”

Certainly, the sight of Hyeokryeon Mu trying to tear off Han Seol-bi’s arms must have looked violent.

However, that had to be seen as his appearance when he was an enemy.

When he was an ally, Hyeokryeon Mu was a more dependable brother than anyone else in my opinion.

“Well, let’s just say that’s the case.”

For now, it was all just a memory I alone cherished.

“More importantly, I think we’ll have to be apart for a while since I need to escort Young Master Moyong back to Liaoning Province.”

Seol Ye-rin was wearing black mourning clothes.

The North Wind Seol Clan was holding a funeral.

“Please go safely.”

I held out my hand.

“I think it wouldn't be bad to replenish some Yang Qi before you go.”

“...Thanks to the Third Young Master, it feels like the balance is gradually being restored.”

Seol Ye-rin grasped my hand.

Zzzzt—

Along with a tingling sensation, true qi began to transfer through our clasped hands as the Extreme Yang Qi and Extreme Yin Qi met.

It was warm.

It was cold.

The two of us started walking, sharing the energy we couldn't feel from ourselves.

“Captain, please consider the eyes of the squad members too.”

“Squad Leader Baek! What are we going to do if you say something that spoils the mood!”

“We can eat before we leave, right?”

“.....”

At our appearance, Baek Mu-yong, Wi Ji-yeong, Tae Un-seo, and Eun Bin voiced their complaints.

“I wish you would care about my eyes too.”

Moyong Geum and his escort, Jang Baek-rim, were waiting for us at the main gate of the Ice Palace.

“Looks like I won’t be able to eat.”

At my words, Tae Un-seo made a glum face.

“Then, you should go in.”

“Yes, I will see you next time too, Young Master Moyong. Thank you for your help this time.”

“Please invite me when you have the engagement ceremony. I will run there in a single breath.”

“Yes, I understand.”

After exchanging farewells with Seol Ye-rin, Moyong Geum turned back to look at me.

“I am envious.”

“Of what?”

“There is something like that. More importantly, there is something I would like to tell you separately on the way, Captain…….”

At Moyong Geum’s words, I tilted my head.

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Liaoning Province, Moyong Clan.

“Is it true that Moyong Geum went to the North Sea to open trade with the Ice Palace?”

“Yes, Young Clan Head.”

Moyong Cheong, the Young Clan Head of the Moyong Clan, was asking his subordinate about news regarding Moyong Geum.

“The result?”

“They say the Merchant Guild Leader received a message stating that the Cold Iron piled up in the Ice Palace is enormous. If the deal goes through, it seems the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild might be sitting on a cushion of money.”

“Instead, our Moyong Clan might be framed for colluding with the Ice Palace.”

“The possibility... seems sufficient.”

“The Clan Head’s opinion?”

“It seems he thinks money comes first.”

If the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild hit the jackpot, the prestige of the Moyong Clan would naturally rise as well.

After all, the Moyong Clan, one of the Five Great Clans, and the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild were in a relationship of mutual aid.

“Even if money is needed.”

Isn’t the Ice Palace a bit much?

The Outer Region Murim, which covets the Central Plains Murim, was the number one target for exclusion.

Among them, the Ice Palace, along with the Heavenly Demon of Xinjiang, had harassed the Murim whenever the so-called Martial Gods of the Outer Regions appeared.

There were still plenty of sects and clans that hadn't recovered their past glory due to that damage.

Still, he had heard that the Ice Palace’s expansion of influence had stalled recently, perhaps thanks to the horse bandits.

“Moyong Geum, that guy was always the problem.”

Moyong Cheong, the Young Clan Head of the Moyong Clan, had always lived a life compared to Moyong Geum.

Although they were from the same clan, one walked the path of a martial artist, and the other began to walk the path of a merchant.

The problem was that the achievements of Moyong Geum, who chose the path of a merchant, were overwhelming compared to Moyong Cheong, who began to walk the path of a martial artist.

It was understandable since achievements in martial arts improvement cannot be shown immediately to the eye.

However, achievements as a merchant could be shown through a visible indicator called money.

With this growth trend, the reputation that the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild would not find it difficult to become the continent's best merchant guild was widespread.

“What will you do, Young Clan Head?”

“Thinking of the public's perception of the Moyong Clan, my judgment is that the deal with the Ice Palace must not go through.”

But money must be earned.

“Gather the wanderers.”

“If you say wanderers.....”

“Wouldn't it be fine if we intercept the Cold Iron and sell it?”

Reduce Moyong Geum’s achievements, and make the deal with the Ice Palace fail.

If things worked out properly, a plan to kill three birds with one stone, which could even elevate Moyong Cheong’s position, was being formed in the depths of the Moyong Clan.

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“I dare to judge that the North Sea Ice Palace will revolve around you, Captain, in the future.”

On the way to Liaoning Province.

Moyong Geum had even left his escort behind and was conversing with me alone.

Naturally, we had also distanced ourselves from the Small Snow Squad.

“I am curious why you came to think that.”

“Action, judgment, drive. You seem to excel in all of them.”

“Thank you for the compliment, but I don't understand why you, Young Master Moyong, are suddenly saying this to me.”

“The fact that your place of origin is the Demonic Cult does bother me quite a bit. But I believe a merchant should not care about such things to earn money.”

I looked at Moyong Geum.

Situationally, I had recognized that Moyong Geum was the one who would become the Merchant King in the not-too-distant future.

“So?”

“I am saying that I hope we can become a relationship of mutual aid. If you ever need anything, please contact me anytime. I promise full support.”

Such a person was secretly making a proposal to me unbeknownst to others.

“Conversely, what is the work I must do for you?”

“Due to the nature of the merchant guild's work, many situations involving danger arise. I hope you will give me help when I ask for it someday, just once.”

Ultimately, the point was one thing.

“You mean let’s become sworn brothers (calling each other brother).”

A member of the Five Great Clans trying to build a friendship with the son of the Demonic Cult Leader.

“That sounds very good!”

“Then, become the younger brother from now on.”

“Excuse me?”

Judging only by appearance, Moyong Geum looked older no matter who saw us.

And in reality, he was.

But,

‘Counting the years I’ve eaten while living through my previous lives, how many are they?’

I couldn't call a much younger kid 'older brother'.

“All right, Older Brother.”

Moyong Geum readily called me Older Brother, as if such things didn't matter at all.

Originally, the stronger one was the older brother, and the weaker one was the younger brother.

Chapter 43 : Chapter 43

Chapter 43 : Letter

As Liaoning Province drew closer, Moyong Geum checked a portion of the Cold Iron he had brought this far.

Thanks to the Small Snow Squad's escort, he was able to bring a carriage worth of Cold Iron.

Once he arrived at Liaoning Province, the martial artists of the Moyong Clan would escort the carriage, so safety could be guaranteed just by entering Liaoning Province.

"Thank you so much, Hyung-nim."

"Haha, since my younger brother is returning to the Central Plains, naturally I should see you off."

The biggest harvest of this trip to the Ice Palace was the fact that he came to call Hyeokryeon Yeom his sworn brother.

Rather than making a solid profit with Cold Iron, building a friendship with someone he could continuously interact with like this was a more valuable asset as a merchant.

"I would like to treat you to a grand meal inside Liaoning Province, but as expected, that would be impossible, right?"

"Young Master."

I understood Moyong Geum's intent, but I shook my head.

"I am grateful for your sentiment, brother, but if we enter Liaoning Province, a problem will surely arise."

The Small Snow Squad was strictly the Ice Palace's armed force.

Furthermore, I was from the Demonic Cult.

If rumors spread that Moyong Geum led the entry of Outer Region Murim and a demonic practitioner of the Demonic Cult into the Central Plains, the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild itself could fall into trouble.

"Indeed... It seems I was too greedy."

Moyong Geum decided to promise for later.

After all, there was a high possibility that I would eventually venture into the Jianghu.

"Let us promise for next time."

The moment we arrived close to Liaoning Province like that,

I saw quite a few people rushing out from the distance.

"Did they already come from the Moyong Clan?"

"Yes? But I haven't told them when I will arrive yet?"

Moyong Geum looked at the group with a questionable gaze.

"Is this the escort goods of the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild?"

Men in black wearing masks rushed out in a swarm.

They were suspicious-looking fellows to anyone's eyes.

"It doesn't seem like the Moyong Clan, does it?"

"It seems so."

It was to the point that Seol Ye-rin, who hadn't said a single word until now, spoke up.

"Seeing as they are talking about escort goods."

"This... It looks like they are definitely here targeting us."

"Are they bandits?"

"Should we draw our swords?"

The Small Snow Squad members growled and glared at the enemies, and,

"...Who are you bastards?"

Moyong Geum asked the men in black with a heavily deep frown.

"....."

The men in black looked at Moyong Geum with an expression saying 'Would we tell you that'.

"...Strike."

Soon, the one appearing to be the captain of the men in black issued an order.

Then,

Flash!

Along with a flash of light, the bandits began to rush in.

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-They are wanderers!

Seeing the bandits rushing in without a word, the Sword Venerable shouted.

Even if they disguised their appearance with masks and black clothes, they couldn't discard their martial arts.

They possessed various martial arts and different characteristics, but there was only one reason they could move in one place with the same goal.

-Their goal is the escort goods!

Saying they are targeting these escort goods means they know the identity of the goods is Cold Iron.

'That means...'

My gaze turned toward Moyong Geum.

The only ones who know the fact that these escort goods are Cold Iron are the Moyong Clan.

Moyong Geum is not the culprit since he would suffer immense loss if the Cold Iron is taken.

However, there must be those who dislike Moyong Geum monopolizing the Cold Iron.

'Stupid bastard.'

It seems they sent wanderers to steal the Cold Iron brought from the Ice Palace.

The Small Snow Squad didn't come out to escort for no reason.

Furthermore, on this side,

"To dare target the goods being traded with the North Sea."

Crackle-

The ground began to freeze.

The earth turned into the North Sea in an instant.

Slip-

"Aaaagh-"

The masked men who were running on the ground to ambush the carriage began to slide, and,

"They are enemies. Lethal force is authorized."

At my command,

Thwack- Slash-

Wi Ji-yeong and Tae Un-seo began to slaughter the enemies with fast hand movements.

"White Night, Tamya!"

-Grrr!

Baek Mu-yong unleashed White Night and Tamya, and,

"Spill where you came from and who you are."

In addition to that.

Eun Bin, who had captured one martial artist wearing a mask, began to torture the wanderer.

"S-Spare me..."

It seemed the masked men hadn't expected this either.

Moyong Geum and his escort, Jang Baek-rim.

I saw the masked men, who thought there were only two escorts protecting the goods, making devastated expressions.

"Steal the escort goods!"

-Waaaaah!

Just then, I felt the masked men reacting to a man's voice.

Whoosh-

Flames soared from my sword as I realized a command unit existed.

"Flame Butterfly-"

A fluttering butterfly landed on the one who had just given orders to the masked men.

At that moment,

Fwoosh!

"Aaaaaagh!"

The man's entire body burned up completely just like that.

Pause-

The masked men's movements stopped for an instant at that flashy death.

"Stop!"

Moyong Geum was not one to miss this opening.

"I am Moyong Geum of the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild. I do not know who sent you, but if you do not stop the attack immediately, I will have no choice but to kill everyone eventually."

Surrender if you don't want to die.

Moyong Geum shouted with such a warning.

"What are you listening for! Hurry up and seize the escort goods!"

The hesitating masked men began to rush toward the carriage.

"That is mine!"

"Die!"

They know what the escort goods are.

It means information has leaked.

"It seems like it's a figure within the clan."

"I can roughly guess who it is."

Moyong Geum drew his sword.

Come to think of it, Moyong Geum was also a martial artist.

If he learned the sword of the Moyong Clan, he would be able to do his part sufficiently.

Slash-

"Cough!"

My eyes shone at Moyong Geum's sword strike that cut down the guys rushing in an instant.

It was my first time experiencing the Moyong Clan's sword.

Because I had lost my life before I could even venture into the Jianghu.

"They are persistent."

If they were ordinary wanderers, they would have given up if they died off like this.

"……?"

"They must be coming from the Moyong Clan. The reason they are targeting the goods quickly is probably because of that."

It means time is on our side.

"That means it doesn't matter if I freeze them all, right?"

Seol Ye-rin began to emit cold energy.

"Could you block the carriage for a moment?"

Rumble.

At my request, Seol Ye-rin erected ice walls on all sides of the carriage.

"Now no one will be able to approach."

"Thanks."

I watched the front.

I saw the men in black wearing masks collapsing while scattering blood.

Eun Bin, Baek Mu-yong, Tae Un-seo, and Wi Ji-yeong were naturally stronger than the wanderers.

"What did they take us for..."

To send such weak wanderers.

"I apologize. When you have helped us up to here."

Most of the wanderers had collapsed.

"I am fine."

Looking only at the result, I don't know if this situation is fine.

Blood was splattered everywhere, and corpses were spread all around.

If someone were to see this scene...

"Moyong Geum!!!"

Just as the situation was being sorted out, someone's shout was heard from afar.

A quite large crowd rushed in and entered my view.

It was clearly the personnel of the Moyong Clan.

"Captain."

"Brother, it seems we must part ways here."

"Yes, Hyung-nim. I wish you a safe return."

"I'll leave the rest to you. Miss Seol."

"I'm ready."

Shatter!

The ice wall collapsed.

Seol Ye-rin and I lightly clasped hands to Moyong Geum and then turned toward the path we came from.

'Being with me, who is from the Demonic Cult, wouldn't be good for Moyong Geum. It's better to step back for now.'

"We return to the Ice Palace quickly."

***

"Are you alright?"

After the party left, the martial artists of the Moyong Clan reached Moyong Geum.

"As expected, it was the Young Master."

The Young Master of the Moyong Clan, Moyong Cheong, looked at Moyong Geum and smiled brightly.

"Were you hurt anywhere?"

"I wasn't hurt, but."

"What are you doing! Chase them!"

"Young Master."

Moyong Geum blocked Moyong Cheong's shout.

"What are you doing? They are our business partners and guests!"

"Whatever the case, they are bastards who spilled blood on our land. We cannot just let them go."

"From today, the Ice Palace is my business partner. I would prefer it if you didn't cause trouble with a business partner."

"That seems difficult, however."

Thud thud thud thud.

The martial artists of the Moyong Clan began to chase the Small Snow Squad.

"Do you intend not to make the next deal?"

"Do you care about that even when this mess has occurred?"

From the beginning, Moyong Cheong had no intention of listening to Moyong Geum's story.

"As a merchant, just take the carriage and go inside like a merchant. We will drive out the barbarians of the Ice Palace who committed murder."

Moyong Geum's expression hardened.

***

We began to be chased.

It was not the picture I had expected.

Because I thought we would return after safely selling the Cold Iron.

'It's troublesome if we cause friction with the Five Great Clans already here.'

Killing wanderers and killing martial artists of the Moyong Clan are completely different.

Rumors spread in an instant.

We only blocked the attack of the wanderers, but they could fabricate that the Ice Palace invaded the Central Plains.

"Captain, what shall we do?"

Even if those chasing from behind weren't masters.

'Friction is absolutely a no-go.'

The Ice Palace must not receive attention.

-These riffraff, just!

-Hoho, Master. Shall we give you some help with this level?

I turned my gaze at the murmurs of the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen.

Whoosh!

The sliding Demon Queen entered my view.

The ground began to fill with icy roads.

Not wanting to lose,

Woosh!

The Sword Venerable swung his sword.

What would happen just because a spirit swung a sword, but.

A violent wind began to blow.

"T-The wind is too strong!"

"Why at a time like this!"

The martial artists of the Moyong Clan chasing from behind became unable to advance.

Thanks to that, we were able to escape easily.

"Is it alright to return like this?"

"I understand that the settlement has already been received. Since he knows there is quite a lot of Cold Iron, Mister Moyong will visit again."

There might be friction within the clan, but if he is the one to become the Merchant King, he should be able to handle it himself.

"I am worried that strange rumors might spread because of killing the wanderers."

I shook my head at Wi Ji-yeong's words.

"Rather, it is a good thing."

We can inform the Murim that the Ice Palace is going strong.

'I remember that the Ice Palace's might did not spread to the Murim when I was staying in the Demonic Cult.'

There must have been this and that reason.

But the status of the North Sea Ice Palace will change from now on.

'I will make it so.'

Only then can I survive from Hyeokryeon Geuk.

My second brother, Hyeokryeon Mu, will surely report my story to Hyeokryeon Geuk.

Since it is before he becomes the Young Cult Leader, I had to be fully prepared to face Hyeokryeon Geuk as much as possible.

The legacy of the Martial Gods, the funding of the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild, and in addition to this, a force like the Small Snow Squad that I can move freely.

I needed too many things.

***

The Ice Palace Head, Seol Baek-ho, summoned me after I returned to the Ice Palace like that.

"Did you call for me?"

"A letter has arrived for you."

A letter?

"Where is the place of origin?"

Hyeokryeon Mu had returned, and I was on my way back after sending Moyong Geum back to the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild.

There should be no more places related to me.

Who sent a letter to me?

"It is the Potala Palace."

"Yes?"

"It seems you will have to go to the Potala Palace for a bit."

This seems like something I've heard a lot somewhere.

"Are you saying... I should go to the Potala Palace personally?"

"Yes, go and bring the Young Palace Head."

"May I ask what the reason is?"

"They say the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace possesses a constitution similar to yours. The problem is, unlike you, that side seems to have caught a heat fever, they said. They asked if I could send Ye-rin, so I told them to come personally."

"Then isn't there no need for me to go?"

"You never know, perhaps you might be able to cure the Potala Palace's Young Palace Head just like you overcame the Extreme Yang Body."

It is unknown if it is possible for an Extreme Yang Body to cure an Extreme Yang Body.

Anyway, it's all good.

But there was something more important than that.

"The Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace, is it a man or a woman?"

"It is a man."

"I will go."

If it's a man, Seol Ye-rin won't worry even if I go to the Potala Palace.

Chapter 44 : Chapter 44

Chapter 44 : Preparation

“Did I say I would go for no reason.”

On the way back after coming out of the Palace Lord’s Hall.

I recalled the location of the Potala Palace and muttered with a troubled expression.

My father-in-law told me to go easily, but the distance was truly too far.

It was hard enough coming from the Demonic Cult to the North Sea Ice Palace, so how long would it take to get to the Potala Palace in the Western Regions.

‘Will it take about a month?’

If we went slowly, it seemed like it would take about that much time.

Suddenly, I wondered if it was okay to be away from Seol Ye-rin for a month.

‘It is troublesome no matter how I look at it.’

It was a problem if the Extreme Yin Qi became saturated and Seol Ye-rin froze up again.

Squirm-

As I thought about being apart from Seol Ye-rin, the Extreme Yang Qi began to squirm.

-Nyaa.

Peek.

Tamya also poked her head out from my bosom for the first time in a while.

“Are you coveting it again?”

Pulse-

It seemed Tamya also felt the Extreme Yang Qi squirming.

Looking at Tamya absorbing the Extreme Yang Qi.

“Ah.”

I could be certain that Miss Seol would not freeze if she was with this little guy.

Because Tamya was a Snow Wolf that absorbed even Extreme Yin Qi.

‘I should go talk to her first, right?’

It was late at night, but it seemed better to have the conversation quickly.

Because I felt like we had to move starting tomorrow to arrive at the Potala Palace even one day sooner.

‘A person with the same constitution as me…….’

By the way, I did not think the news of the Young Palace Head’s complete recovery would have reached all the way to the Potala Palace.

It is good that the Ice Palace’s recognition is rising, but it is troublesome if rumors about me, Hyeokryeon Yeom, spread as well.

Because I must not let Hyeokryeon Geuk take notice of me yet.

“What are you thinking about so intently?”

Flinch-

While I was lost in thought,

I felt a presence before I knew it.

It was Seol Ye-rin.

“I was actually on my way to the Young Palace Head’s Hall. How did you come here?”

“Ahem, I just happened to be taking a walk.”

“A walk?”

“I just wanted to get some fresh air.”

Whish!

Tamya escaped from my bosom and went over to Seol Ye-rin’s arms.

“Tamya!”

“It is fine.”

“I guess Tamya wants to take a walk together too.”

This time, it did not seem like it was to covet the Extreme Yin Qi.

Hop.

“It really seems like he wants to take a walk together.”

“Shall we walk a bit?”

“Sounds good.”

It was a good opportunity.

I thought I should bring up the story about the Potala Palace while walking with Seol Ye-rin.

Thud, thud.

“What did you talk about with Father?”

Seol Ye-rin brought up the topic first.

Thanks to that, I carefully opened my mouth about the Potala Palace.

“He told me to go to the Potala Palace.”

“... The Potala Palace?”

Seol Ye-rin stopped walking.

“Yes.”

“For what matter at the Potala Palace in the Western Regions?”

“He said the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace has a constitution similar to mine.”

“Pardon? He must be very sick like Miss Seol. The Palace Lord told me to bring him to the Ice Palace.”

“... Is the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace a woman?”

“He said it is a man.”

“Ah?”

Hearing that it was a man, Seol Ye-rin’s expression brightened slightly, then she tilted her head.

“But, you are bringing him to the Ice Palace?”

To bring him here, and have him meet whom?

I had not thought that far.

***

-Anyway, you received permission.

-Since it is the Palace Lord’s order, it cannot be helped.

Listening to the mutterings of the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen, I left Seol Ye-rin behind and headed to the Small Snow Squad’s quarters.

I decided to go with the Small Snow Squad for the journey to the Potala Palace.

However, I decided to leave Eun Bin behind.

Because there was no one other than the Vice Captain, Eun Bin, whom I could trust to leave the Young Palace Head, Seol Ye-rin, with.

“Hmm? Captain?”

As I entered the Small Snow Squad’s quarters, Tae Un-seo looked at me and was startled.

His hair was damp, as if he had just washed up.

“Where are the others?”

“Most of them should be resting.”

I looked around.

Thinking about it, I had never visited the Small Snow Squad’s quarters before.

The problem was,

‘Why is it so shabby?’

It seemed the Small Snow Squad’s quarters were just using the place Eun Bin used last time as is.

Naturally, it was not a proper residence.

“You guys live here?”

“Yes? That is correct.”

At the very least, the Ice Wolf Squad’s quarters were not like this.

Then that means only the Small Snow Squad is receiving this kind of treatment.

“Since when?”

“Since the beginning.”

“Groan.”

“There are no major inconveniences. We mostly live in places like this.”

No.

The Young Palace Head’s Hall and the Palace Lord’s Hall were not like this.

“Call Baek Mu-yong and Wi Ji-yeong. I have a matter to discuss.”

“Yes, Captain.”

I saw Tae Un-seo going inside.

“You said the Captain is here?”

Wi Ji-yeong came running out.

Since returning, it seemed she had finished preparing for bed.

“What is the matter?”

Baek Mu-yong also came out while rubbing his eyes.

“I came because there is something to discuss, but before that, I think we need to talk about the lodgings first?”

“What about the lodgings?”

Eun Bin also came outside.

He has an expression that says there is no problem at all.

“I am saying this because I feel it is too frugal compared to other units.”

“I think the Captain knows well that the Ice Palace’s situation is poor these days.”

I know it well.

That is why I gave money to solve that.

Furthermore, the money received from selling the Cold Iron to the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild this time is quite substantial.

The problem is whether to use that money for repairing the Small Snow Squad’s quarters.

“I know that, but.”

I felt that this kind of treatment was a bit unreasonable.

I think it would be good to have a talk with the General Manager before leaving.

“More importantly, for what reason did you call us?”

“Ah, everyone prepare for long-distance travel tomorrow.”

“By long-distance travel, you mean……?”

“We will leave for the Potala Palace.”

At the words Potala Palace, the expressions of the Small Snow Squad members stiffened.

“Are you talking about the Potala Palace in the Western Regions?”

“Correct. For what matter there…….”

I began to tell the Small Snow Squad members the explanation I gave to Seol Ye-rin once again.

“… The Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace.”

“I did not know the relationship between the Ice Palace and the Potala Palace was this good.”

“Aren’t the Outer Region Murim factions all close to each other?”

At my question, Baek Mu-yong shook his head.

“That is not so. Since they tend to move depending on who holds the hegemony of the Outer Regions, the fact that they requested this of the Ice Palace is a bit questionable in itself.”

“Is that so?”

“If the Captain cures the Potala Palace’s Young Palace Head, the Potala Palace will owe a tremendous grace to the Ice Palace.”

From my perspective, it means they could become a force that can stand against the Demonic Cult at least once.

“Knowing that, I definitely have to bring him back safely, right?”

“The fact that we have to go… does not change.”

“I will go pack the food ingredients.”

As Tae Un-seo spoke while shaking off the water,

“Let’s go together!”

Wi Ji-yeong chased after Tae Un-seo.

“If we all leave, who protects the Young Palace Head?”

“That is why I intend to leave the Vice Captain behind.”

“That is…….”

“It seems it will take about a month, so I ask you to take good care of the Young Palace Head during that time.”

“Then the Young Palace Head’s Extreme Yin Qi…….”

Hop.

Tamya pounced on Eun Bin.

“… A Snow Wolf?”

“As long as that guy is with the Young Palace Head, the Young Palace Head will no longer be swayed by the Extreme Yin Qi.”

Tamya was a spirit beast.

“I hope you return safely.”

Eun Bin opened his slit eyes slightly.

There was no way something that would cause those slit eyes to fully open would happen for a month.

“Right. I trust only the Vice Captain.”

I left the Small Snow Squad and began to move to meet the General Manager.

***

Knock knock knock-

Seol Su-hyeok, who had collapsed on his desk unable to overcome his drowsiness while managing the affairs of the Ice Palace in the General Manager’s office, opened his eyes at the sound of knocking on the door.

“Ahem, who is it?”

“It is the Small Snow Squad Captain.”

Hyeokryeon Yeom?

For what reason is Hyeokryeon Yeom here at this hour?

General Manager Seol Su-hyeok stood up and opened the door.

“What brings you here at such a time?”

“I came because there is something to discuss.”

Hyeokryeon Yeom, with a stiff expression, clasped his hands and spoke from outside the door.

There must be a reason for visiting at this hour.

Seol Su-hyeok already knew that the Palace Lord told the Small Snow Squad Captain to go to the Potala Palace.

From the position of the Palace Lord, he was not sending the Small Snow Squad Captain because he felt sorry for the Potala Palace Lord.

‘If he cures the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace, the Ice Palace places the Potala Palace in debt.’

Even if he fails to cure him, just by bringing the Potala Palace’s Young Palace Head to the Ice Palace, they can hold the Young Palace Head hostage.

After Seol Ye-rin’s treatment, the Palace Lord, who is grasping the power of the Ice Palace again, seemed to intend to expand his reach externally as well.

And as the person who can stand at the forefront of exerting that influence.

‘He chose Hyeokryeon Yeom.’

Recently, there are almost no affairs within the Palace that the Small Snow Squad Captain is left out of.

Thus, while the Small Snow Squad is dispatched externally this time, he might intend to completely reorganize the internal structure of the Palace.

If not that.

‘Maybe he intends to give him time to catch his breath from the pressure of the Five Families for a while.’

It is a long way to the Potala Palace.

In the time Hyeokryeon Yeom goes to the Potala Palace and back, the Palace Lord would have seized control of the Ice Palace.

-General Manager, I am sorry I could not pay enough attention to the Ice Palace all this time.

The Palace Lord’s words he heard today contained the meaning of wanting to make the North Sea great again.

He was hardly able to focus on work due to these thoughts and then Hyeokryeon Yeom came to visit.

“What is the discussion?”

“I have a proposal to make.”

A proposal?

“Speak.”

“I think the General Manager is also aware of the matter that I will soon be leaving for the Potala Palace.”

“And so?”

“Since coming to the Ice Palace, I have treated the Young Palace Head. I swept away the horse bandits and solved the Ice Palace’s financial difficulties, and I believe I showed you my ability by even selling off the Cold Iron through the transaction with the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild.”

Flinch-

As Hyeokryeon Yeom listed his credits, Seol Su-hyeok began to make a flustered expression.

Because when someone tells a story like that, there is definitely something they want.

“Right, I know well that you established merit. So, what do you want?”

A reward for the achievements?

Since the engagement ceremony with the Young Palace Head will be held soon, a wedding gift?

He wouldn’t demand the Ten Thousand Year Fire Carp received from the Demonic Cult.

Is he going to demand the Ice Palace’s spiritual medicine?

Seol Su-hyeok looked at Hyeokryeon Yeom with a curious expression as to what he would demand.

“The Small Snow Squad’s quarters are too shabby.”

Pause-

To Seol Su-hyeok, who was agonizing over what to give, Hyeokryeon Yeom's answer was very unexpected.

"... So you are saying to change the Small Snow Squad's quarters now, is that it?"

"It would be good if we can change it. Since we earned a lot of money, if possible, can't you build a new one?"

He is asking to just build a new one.

Not for himself, but for his subordinates.

'Look at this guy?'

He knew he was a lucky charm, but.

It was still a question to Seol Su-hyeok whether Hyeokryeon Yeom was truly moving for the sake of the Ice Palace.

"I will ask just one thing. Why did you readily accept coming to the Ice Palace?"

No matter that he is the Cult Leader's third son, if he had stayed in the Demonic Cult and expanded his power, his future could have been different.

He was more certain after meeting the Cult Leader's second son this time.

If Hyeokryeon Yeom had not become the Ice Palace's live-in son-in-law, he might have been able to surpass the second son, if not the first.

"In Our Cult, the Ice Palace was always consciously regarded as a nemesis. If I am helpful for a blood alliance with such a nemesis, wouldn't both the Ice Palace and Our Cult be able to move toward a warmer place?"

At the words warmer place, Seol Su-hyeok's two pupils began to dilate.

"So I ask this of you, General Manager. I am fine, so please allow the squad members to live in a good environment."

"... I will have a new one built while you are away at the Potala Palace. And I will raise the salary as well."

At the word salary, Hyeokryeon Yeom opened his eyes wide.

"... There was a salary coming out too?"

Come to think of it, realizing that he had never once given a salary to Hyeokryeon Yeom, Seol Su-hyeok laughed and spoke.

“It will be an amount you will be satisfied with.”

***

The next day, just before leaving for the Potala Palace, the Small Snow Squad was able to receive their first monthly salary.

Chapter 45 : Chapter 45

Chapter 45 : Kunlun

“This is.....”

“What money is this?”

“It is the travel expenses and also the monthly salary.”

“You mean monthly salary?!”

Wi Ji-yeong was startled.

Because it was three times the amount she received when she lived as a maid of the Demonic Cult.

“I thought you considered us room-corner idlers. It seems like a proper salary received after a long time. Thank you, Captain.”

Eun Bin also checked that the monthly salary had increased and offered his thanks.

“... I will pledge my loyalty!”

“I will repay you with delicious ingredients!”

Baek Mu-yong also received a salary much higher than his days in the Ice Wolf Squad.

Tae Un-seo was the same.

It seemed he received enough funds to buy all the food ingredients he could buy for the cooking he wanted to do.

“Whenever we produce results, I will demand a salary raise from the General Manager, so I ask you to do well in the future too.”

“Thank you!!”

As expected, no matter which world it is, money is important to satisfy basic human desires.

‘Because there is no one who wants a life like a slave.’

Work hard, and earn as much as you work.

If you produce results, corresponding rewards follow.

That is how development happens.

“Now then, shall we leave for the Potala Palace?”

“I came to see you off.”

Just as we were about to leave, the Young Palace Head Seol Ye-rin revealed herself.

“You came?”

I heard that after we talked yesterday, the Young Palace Head Seol Ye-rin went to find the Palace Lord.

Honestly, I was worried about what to do if she said she would go to the Potala Palace together.

Looking at her attire, fortunately, it seemed to be my groundless fear.

Leap!

As soon as she saw Seol Ye-rin, Tamya jumped straight into Seol Ye-rin’s bosom.

“If you are with that little guy, you will be fine for the time being.”

“Yes, the time limit is exactly one month.”

“Time limit?”

“One month later, on the day the Third Young Master returns from stopping by the Potala Palace, I reached an agreement with the Palace Lord to hold an engagement ceremony.”

This is the first I am hearing of this.

“Engagement ceremony?”

“Yes, I will be working hard so that the people within the Palace can acknowledge the Third Young Master during that one month. So, Third Young Master, please execute the order given by the Palace Lord as quickly as possible and return.”

“I will do so.”

After saying it, I saw Seol Ye-rin’s blushing face.

Thinking about it, an engagement ceremony means we will marry later on.

The fact that she talked about this directly to the Palace Lord means Seol Ye-rin expressed her intention to marry herself.

‘Oh my.’

Originally, I should have been the one to talk about something like this first.

“When I return, I will bring back a gift.”

Although it feels a bit premature to propose yet.

I thought it would be good to prepare at least a gift to commemorate the engagement ceremony.

***

‘Really.’

Her face was burning.

Yesterday.

Hearing that Hyeokryeon Yeom was going to the Potala Palace, she went to find Father right away.

-Oh, Ye-rin, what brings you here at this time of night!

-Father. I heard you ordered Young Master Hyeokryeon to go to the Potala Palace?

-The one the Potala Palace requested was you. But I cannot send you, can I.

-What if I say I want to go together?

-I do not permit it.

-I knew you would say that.

-Are you giving up?

-Instead, I have a condition.

-Speak it.

-The day Young Master Hyeokryeon returns. I want to hold an engagement ceremony.

-You are saying... you want to marry?

-I said an engagement ceremony. Don’t we have to do it even formally through the blood alliance anyway? I can at least decide the date myself.

-..... I understand.

-Ah, and by any chance, you aren't going to form something like a blood alliance with the Potala Palace too, are you?

-Why do you ask that?

-I heard the Young Palace Head is a man? It will be troublesome if you bring him to the Ice Palace and entrust his treatment to me.

-... That will not happen.

-Good. Then, I ask you to proceed with the engagement ceremony.

That is how the engagement ceremony was decided.

The problem was the fact that she had to convey this to Hyeokryeon Yeom.

From then on, her heart started pounding.

It was just an engagement ceremony, but she started running out of breath as if she had to convey her feelings.

“When I return, I will bring back a gift.”

It seemed Hyeokryeon Yeom recognized such feelings of Seol Ye-rin.

He said he would buy a gift on his way back from the Potala Palace.

At those single words, her heart began to resonate once again.

‘Really, quiet down a bit.’

Afraid that the sound of her heart would be heard, Seol Ye-rin stared at Hyeokryeon Yeom with a nervous heart.

“Is there any gift you want?”

“A gift is something the giver should think about. And while a gift is a gift, please do not forget that returning safely is the priority.”

One month is a long time.

If any problem happens to Hyeokryeon Yeom during that time.

‘I will not stay still.’

She would mobilize all the power Seol Ye-rin possesses to punish the one who put Hyeokryeon Yeom in trouble.

Flinch-

Although it was anew, Seol Ye-rin realized that her gaze looking at Hyeokryeon Yeom had changed quite a bit.

“Right, thank you for worrying. Then I will be back. Let’s go.”

“Yes, Captain.”

“Vice Captain, I hope you protect Miss Seol well.”

“Yes, understood. Captain.”

“I will be back, Young Palace Head!”

“Please do not skip meals and make sure to eat properly.”

Wi Ji-yeong and Tae Un-seo threw a word each while looking at Seol Ye-rin and began to move following Hyeokryeon Yeom.

“Eun Bin. Everyone will return safely, right?”

“Of course.”

“One month, huh.”

-Kyaong.

A time that is long if you say it’s long, and short if you say it’s short.

During that time, Hyeokryeon Yeom will continue to change.

‘He will probably become much stronger than now.’

She could not lose.

Slurp-

She felt Tamya sucking in the Extreme Yin Qi little by little.

Just as the Ice Crystal targeted Seol Ye-rin’s Extreme Yin Qi, Tamya was also coveting Seol Ye-rin.

‘I cannot rely on him anymore.’

During the one month, Seol Ye-rin also resolved to change.

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Potala Palace.

“Ugh-”

There was a figure twisting their body in the Young Palace Head’s Hall.

Bubble bubble.

A painfulness as if the whole body was being seared by hot fire is felt.

The Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace, Cheon Deung-jin, bit his lip.

‘If there is hell, is it here?’

-Jin-ah, endure it just a little longer.

The Palace Lord’s voice flows into his head.

‘How do you expect me to endure this pain?’

-I requested the Ice Palace to send someone with Yin energy to cool down your heat, but they said they are sending someone with Extreme Yang Qi.

‘Extreme Yang Qi?’

He heard that Extreme Yang Qi is something even worse than this pain Cheon Deung-jin is feeling right now.

“Is he... alive?”

-Yes, they say so! I heard that the Demonic Cult Leader’s third son, who possesses the Extreme Yang Body, is overcoming the Extreme Yang Qi and living on despite having the Extreme Yang Body. If that guy comes, he might be able to control your Yang energy!

Several questions arose.

We requested the Ice Palace, so why is the Demonic Cult Leader’s third son coming all the way to the Potala Palace.

How can he live without struggling in pain while possessing the Extreme Yang Body.

“How long... do they say it will take.”

-That is.....

The North Sea is far.

It was highly likely to take over fifteen days just to cross from the North Sea to the Western Regions.

‘It will take a long time.’

“I will... try to endure.”

-They say the North Sea Ice Palace’s Young Palace Head also survived thanks to him. Rumors that the Ice Palace Lord is excited thanks to that have even reached here! I think we can really have hope this time! So, endure just a little longer!

The Potala Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa, could only say these words for Cheon Deung-jin.

‘Hope?’

It has been a long time since he gave up on such things.

Is it because he knows that if he does not overcome this heat, it will lead to death.

The only reason Cheon Deung-jin lives without giving up on this life is one thing.

‘I cannot die before taking revenge on that guy.’

So today as well, Cheon Deung-jin was enduring the pain.

For a whole fifteen days, Cheon Deung-jin struggled in the pain of the Fire Spirit Qi.

***

At that time.

Qinghai Province, Moyong Clan.

The Moyong Clan's Young Clan Head, Moyong Cheong, did not like the behavior of the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild Leader's son, Moyong Geum.

Moyong Geum was increasing his influence within the family by supporting the Moyong Clan through financial gains.

"We should have dealt with the Ice Palace bastards back then."

Seeing the Cold Iron loaded on the carriage, he felt even more so.

The bigger the Moyong Clan Merchant Guild grew, the greater Moyong Geum's prestige would become, and conversely, Moyong Cheong's prestige would end up shrinking.

"I need to make it so they can never trade with the Ice Palace again."

That didn't mean he could invade the Ice Palace either.

"If only it spreads widely that the Ice Palace bastards are guys who will cause harm to the Central Plains....."

He can make Moyong Geum go to ruin.

As for the merchant guild, it is enough if Moyong Cheong absorbs and recreates it.

The urgent priority is to deal with the guy who is like a thorn in the eye first.

"The fact that they started trading with Moyong Geum means the Ice Palace bastards might start moving in earnest."

Murim's perception of the Ice Palace is not on the good side.

Is it just once or twice that the crazy guys who call themselves Martial Gods caused a scene in the Central Plains?

"If only I can tell the other guys that the Ice Palace has started moving so we must keep them in check."

The story will be different.

Moyong Cheong began to tap his finger on the table.

“Just in case.....”

Scritch scratch scritch.

He began to write a letter.

If he conveys the letter through the Murim Alliance, he can deliver the letter to the key figures of the Nine Sects One Gang and the Five Great Clans.

If by any chance there are martial artists of the Ice Palace crossing over not to Liaoning but to another place, they will be able to keep the Ice Palace in check.

The carrier pigeon sent by Moyong Cheong flew into the sky.

***

Fifteen days later.

“Huff, huff.”

-If someone sees this, they would think you are trying to become a master of the Lightness Art.

-To think a martial artist who can wield Inner Qi would think of running until his breath reaches the tip of his chin. I cannot understand it.

The Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen began to nag.

“... Young Master, this is training, right?”

“This is the second time I thought I might die while unfolding movement arts.”

“Although coming on horseback would have been slow, our stamina would have been preserved.....”

The Small Snow Squad members voiced their complaints.

It is a natural complaint.

Because we decided to conduct a forced march to the Potala Palace.

There were several reasons.

‘To meet the schedule of the engagement ceremony, maximum speed movement was essential.’

The second reason was due to the location characteristics of the Potala Palace.

The Potala Palace exists in the Western Regions.

The path from the North Sea to the Western Regions is divided into two.

The first path is the path crossing the Great Grasslands and cutting across Qinghai to cross over to the Western Regions.

If we ran in a straight line, it was the path that could reach the Potala Palace the fastest.

The second path, although a bit of a detour, is the path entering the Western Regions via Xinjiang where the Demonic Cult is located.

In the case of this path, the advantage was that we could head to the Potala Palace without entering the Central Plains.

What the Small Snow Squad and I chose was the shortcut.

Thanks to pushing away the horse bandit groups and burning them, the vast grassland was in an optimized state to unfold movement arts.

As we ran our asses off across the Great Grasslands like that, we ended up arriving.

“From here on, it is Qinghai.”

The entrance where those from the Outer Region Murim enter the Central Plains Murim.

Qinghai Province.

“Hmm?”

Just as we were about to enter Qinghai Province.

I saw martial artists wearing blue-gray robes passing by.

Seeing the silver cloud pattern engraved on the sleeve cuffs swaying in the wind, Wi Ji-yeong shouted with a bright expression.

“Young Master! I think they are Ox-nosed Taoists!”

As soon as we arrived in Qinghai Province, we almost ran into the Taoists of the Kunlun Sect.

Chapter 46 : Chapter 46

Chapter 46 : Potala Palace

Taoist Azure Cloud of the Kunlun Sect sighed at the Sect Leader's order to go on patrol with the first-generation disciples.

It was understandable, for even though they were located in Qinghai Province, unless the Demonic Cult or the various factions of the Outer Regions were to start a war, they would not directly invade the Central Plains.

The current Central Plains was in an unprecedented era of peace.

Perhaps because of that, most martial artists, as if suffering from insensitivity to safety, considered the duties they should fundamentally take for granted as bothersome.

"There is no way the guys from the Outer Region Murim would enter all the way to Qinghai Province, right?"

"Still, aren't there times when external patrols like this are good?"

The first-generation disciples began to giggle.

From their perspective, slacking off from training seemed enjoyable.

"Ahem, did I not tell you that this is also part of training."

"Yes, Elder."

At Taoist Azure Cloud's words, the first-generation disciples shut their mouths.

Wanting to quickly report that there were no anomalies and rest, they were looking around leisurely, when,

"Hmm?"

"Elder, these are traces of someone passing by!"

At the words of a sharp-eyed first-generation disciple, Taoist Azure Cloud looked in that direction.

Swipe-

Through the leaves, traces of human presence came into view.

And the warmth felt from there.

It is evidence that someone was there until just a moment ago.

“Search the surroundings!”

Taoist Azure Cloud’s expression began to harden firmly.

There is no way there would be people in the remote areas of Qinghai Province.

‘Is it really the Ice Palace bastards?’

Not long ago, a carrier pigeon with an unknown source circulated toward the Nine Sects One Gang and the Five Great Clans.

A message stating that the Ice Palace might begin to maneuver again.

Martial artists of the Murim Alliance who saw that message recalled the events of a hundred years ago.

‘That a disaster like the North Sea Martial God might target Murim again.’

Pressure.

Rather than finding the owner of the message, due to anxiety over what might happen, the Murim Alliance issued instructions to each sect to go on patrol.

And so Kunlun was patrolling like this as well.

Then, the fact that traces of human presence remain here right now means there is a high possibility that forces of the Outer Region Murim, like the Ice Palace, have truly crossed over to Qinghai.

“No human presence is felt in the vicinity.”

“Warmth remained, they could not have gone far yet. Quickly-”

Swoosh!

Just then, men in black wielding swords soared out from the ground.

“Keuhuk!”

In an instant, one of the Kunlun Sect’s first-generation disciples died.

“Un-ah!”

As Taoist Azure Void drew his sword and moved, the man in black began to flee.

The appearance of fleeing while scattering ink-colored demonic qi.

It was not the Ice Palace mentioned in the carrier pigeon, but a member of the Demonic Cult who had been lying in ambush in Qinghai Province.

“It is clearly a Demonic Cult bastard! We must not lose him!!”

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After the martial artists of Kunlun left.

Rustle.

From the trees, the bushes, and the underground tunnels, Hyeokryeon Yeom’s party, who had been watching the situation, revealed themselves one by one.

“... What is this situation?”

“Well.”

A man in black appeared, killed a martial artist of Kunlun and ran away.

“Is he a real Demonic Cult member?”

The gazes of the Small Snow Squad members turned to me.

-Strange.

-I agree.

I saw the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen tilting their heads.

“No, the guy who ran away is not a Cult member.”

If it were a demonic practitioner, he would not run away scattering demonic qi so clumsily like that.

If a guy who entered Qinghai Province to perform a secret mission was discovered,

‘He would have killed them all.’

And very covertly at that.

So that could absolutely not be a Demonic Cult member.

‘Is this Hyeokryeon Geuk’s work?’

During the time I lived in the Demonic Cult in my previous life.

I mastered martial arts through the elders.

When I entered closed training and lived together with the elders, I could not pay attention to external affairs.

Even then, I remember Hyeokryeon Geuk moving very busily.

Back then, I thought I would easily win against Hyeokryeon Geuk since he was running around here and there without training, doing whatever he was doing.

‘Was he laying the groundwork?’

Qinghai is a bridgehead for invading the Central Plains.

If the Demonic Cult intends to invade the Central Plains, the first sect they must deal with is the Kunlun Sect belonging to the Nine Sects One Gang.

‘But for what purpose?’

If Hyeokryeon Geuk planned this kind of work, there must be a reason.

‘Even if he informs the Murim Alliance that demonic practitioners are crossing over to the Central Plains, nothing will change.’

There was a need to find out for what reason he was putting on such an act, but.

“What should we do?”

I really wanted to chase after him in my heart, but regrettably, there was too little time.

While I was agonizing over what would be good to do.

-Just go to the Potala Palace.

Flinch-

The Sword Venerable spoke to me.

-Since you aren’t going to quarrel with Kunlun anyway, if it’s just confirming what is happening, my disciple and I will do it, so you guys go ahead first.

‘Was movement possible in that way too?’

-Although there is a distance limit, as long as you don’t leave Qinghai Province, spying should be sufficiently possible.

The Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen are souls bound to the legacy.

If the distance from the Extreme Snow Sword and the Cold Snow Secret Realm becomes far, they will return again.

‘All right.’

“Ignore it and unfold movement arts to the Potala Palace.”

Leaving the information acquisition to the two people, I decided to run straight toward the Western Regions, the Potala Palace, with the Small Snow Squad members.

Dash-

Watching the running Small Snow Squad members, the Sword Venerable muttered.

-Keul keul, then shall we move too?

-Yes, Master. It reminds me of the old days.

Swoosh-

The Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen, who had to collect as much information as possible before Hyeokryeon Yeom got too far away, flew through the air and began to chase the Taoists of the Kunlun Sect.

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“Stop right there!”

The Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen discovered the Ox-nosed Taoists of Kunlun not far away.

-It looks a bit like a lure, doesn’t it?

The man in black was scattering demonic qi and maintaining an appropriate distance so the Taoists could catch up.

As if.

-He engaged in a chase with a demonic practitioner and it seems he intends to show that the Demonic Cult is dangerous.

It was strange.

While the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen were watching the situation with its unknowable intentions.

Stop-

The man in black stopped.

“Elder, that guy stopped!”

The man in black, who drew his sword, looked around for a moment,

Then grinned.

It was clearly witnessed that his eyes, not covered by the mask, curved slightly.

“You’re laughing?”

“Avenge Un-ie!”

The moment the first-generation disciples fell far back to unfold a sword formation,

-What the!

-No!

The Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen spat out sounds of astonishment.

What they thought would naturally pour out was not demonic qi.

It was a terrible chill.

It was Ice Art, not Demonic Art.

Crack crackle-

The surroundings began to freeze centering on the demonic practitioner.

“You bastard... What kind of guy are you! Were you really... the Ice Palace bastard mentioned in the carrier pigeon!”

“Kill him!”

“Open formation!”

The first-generation disciples of Kunlun unfolded a sword formation and pounced on the demonic practitioner.

However,

Rumble rumble!

The chill they encountered for the first time made their footsteps falter, and the demonic practitioner took advantage of that gap to begin ravaging the bodies of the Taoists with his sword.

“You bastaaard!”

Seeing that sight, Taoist Azure Cloud unfolded the Cloud Dragon Eight Forms and fell from the air.

However,

Bang!

He too had no choice but to bounce off from the rebounding energy pouring out from the demonic practitioner.

Strong.

And unfamiliar.

Kunlun was able to face the power of an Outer Region martial artist for the first time.

Soon.

Swoosh!

The man in black began to run away again.

The Ox-nosed Taoists of Kunlun could not think of chasing the man in black.

-I don’t know who it is, but he is wicked.

-It is a matter we cannot just pass over. If it is someone who uses Our Palace’s Ice Art while scattering demonic qi……. We must inform him immediately.

The Martial Gods, having watched all of this situation, returned to Hyeokryeon Yeom.

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The next day, noon.

Outskirts of the Potala Palace.

-It is hot.

-I think this every time I come, but this place is truly an environment completely opposite to the North Sea.

At the Demon Queen's words, I asked.

'Have you ever visited the Potala Palace?'

-Briefly in the past. Because there was a guy I wanted to beat up.

'Did you beat him up plenty?'

-Of course!

Looking at the Demon Queen's reaction, it seemed the Potala Palace also would not like the Ice Palace people that much.

"Whew, we have arrived."

Wi Ji-yeong wiped her sweat.

Is it because we moved while unfolding movement arts like crazy?

Everyone looked exhausted.

Baek Mu-yong was sighing heavily in the sweltering heat.

Tae Un-seo was frowning deeply.

"Is it hard?"

"I am hungry. I want to quickly make something cool and eat it."

The fact that his focus was on 'making and eating' rather than eating gave me goosebumps.

More importantly.

'Is it that hot?'

Is it because of the constitutional characteristics of the Extreme Yang Body?

Just as with the cold, I did not feel the heat that much either.

Seeing such an appearance of mine, the Small Snow Squad members were thinking that I had reached the state of Impervious to Cold and Heat.

The Small Snow Squad members including me stared ahead.

A gigantic palace soaring amidst the floating red clouds.

It was like a sanctuary.

The base of the castle was blindingly pure white walls, but the orange and vermilion jade towers piled on top of it spewed out golden mist every time they received the setting sun, touching the sky.

To enter that palace, it seems we have to climb dozens of stone steps.

‘I think I need to meet the Potala Palace’s Young Palace Head as soon as possible and confirm what the problem is.’

There is the matter of the engagement ceremony, and the contents delivered through the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen also weighed on my mind.

-Guys wearing black clothes were using Ice Arts while spewing demonic qi. That is the problem.

-Yes, it means it is a perfect situation for you, an Ice Palace person from the Demonic Cult, to be suspected. Whether you actually use chill or not.

In other words, I don’t know who it is, but to spread rumors that I am a threatening figure, they deployed a demonic practitioner who learned Ice Arts to Kunlun.

However.

‘It seems they do not know I have an Extreme Yang Body.’

If they intended to perfectly imitate me, they would have used Fire Arts, not Ice Arts.

Anyway, in a situation like this, there was a need to closely examine the situation on the way back to the North Sea.

‘I have to hold the engagement ceremony too, there is a lot of work.’

The engagement ceremony that will be held when I return to the North Sea.

Since it is an engagement ceremony, contact will go to the Cult Leader as well.

By now, Hyeokryeon Mu must have arrived at the Demonic Cult and talked about me.

I wondered what kind of reaction Hyeokryeon Geuk and the Cult Leader would show if they knew the fact that I was doing well.

“Are you going to enter right away?”

The main gate of the Potala Palace.

I saw a monk guarding the front of the gate.

Currently, I was hiding my presence along with the Small Snow Squad members.

Because we knew that most Outer Region people do not view outsiders kindly.

Furthermore,

‘To think he said I just have to arrive at the Potala Palace and say I came to meet the Young Palace Head.’

Then it means I have to barge into the Potala Palace and declare, I came from the North Sea.

“What should we do?”

“Wouldn’t it be better to try talking to him first?”

“Who wants to try talking?”

“I will do it.”

Tae Un-seo stepped forward readily.

It seems he wants to move quickly because he is hungry.

“Will it be okay?”

“Still, among us, I think Tae Un-seo will look the least threatening.”

Baek Mu-yong is threatening because of his large build.

Thinking that the people of the Potala Palace would not be wary of a woman since they are former monks, I eventually decided to send Tae Un-seo to the monk.

“Tell him you came from the North Sea Ice Palace and ask how to meet the Young Palace Head.”

“Yes, understood.”

At my instruction, Tae Un-seo approached the monk at the Potala Palace main gate.

Soon. The two people began to talk.

Then Tae Un-seo suddenly pulled out a kitchen knife.

“Ah.”

The moment I realized something went wrong,

Scuttle.

Tae Un-seo unfolded movement arts and began to run toward where we were.

At the same time,

Rumble-

The monks of the Potala Palace began to pour out.

Chapter 47 : Chapter 47

Chapter 47 : Fire Spirit Qi

"Warrior Tae, just what did you tell them?!"

"I said exactly what you told me to say!"

"Try saying it without getting a single letter wrong!"

"I came to pick up the Young Palace Head, guide me to the Young Palace Head! Ah, I also said that since I was hungry before that, it would be good if you gave me some food too."

"Did you not say you came from the Ice Palace?"

"Ah, I left that out!"

Sending Tae Un-seo was the problem.

Currently, we were in a standoff with the monks pouring out of the Potala Palace.

"Where do you come from when you seek the Young Palace Head?"

"It seems my subordinate made a mistake. I am Hyeokryeon Yeom from the North Sea Ice Palace. Did you not receive contact?"

Flinch-

At the mention of the North Sea Ice Palace, the expression of the one who appeared to be the leader of the monks hardened.

"I am called Jin Gang-pae. I did not know you were people from the Ice Palace. I will escort you inside. Everyone, back down!"

Rumble-

At Jin Gang-pae's single word, the monks holding staff retreated.

'It seems there is no wariness regarding external personnel here.'

Even when I arrived at the North Sea Ice Palace, there were those who showed extreme wariness.

I consider exclusion regarding outsiders a natural behavior that occurs more in factions with strong belonging and little exchange.

In fact, the Demonic Cult was the same.

If guys who threw themselves into the Demonic Cult from the Central Plains appeared occasionally, the guys who were originally from the Demonic Cult would start poking at them with wariness or hostility.

It is being treated like a stone that rolled in.

A society of the weak is meat and the strong do eat where if you endure, you can mingle together, and if you cannot endure, you die or get beaten up.

Because the place called Murim is a world of those with power.

Glance-

I looked at Jin Gang-pae who was commanding the monks of the Potala Palace.

'His might is roughly... about equal to Baek Mu-yong?'

It was impressive that he was carrying a saber, not a sword, at his waist.

Because the other monks were holding staff.

"Was there no discomfort in coming here?"

At Jin Gang-pae's single word, I definitely got the feeling that we were being served with extreme sincerity.

As expected, nice words for nice words.

We began to enter inside the Potala Palace together with the monks who surrounded us as if besieging us.

"There were no big problems except for the distance."

"I suppose the Western Regions and the North Sea are indeed far apart. How is it now that you have visited the Potala Palace in person?"

This time he asked Wi Ji-yeong.

"It would be fine if not for the heat!"

"Indeed, since you came from the cold North Sea, you might not be adapted to the heat. I will prepare some cool water."

"Thank you."

Baek Mu-yong tilted his head and sent a telepathic message.

-It is strange, Captain.

-What is strange?

-The martial artists of the Potala Palace are not people who lower themselves like this usually. They are guys who think they should be wary first if they are outsiders like us. They are too docile.

I think there was a clear order from above.

Rather, the Ice Palace is a strange one.

No matter that I am an outsider, they treated someone who came to treat the Young Palace Head coldly.

But the Potala Palace seemed a bit different.

"We have arrived."

At Jin Gang-pae's words, we looked up ahead.

A giant gate larger and more splendid than the gate of the North Sea Ice Palace revealed its appearance.

Rumble.

As the huge gate opened and we went inside.

"Who is the live-in son-in-law of the Ice Palace Lord?"

A man with copper skin possessing an atmosphere similar to the North Sea Ice Palace Lord, Ice King Seol Baek-ho, revealed his appearance.

***

The Palace Lord of the Potala Palace, Lion King Cheon Jeok-pa, examined the aspects of the group that entered the Potala Palace.

A total of four people.

One woman and three men.

The one who stood out exactly was the handsome man wearing black clothes in the center.

A man who seemed to possess a noble dignity to the extent that the woman who was clearly a martial artist looked like a maid.

Up to the large built man who appeared to be an escort and the strange guy wearing a kitchen knife instead of a sword at his waist.

'To think of visiting the Potala Palace with only four people.'

It was very daring.

"I am Hyeokryeon Yeom, the Captain of the Small Snow Squad, the unit that protects the Young Palace Head of the Ice Palace. I greet the Palace Lord of the Potala Palace."

When Hyeokryeon Yeom took the clasped hands greeting, Cheon Jeok-pa made an intrigued expression.

"Small Snow Squad Captain, you say."

"Palace Lord, you must introduce yourself."

Then, the Guardian Monk, Arhat, who was standing next to him spoke to Cheon Jeok-pa.

"I am the Potala Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa. You have come a long way."

"No, I heard that like our Young Palace Head, the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace is also very sick. Would it not be good to check the condition right away?"

"I heard it is the Extreme Yang Body."

Flare-

Hyeokryeon Yeom showed it with actions rather than words.

Cheon Jeok-pa's eyebrows twitched, confirming the flames blooming around Hyeokryeon Yeom.

"I do not know what constitution the Young Palace Head possesses, but I think mine was worse if it was severe."

"Is there... no pain?"

"Too much time has passed to feel pain."

It is not just this life.

In all my life, I, Hyeokryeon Yeom, possessed the Extreme Yang Body and he had memories of struggling to escape from the Extreme Yang Body.

Of course, in the case of this life, it was a case that was resolved by meeting Seol Ye-rin.

'However.'

What is this feeling?

It is a feeling I am feeling for the first time.

Since entering the Potala Palace, the Extreme Yang Energy has fluctuated.

As if it was a feeling that something was calling me from somewhere.

-It is hot, hot.

-It is a place that is poisonous to us.

Then, the voices of the Sword Venerable and Demon Queen were heard.

-Is something the matter?

-Did you not feel it?

-What are you speaking of?

-The energy of the Fire Spirit Jade.

Fire Spirit Jade?

-If the Ice Crystal exists in the North Sea, a divine object called the Fire Spirit Jade exists in the Potala Palace. Just as the Young Palace Head of the Ice Palace received the influence of the Ice Crystal, perhaps the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace received the influence of the Fire Spirit Jade.

-Then you mean the pounding that has been hitting my heart since earlier is because of the Fire Spirit Jade.

-Since you must possess the Extreme Yang Qi, it would be plausible for it to resonate with you.

For some reason, I wanted to see it.

"Good, if the Small Snow Squad Captain cannot treat the Young Palace Head, I would like you to take him to the Ice Palace quickly."

"I will do my best."

Just like it was in the North Sea, the meeting with the Young Palace Head happened rapidly in the Potala Palace too.

However, this time too, the only one who could access the Young Palace Head's Hall was me alone.

I, who entered the Young Palace Head's Hall together with the Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa, and the Guardian Monk Arhat, asked.

"By any chance, is the Young Palace Head also of a special constitution like the Extreme Yang Body?"

"That is not it."

It's not, but he suffers from Extreme Yang Qi?

"If I were to define it... it could be about the level of the Fire Spirit Body."

"Fire Spirit Body..."

If I did not know about the Fire Spirit Jade, I might not know, but I could deduce that it meant a body that received the influence of the Fire Spirit Jade no matter who heard it.

"Now, this is the room where the Young Palace Head is staying. We are trying to make it as cool as possible, but it was not easy."

"Young Palace Head. The Palace Lord and the guest from the North Sea have arrived."

The voice of the Guardian Monk was conveyed to the other side of the door.

"It's hot..."

Laborious breathing sounds were heard from inside.

"Jin-a, someone possessing the Extreme Yang Body similar to you has arrived from the North Sea. May I send him in?"

At Cheon Jeok-pa's words, a voice was heard from inside.

"Can he endure this heat?"

Cheon Jeok-pa and Arhat's gazes headed toward me.

***

Heat?

I have no experience feeling such a thing in my life.

"It is fine."

"He says he is fine."

"If so, please come in."

As the Palace Lord of the Potala Palace nodded, I grabbed the door and opened it.

It was slightly warm.

'Warm?'

If it is warm for me, it means this heat is at a level ordinary people cannot handle.

"Are you okay?"

"There is no problem. Then I will be back."

Rattle.

As I closed the door and entered inside the Young Palace Head's room.

-Ahem.

-It is to the extent that the energy of the Fire Spirit has encroached upon the room.

The two Martial Gods made uncomfortable expressions.

It must be because it is an incompatible energy.

However, to me, it was giving a coziness like a sanctuary.

There were no items whatsoever inside the room.

Probably because everything melts down in the heat.

I saw a figure lying down as if collapsed in the place located in the center.

"Hello, I am called Cheon Deung-jin. I apologize for greeting you in this appearance."

An appearance without even the strength to get up.

Sweat was flowing down like rain from Cheon Deung-jin's whole body.

"Are you in much pain?"

"Rather than pain, it is agonizing."

As I tried to approach Cheon Deung-jin,

Vwoom-

The Extreme Yang Qi reacted.

'What is this?'

It wasn't even Tamya, but the Extreme Yang Qi started to spew out as if coveting something delicious.

'They said too much is as bad as too little.'

I controlled the Extreme Yang Qi for now.

Don't I have to judge whether I can eat it or not?

"I will examine you for a moment first."

As I tried to grab his hand,

Whoosh!

Rebounding Energy occurred.

"The heat energy refuses me?"

This is the first time for something like this.

-Just like the Extreme Yin Qi of the Ice Crystal and the Yin Qi when learning martial arts are different.

-It means general fire energy and Extreme Yang Qi are different. But even among them, the Fire Spirit Qi possessed by the Fire Spirit Jade is certainly energy of a level that rivals the Extreme Yang Qi.

I wanted to see the Fire Spirit Jade more and more.

"...Are you okay?"

"Ah, yes. There is no problem."

I flowed qi to my eyeballs and visualized the mana circuit in front of my eyes.

Then,

Flash-

The Fire Spirit Qi swirling around Cheon Deung-jin's body revealed its appearance.

The eyes that can see the circuits were becoming a tremendous help at times like this.

'It is plausible that it is agonizing.'

The acupoints where qi passes through were filled with Fire Spirit Qi.

It is to the extent where I do not know how he can be alive.

Thinking that removing the Fire Spirit Qi from Cheon Deung-jin's body was the priority, I attempted to approach again.

Flash-

Rebounding Energy occurred, but it was useless this time.

I pierced through the Fire Spirit Qi with Extreme Yang Qi.

Contact is the priority for now.

Just like I received the Extreme Yin Qi by contacting Seol Ye-rin.

Whether to push my Extreme Yang Qi into Cheon Deung-jin, or suck up Cheon Deung-jin's Fire Spirit Qi.

I felt I would know that if I touched him.

Fortunately, it seemed the Extreme Yang Qi pushed away the Fire Spirit Qi now.

I quickly reached out my hand toward Cheon Deung-jin's wrist.

Tap-

The moment I just grabbed Cheon Deung-jin's wrist,

Swish!

The Fire Spirit Qi shot into my body as if trying to swallow me.

'Foolish.'

It was funny that it was thinking the Fire Spirit Qi would win as a matter of course.

The Extreme Yang Qi welcomed the entry of the Fire Spirit Qi.

If I simply compare the Extreme Yang Qi and the Fire Spirit Qi, it is like this.

The Fire Spirit Qi is the energy of fire that flows hugely like the Yangtze River.

However, the Yangtze River is also eventually regarded as a single flow when it meets the sea.

In other words, the Extreme Yang Qi is no different from a giant sea of fire making up the human body.

Just as the flowing waves of the Yangtze River became just a part of the sea, the Extreme Yang Qi was accepting the Fire Spirit Qi affectionately.

As if telling it to come quickly, it started to accept the Fire Spirit Qi toward the qi center.

Gurgle gurgle-

The more it did so, the better Cheon Deung-jin's complexion started to become.

"I don't think we need to take you to the Ice Palace?"

If the Extreme Yang Qi could just absorb all the Fire Spirit Qi like this, I felt I might not need to take the Young Palace Head to the Ice Palace.

"Mmm..."

As the Fire Spirit Qi escaped more and more, Cheon Deung-jin started to leak a groan.

Only then did my gaze head toward Cheon Deung-jin.

His body looked extremely slender, and his face also appeared more beautiful than any man I had seen.

A different feeling from Hyeokryeon Mu.

"You will charm quite a few women if you go outside."

It is a pity.

The fact that Seol Ye-rin and Cheon Deung-jin as well are suffering from constitutional problems like this.

Of course, it seems both are because of the implements called the Ice Crystal and the Fire Spirit Jade.

I thought Cheon Deung-jin would become okay if I just extracted all the Fire Spirit Qi like this.

At that moment,

Flare-

"Huh?"

Something unexpected happened.

As the Fire Spirit Qi escaped, Cheon Deung-jin's body started to weaken.

And the Fire Spirit Qi that had encroached upon the room started to aim for Cheon Deung-jin's body again.

Then,

Cheon Deung-jin's body started to burn up.

Chapter 48 : Chapter 48

Chapter 048 : Instant Kill

Fwoosh-!

Sparks fly.

The Fire Spirit Qi deployed within the room swarms toward the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace, Cheon Deung-jin.

"It's an energy quite like a jackal."

It is targeting Cheon Deung-jin as if looking at prey.

-There is a need to change the energy of the room itself.

-Let's make one like the Fire Spirit Jade!

I nodded at the Demon Queen's words.

Creating an aggregate of energy was not difficult for me.

'The main task of mages was creating circles.'

I had recorded and organized the theory for creating those circles in my past life.

If that memory is the foundation of my Inner Qi operation method,

"Come in."

I started to extract the Extreme Yang Qi.

As the Extreme Yang Qi escaped from inside the body,

This time the Fire Spirit Qi started to take me as prey.

Rumble!

The Fire Spirit Qi shooting in.

On top of that, it started to suck up even the Fire Spirit Qi inside Cheon Deung-jin's body through the hand holding Cheon Deung-jin.

Then the flames attached to Cheon Deung-jin's body transferred to me.

It is not hot.

There is no feeling of the acupoints burning.

With this, it became certain.

That the Extreme Yang Qi is energy of a far higher rank than the Fire Spirit Qi.

'Clump together.'

Squelch-

I did not move the Fire Spirit Qi that entered inside the body to the qi center but started to clump it through my palm.

I was confident in controlling the flow of qi more than anyone now.

Above my palm, a pill made of Inner Qi started to be created rapidly.

-Hmm, quite impressive.

-I think being able to handle the Fire Spirit Qi like this is also a talent.

-Certainly, if it were us, we would have been quite troubled.

Ignoring the voices of the Sword Venerable and Demon Queen.

I started to watch the Fire Spirit Pill growing increasingly larger in size.

The sultry air started to decrease more and more.

I smiled while watching that appearance.

Vwoom-

Before long, the red pill created on top of my palm started to spew out orange light.

"Gasp!"

As the Fire Spirit Qi that completely filled the room disappeared, Cheon Deung-jin, who had been lying down as if dead, opened his eyes.

Seeming amazed at his suddenly lightened body.

Cheon Deung-jin blinked his two eyes.

"Are you feeling a bit better now?"

"To, to think my body is this light."

Cheon Deung-jin raised his body.

The hot Fire Spirit Qi that had confined Cheon Deung-jin in pain had all disappeared.

"Just who are you..."

To get rid of all the Fire Spirit Qi that was so troublesome just like this.

He could not believe it.

"I would be grateful if you think of me as a person who was suffering from a greater heat fever than the Young Palace Head."

***

I came outside together with the Potala Palace's Young Palace Head, Cheon Deung-jin.

"Jin-a!"

The Potala Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa, was astonished upon seeing that sight.

Because he did not anticipate that he would be cured immediately like this.

"Just how..."

Cheon Jeok-pa was surprised to see the recovered Cheon Deung-jin.

"He is not completely cured yet."

I said something to break the mood.

"Then how can he be completely cured?"

"It could be called a complete cure only if we prevent the Fire Spirit Qi from penetrating into the Young Palace Head's body again."

The mission I received was taking Cheon Deung-jin to the North Sea Ice Palace.

I didn't know if he could reach a complete cure, but I had to take Cheon Deung-jin and go to the North Sea Ice Palace for now.

For that,

'There is a need to see the Fire Spirit Jade once.'

Just like the Ice Crystal, there might be some problem with the Fire Spirit Jade too.

Generally, there was no reason for a divine object to harm a person.

When I brought up the story about the Fire Spirit Qi, the look in Cheon Jeok-pa's eyes changed strangely.

"As expected, since your origin is your origin, you knew about the Fire Spirit Qi."

"Even though I look like this, I too possess the atrocious constitution called the Extreme Yang Body, so I came to know about it somehow."

Cheon Jeok-pa nodded.

He had already anticipated that the Heavenly Demon Divine Cult side would have a somewhat larger breadth of understanding regarding the Potala Palace's energy than the North Sea Ice Palace.

"So is there a way to treat the Young Palace Head?"

"I think finding the cause that made the Young Palace Head like this would be first."

At those words, the Guardian Monk Arhat stepped forward.

-Palace Lord, you cannot. That guy is practically asking if he can see the Potala Palace's divine object right now.

The quick-witted Arhat seemed to be restraining him, wondering if the Palace Lord might show the Fire Spirit Jade.

But already,

"Arhat, guide him to the place where the divine object is."

"I think it would be better for the Young Palace Head not to go together."

Because if by any chance he gets influenced by the Fire Spirit Qi, the energy will become concentrated.

"Jin-a, go and rest."

"But..."

"As I said last time, perhaps you might have to leave for the Ice Palace. So go quickly and pack your bags."

At the Potala Palace Lord's words, I tilted my head inwardly.

Since Cheon Deung-jin was showing improvement right away, I thought he would ask if he didn't need to send him to the Ice Palace.

Because to him, it seemed it was already natural for Cheon Deung-jin to go to the Ice Palace.

"Follow me."

"Yes, but what about my companions?"

"They are waiting well so do not worry too much."

This, it subtly feels like holding the companions as hostages.

-Kekeke, shall we go check on them?

'I would be grateful if you did that.'

-I will go. Since we never know, Master, you go with Yeom.

The Demon Queen volunteered to move.

'If by chance something happens, please let me know immediately. I will shake off the Palace Lord and move.'

-Understood.

Watching the Demon Queen leaving, I started to follow behind Cheon Jeok-pa.

"Is it okay to show the divine object to an outsider like this?"

"If you were an Ice Palace person, I would not have shown it."

Those words meant he was showing the Fire Spirit Jade because I was from the Demonic Cult.

"It sounds like you are showing it... because it is me?"

"Correct."

"I am curious about that."

Because they are in a competitive relationship with the Ice Palace?

To say that, they requested help with desperate feelings.

Rather than that, it seemed there was definitely some relationship between the Fire Spirit Jade and the Demonic Cult.

'Certainly, there is more to gain coming outside than training inside the Demonic Cult.'

Since I formed a force in the Ice Palace, and became able to continue a connection with the Potala Palace like this.

-Kid.

Then, the Sword Venerable called me.

'Yes.'

-The look in that Guardian Monk's eyes watching you is not ordinary. I think there is a need to be careful.

At the Sword Venerable's words, I nodded slightly.

There was a need to constantly recognize that I was in a state of roaming around enemy territory without a single escort.

Walking for some time like that,

"It is here."

Cheon Jeok-pa pointed below from the center of the Palace Lord's Hall.

"Below?"

"The location where the Fire Spirit Jade is, is the underground of this palace."

"Is it okay to tell me such things one by one?"

"Well."

The feeling of knowing something I shouldn't know.

I felt a bit chilly, but I decided to endure until facing the Fire Spirit Jade for now.

Certainly.

Vwoom-

From the moment I recognized that the Fire Spirit Jade was underground, a sticky heat was rising from the bottom.

Thump- Thump-

Like a pulse beating, the Fire Spirit Pill extracted from Cheon Deung-jin a little while ago started to resonate with the Fire Spirit Jade.

"Entering."

Creak-

Along with Cheon Jeok-pa's words,

The floor collapsed.

"What the-"

"I earnestly hope you return alive."

My body started to descend.

***

"Will it be okay?"

After dropping Hyeokryeon Yeom underground.

Arhat asked Cheon Jeok-pa.

"It will be okay."

Because the guy is a Demonic Cult person.

"If the guy is truly from the Fire Worshipping Cult, he will come out alive like that guy last time."

"Would that guy know that his younger brother visited here?"

"He won't know. I heard he does not have much interest regarding the scoundrel third young master."

"Is being a scoundrel truly the fact? He did not look like that at all."

"Well. Originally, rumors are things you shouldn't believe until you see with your own eyes."

The Potala Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa, hoped Hyeokryeon Yeom would please come out alive.

Because only then could the Young Palace Head survive.

"Please return alive, then along with my apology, I will entrust the Young Palace Head to you."

The Potala Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa, did not know.

Hyeokryeon Yeom would end up hearing all of this story right now.

-...They were sharing such a conversation.

Swish!

While falling to the floor, I started to discharge the Extreme Yang Qi toward the bottom.

The Extreme Yang Qi spewing through the Bubbling Spring acupoint spewed out tremendous heat.

Quickly taking off my clothes and rolling them round, I floated the clothes using the heat.

Then.

The gravity falling to the ground decreased significantly.

'I should learn Void Treading quickly or something.'

Descending slowly in a state floating in the air using the principle of a hot air balloon, I received the conversation between the Potala Palace Lord and the Guardian Monk through the Sword Venerable.

"Threw me underground while hoping I return alive, huh."

I don't know well yet what Cheon Jeok-pa's true intention is.

However, soon.

Swoosh-

Because of the familiar energy felt from below here, I could notice why Cheon Jeok-pa threw me here alone.

Vwoom- Vwoom-

As I looked down.

A jewel glowing with red light was spewing out heat.

The problem was that dark Demonic Qi was surrounding the Fire Spirit Jade around it.

"Which damned bastard installed Demonic Qi here and ran?"

-Kekeke, well, wouldn't it be a guy you know?

I think so.

There was only one person even within the Demonic Cult who could commit such a crazy act.

"Hyeokryeon Geuk visited the Potala Palace?"

It is content I didn't know at all.

Suddenly, I recalled the scene just before dying to Hyeokryeon Geuk.

-If you kill me, and become the Young Cult Leader, what is the first thing you want to do, Elder Brother?

-Invasion of the Central Plains. The foundations are already all prepared.

Perhaps one of the foundations Hyeokryeon Geuk spoke of might be the Potala Palace.

'If the one who made the Fire Spirit Jade and the Potala Palace's Young Palace Head like this is Hyeokryeon Geuk.'

'The one who tampered with the Ice Crystal might also be Hyeokryeon Geuk.'

Truly an annoying guy.

However,

"The fact that you didn't block me from leaving for the Ice Palace is your bastard's biggest losing move."

Tap-

I, who landed slowly on the ground, faced the Fire Spirit Jade.

The Extreme Yang Qi soars and starts trying to covet the Fire Spirit Qi.

"Overeating is forbidden."

I, who disciplined the Extreme Yang Qi for now, approached closer and closer to the Fire Spirit Jade.

Then,

-Ho?

The Snow Wind Sword Venerable, Baek Un-han, spewed out an exclamation.

"Why are you like that?"

-Did you not feel it yet?

As soon as Sword Venerable Elder's words ended.

Waver-

Something started to waver in the purple Demonic Qi surrounding the Fire Spirit Jade.

-To think a fellow countryman... would visit, I didn't even imagine.

The voice conveyed to my mind was not that of a human.

The epicenter of the Demonic Qi wrapping the Fire Spirit Jade was coming from that person.

As soon as I saw the guy, I could figure out what kind of person the guy was.

"...Jiangshi."

And a Living Jiangshi showing movement alive enough to be able to send telepathic messages.

-Kekeke, to think a Jiangshi still exists even though three hundred years have passed. As expected, your main family is rotten.

I could not deny the Sword Venerable Elder's words.

Because the Demonic Cult was indeed trash.

-Are you bastard also aiming for the Fire Spirit Jade?

"If I am?"

-Instant kill.

The Living Jiangshi guarding the Fire Spirit Jade swung its sword toward me.

Chapter 49 : Chapter 49

Chapter 49 : Flame Demon

Living Jiangshi.

A monster created in the past by the Maoshan Sect of the Demonic Cult by modifying human bodies.

I heard they disappeared when the Maoshan Sect, which had thrown itself into the Blood Cult, was annihilated.

'The guy who would use such a thing immediately came to mind.'

Hyeokryeon Geuk.

It seemed Hyeokryeon Geuk had already visited the Potala Palace.

He even planted a Jiangshi here after seeing the Fire Spirit Jade.

It seemed the Potala Palace Lord sent me down here knowing all of this.

Boom!

'Fast.'

Flames soared every time the guy swung his sword.

It was because the flame barrier protecting me was deflecting the guy's sword.

-Annoying.

The Living Jiangshi was continuously conveying thoughts via telepathy.

However,

'Hmm?'

While I was watching the Jiangshi's swordsmanship to defend against its sword.

'I wondered why it was so familiar...'

The sword strikes the Jiangshi was unfolding were swordsmanship I had seen a lot.

Seven Severing Demon Sword.

The martial art unfolding from Jiangshi's hand was one of the martial arts I learned from the elders in the past.

In other words, that meant,

"Why... have you become a Jiangshi in a place like this!"

At this point in time, an elder who should be busy training me in the Demonic Cult, why!

Seven Severing Demon Sword First Form, Seeming Real Returning to Void.

Techniques where reality and illusion are mixed dizzy my eyes.

A sword where lethal techniques and feints could not be distinguished flew toward me.

However,

'I distinguish it.'

Swish!

A sword strike sweeping past my neck.

'It's a feint.'

-No...

Next, a fast sword aiming for the heart.

Second Form, Cold Killing God Flight.

Black cold energy spewed from the sword tip shoots toward the heart.

This is a lethal technique.

That means.

"Nine Kills Spouting Gold."

I drew my sword and swung it nine times.

Nine swords flashed nine times spewing red flames.

-How did you bastard!

Slash-!

As Jiangshi's chest is cut, flames rise from the guy's body.

"Because it is a sword I learned directly from you, Seven Severing Elder."

Seven Severing Demon Sword, Ultimate Technique Seven Severing Soul Slash.

A sword strike burning the soul flew toward Jiangshi's heart, its core.

-Keuk.

"I do not know for what reason Hyeokryeon Geuk made you into this state. But please rest in peace now."

Whoosh-

Flames started to burn the Jiangshi.

At that moment,

Light returned slightly to the pitch-black pupils of the Jiangshi.

-Th, thank you.

Whoosh!

The flames turned the Jiangshi into ashes.

I stared at the Jiangshi turning into ashes with sorrowful eyes.

Hiss-

As the Demonic Qi scattered, the Fire Spirit Jade behind it revealed its appearance.

The Fire Spirit Jade started to spew out light.

-Kekeke, what do you intend to do now?

If I put my mind to it, taking the Fire Spirit Jade was nothing.

Of course, since taking the Fire Spirit Jade wouldn't be of any help to me either, I had no intention of doing so.

However, if Hyeokryeon Geuk saw the Fire Spirit Jade and left, and because of that the Young Palace Head was influenced by the Fire Spirit Qi.

"I do have to examine it."

What he did to the Fire Spirit Jade.

I approached closer so I could see the Fire Spirit Jade well.

***

At that time, North Sea Ice Palace.

Crack-

Ice Crystal fragments started to fall down.

"It is anxious..."

Seol Ye-rin, who was standing in front of the Ice Crystal, muttered.

After Hyeokryeon Yeom's group left the Ice Palace, Seol Ye-rin also did not just waste time.

"I am more anxious!"

"I told you, you do not need to be watching like that."

Next to the Ice Crystal, the North Sea Ice Palace Lord, Seol Baek-ho, was looking at Seol Ye-rin with eyes full of anxiety.

"Do you really have to do this when even the Small Snow Squad Captain is not here?"

"It is okay because Tamya is here now and, I must do it now because the Small Snow Squad Captain is not by my side."

Seol Ye-rin standing in front of the Ice Crystal again.

That was to sever the curse of this Ice Crystal on her own.

'Until the Third Young Master returns, no matter what happens...'

She wanted to make it so there would be no talk that he would be engaged to a terminally ill patient with Severed Meridians.

Even before Hyeokryeon Yeom arrived at the Ice Palace, Seol Ye-rin was a person who could not expect a 'future'.

She, who had been continuing her life waiting only for the day she would die soon, became able to continue her life again thanks to Hyeokryeon Yeom.

It must have been from then.

Hyeokryeon Yeom might not know.

But Seol Ye-rin decided to live the rest of her life for Hyeokryeon Yeom.

That was why she was able to even utter the word 'Gaga' out of her mouth.

To her, the engagement ceremony was a very significant event.

Currently, the perception of the Young Palace Head within the Ice Palace was not that good.

A terminally ill patient who doesn't know when or how the Extreme Yin Qi will relapse and kill her.

Hyeokryeon Yeom, who says he will marry such a woman, was being treated like a crazy guy.

In fact, Seol Ye-rin came to know that rumors were spreading that he had no interest in Seol Ye-rin at all and wanted the marriage, aiming for the position of the live-in son-in-law of the Ice Palace.

Grind-

The emotion she felt first upon hearing those rumors was indignation.

'Do they think someone was born with this constitution because they wanted to be born with it?'

Perhaps because this resentment was an emotion she thought about a lot when she was freezing due to the Extreme Yin Qi, it disappeared quickly.

The thought that came next was immediately the thought about Hyeokryeon Yeom.

'Even if we say it's so for me because I have karmic retribution, it's not so for the Third Young Master.'

To recover Seol Ye-rin, he willingly threw away the status of the Cult Leader's youngest son and came to find the Ice Palace.

Of course, there must have been various external factors too, but.

One thing certain is,

'That he did not leave me.'

Hyeokryeon Yeom was the only man who told her he would protect Seol Ye-rin by her side until the end.

She did not want to become a flaw to such a man.

So she came to see the Ice Crystal again.

Because it was also all because of the Ice Crystal that she first came to know she possessed the Extreme Yin Body.

Seol Ye-rin stared at the Ice Crystal.

Somehow the energy did not feel as lively as before.

If it was before, the Extreme Yin Qi would have coiled around Seol Ye-rin as if excited when she approached.

-Grrrr.

There would be various reasons, but among them, the reason the Extreme Yin Qi cannot easily step forward is,

"Thank you, Tamya."

-Growl.

It was all because of Tamya.

They know.

At that moment the Extreme Yin Qi also rushes at Seol Ye-rin through the void.

They will be eaten.

Seol Ye-rin closed her eyes.

Because right now, when they cannot easily rush at Seol Ye-rin, was the time she had to accomplish something.

"What do you intend to do?"

Her father's dissuasion or such was not important to Seol Ye-rin.

'Ice Crystal, I do not want to be the weak me anymore.'

She did not want to live a life indebted to Hyeokryeon Yeom anymore.

So what started is exactly this training.

Sizzle-

She reaches out her hand toward the Ice Crystal.

Clang!

Tremendous cold energy started to cross over to Seol Ye-rin riding her fingertips.

Seol Ye-rin, who acquired the mystery of emptying and filling, was filling the Extreme Yin Qi through the Ice Crystal after emptying the Extreme Yin Qi to the fullest.

-Awooo!

Just in case she might accept the Extreme Yin Qi excessively, Tamya prevented the excess.

'If it is like this...'

She will absolutely never freeze again.

On top of that,

'Vwoom-'

In Seol Ye-rin's qi center, the Extreme Yang Qi Hyeokryeon Yeom injected and left existed, albeit weakly.

"Groan."

The only one burning with anxiety was the Ice King, Seol Baek-ho.

What Seol Baek-ho could do was,

"Stupid guy, return quickly."

Only hoping that Hyeokryeon Yeom, who left for the Potala Palace, would return quickly.

***

Crack-

"A crack is forming."

-That is a big problem.

Sword Venerable Elder answered reflexively to my muttering.

"Why is it a big problem?"

-Hmm, taking the Ice Crystal as an example, the criterion for the Ice Crystal going berserk is when the Ice Crystal breaks.

In other words, it sounded like saying the moment the Fire Spirit Jade also breaks, it could start going berserk.

"This Fire Spirit Jade, what kind of object is it to the Potala Palace?"

The Potala Palace of the Western Regions worships flames like the Demonic Cult.

The Fire Spirit Jade is practically the crystal of those flames.

-The one who broke the divine object will become a public enemy, I suppose.

I let out a sigh.

I have no desire to become a public enemy of the Potala Palace.

"It is a bit regrettable though."

Sizzle-

Extreme Yang Qi spews out from my qi center.

The Extreme Yang Qi that had already absorbed the Fire Spirit Qi started to wrap around the Fire Spirit Jade.

The Fire Spirit Jade that had a crack started to stick back together.

Not only that.

'Now it's doing all sorts of things.'

Are you Tamya?

The Fire Spirit Jade started to suck up the Extreme Yang Qi.

Gulp- Gulp-

It is sucking up quite a larger amount of Extreme Yang Qi than I thought.

Since I didn't think a moment of emptying the Extreme Yang Qi would come in the Potala Palace, I was slightly flustered, but.

"Hyeokryeon Yeom!"

Not through the space I fell, but through another space, the Potala Palace's Young Palace Head, Cheon Deung-jin, revealed his appearance.

But it seems he misunderstood something.

I wanted to say that it's okay, that he doesn't need to run over like that.

Because I was showing an appearance frozen while wrapping around the Fire Spirit Jade.

"No!"

Cheon Deung-jin, who witnessed that appearance, started to run toward me at a tremendous speed.

I wanted to tell him to stop, but.

Because the amount of Extreme Yang Qi the Fire Spirit Jade was sucking up started to increase more and more, it was difficult to stop him.

The moment the hand of Cheon Deung-jin who approached it touched the Fire Spirit Jade attached to me!

Flash!

A tremendous flash swallowed us.

.....

....

.

"...Mmm."

The light that flashed for a long time faded.

Wondering if I was hit by the Fire Spirit Jade's rampage, I examined my body first.

'There is nothing wrong?'

Cheon Deung-jin?

He is not visible.

On top of that.

'Where is this?'

The Fire Spirit Jade also disappeared.

-Are you looking for this?

Then, someone's voice was heard.

As I quickly turned my head toward the source of the voice,

Whoosh-

I saw a man in black wrapping flames around his whole body revealing his appearance with an intrigued expression.

The man possessing red hair contrasting with the North Sea Martial God, Snow Wind Sword Venerable, was flame itself indeed.

And... he was not human.

Like the Snow Wind Sword Venerable.

A ghost.

I had no choice but to ask.

"Who... are you?"

About the ghost's identity.

At my question, rather the opponent looked back at me and spoke.

-Flame Demon Bukgung Son.

Like the Martial Gods met in the North Sea.

I ended up meeting the ghost of a demonic practitioner who handles flames in the Potala Palace.

Chapter 50 : Chapter 50

Chapter 50 : This Humble Woman

Flame Demon, Bukgung Son.

Looking at the alias alone, it seemed to mean a demonic practitioner who used fire.

-I have heard of it before.

At that moment, the Sword Venerable, who was facing Bukgung Son, spoke up.

‘Do you know the Flame Demon?’

-The Flame Demon is his alias in the Demonic Cult. The alias they call that bastard in the Western Regions is.

Fire Spirit Demon Emperor.

-Ah, I think I have heard that alias too.

If even the Cold Snow Demon Queen had heard of it.

“He is a person from quite a long time ago.”

-At least one hundred and fifty years must have passed since then.

-You can consider him a demonic practitioner who burned down the Western Regions in the past.

A demonic practitioner who caused the Great Fire Demon that burned the great desert of the Western Regions.

I stared at Bukgung Son, who was holding the Fire Spirit Jade.

-He is from the Demonic Cult, yet he carries around two souls of the North Sea. He is an interesting fellow.

I had the experience of meeting the Ice Soul Spear Saint attached to the Ice Crystal once.

If the Flame Demon was a similar case.

“Are you guarding the Fire Spirit Jade so it doesn’t go berserk?”

-Kuhahaha!

At the words that he was guarding the Fire Spirit Jade, the Flame Demon burst into mad laughter.

Ziiiing-

At the mad laughter that made my ears ring, I frowned.

Snap-

The laughter stopped.

-It is the opposite.

“By opposite, you mean.....”

-Seeing as the Fire Spirit Qi has been removed from the Young Palace Head’s body.

Woong- Woong-

The Fire Spirit Pill I created reacted to the Flame Demon’s words.

-Even though a lot of time has passed, I will give you a chance since we are from the same hometown. Go back.

“I cannot go back until you tell me with what intention you are trying to make the Fire Spirit Jade go berserk.”

If I had met the Flame Demon without meeting the Living Jiangshi, I might have just gone back.

However, currently.

Since I knew that the Flame Demon was trying to make the Fire Spirit Jade go berserk, I had to grasp the truth.

Why?

‘Because Hyeokryeon Geuk must have passed through here.’

I had to know what that bastard was plotting at the Potala Palace.

-Do you want to die?

The Fire Spirit Qi spewed from the Fire Spirit Jade shot out.

Swoosh-

The Fire Spirit Qi that flew in like that was absorbed the moment it touched me.

-.....

“I apologize, but it seems I possess a higher hierarchy of energy.”

-Ha.

Soon, the Flame Demon’s eyes changed.

-There was a body much more suitable than the Young Palace Head.

-Dodge it!

-Rage!

The Flame Demon, having thrown away the Fire Spirit Jade, rushed at me.

And to block him, the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen blocked my front.

Kwaang!

A tremendous explosion sound burst out.

-I wondered where I had seen you, and it turns out you were the old folks of the North Sea!

-This guy is aiming for your body!

-He was putting the Fire Spirit Qi into the body of the Potala Palace’s Young Palace Head to resurrect!

Resurrection? Sacrifice?

“You mean it is a demonic art.”

Certainly.

If one utilized the Fire Spirit Qi possessed by the Fire Spirit Jade, it seemed possible to unfold something like a Grand Method.

In other words.

‘Ultimately, it means I have to get rid of the Flame Demon to cure Cheon Deung-jin.’

Detaching the Flame Demon attached to the Fire Spirit Jade seemed to be the urgent priority.

I quickly approached the Fire Spirit Jade while the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen held the Flame Demon down.

-What are you doing.....

“Do you want my body?”

My body, which was an Extreme Yang Body, might be the body the Flame Demon coveted the most.

-You, what are you trying to do right now.....

-Are you crazy?!

I started to suck in the Fire Spirit Qi through the Fire Spirit Jade.

Yang energy was already overflowing, but as I pushed more Yang energy in here,

A maddening pain arrived.

-Kuhahaha! Foolish! Thank you, this seat will use your body well!

The Flame Demon, Bukgung Son, shook off the Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen and rushed toward me.

And the moment the Flame Demon’s hand touched me,

Swoosh-

The Flame Demon, Bukgung Son, was sucked into my body just like that.

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‘Now this body is mine.’

The Flame Demon, Bukgung Son, thought so.

He was someone who tried to prevent the invasion of the Potala Palace based on the pact with the Heavenly Demon during his lifetime.

However, the moment he was deployed to the Potala Palace holding the Fire Spirit Jade, he became a prisoner of the Fire Spirit Jade just like that and his soul was bound.

Afterward, his physical body was destroyed, and in a situation where only his soul remained, Bukgung Son struggled to survive somehow.

The successive Palace Lords of the Potala Palace began to treat the Fire Spirit Jade brought by the Flame Demon as a sacred object.

Thanks to that, Bukgung Son was able to grow his power in the depths of the Potala Palace.

As time passed and he recovered his power to some extent, Bukgung Son wanted to regain a physical body.

However, unlike his disappeared body, his soul had changed to become no different from the Fire Spirit Jade itself.

To have a body in this situation, a vessel to contain the soul was needed.

Fire Spirit Body.

He needed a person who could fully accept the Fire Spirit Qi he harbored.

So he put the Fire Spirit Qi into the body of the Potala Palace's Young Palace Head.

If he survived, he would become a vessel.

If he died, he just had to find the next batter.

But,

'A human possessing a body more suitable than the Young Palace Head appeared.'

He had no choice but to drool.

A supreme body possessing the Extreme Yang Body, no less.

Since he had currently entered inside his body.

Now, he just had to take over this body.

But,

"What is this? Why can't I see him?"

No matter how much he looked around, it was because he could not find Hyeokryeon Yeom, the owner of this body.

Then,

-It was truly an insignificant existence.

Bukgung Son looked up at the sky.

The shadow of a gigantic existence was looking down at Bukgung Son.

“What.....”

It is an unbelievable situation.

It seemed as if the gigantic Hyeokryeon Yeom had placed Bukgung Son on his palm and was looking down.

“This makes no sense!”

Bukgung Son gasped in shock.

Black figures walked stomp, stomp toward him.

Those were three blurry black shadows.

The first figure was an afterimage of a mage wearing a robe from another world.

Following behind was a young man of sturdy build swinging a single bat resting on his shoulder.

Lastly, a man with black fire burning.

Those three gathered as one to create a single figure.

Hyeokryeon Yeom.

He was the owner of this body he had coveted and entered.

“This place is my Mental World. It is not a place a forgotten ghost like you, who lived barely one life, can overcome. Unless you are ‘me’.”

Like that, Hyeokryeon Yeom hid his appearance again and his voice rang out.

“Flame Demon, you made the wrong choice.”

Flashing in the east, flashing in the west.

This time, Hyeokryeon Yeom walked out from the front.

Flutter-

A butterfly started to flap its wings.

“This is my territory.”

At least in this territory, it was a space where everything Hyeokryeon Yeom had thought of could be realized.

Flutter-

The butterfly landed on Bukgung Son’s shoulder.

“I am sorry, but it is my victory.”

Fwoosh!

A massive flame engulfed Bukgung Son.

“Kuaaaak!”

Bukgung Son, swallowed by the fire demon, screamed.

Hyeokryeon Yeom whispered while looking at him.

“Now, if you want to live... answer my question. Hyeokryeon Geuk. Have you ever met the eldest son of the Demonic Cult Leader here?”

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-It was a needless worry.

-How can your mental power be stronger than the Flame Demon?

The Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen asked me while looking at Bukgung Son’s burning soul.

“It seems the time I have lived was just a very little bit longer than the time the Flame Demon lived.”

From the beginning, I had no intention of letting Bukgung Son live.

Furthermore, I actually didn't know how to extinguish the Soul Destroying Flame, the fire that annihilates a soul once attached.

Thankfully, Bukgung Son answered my question well.

Thanks to that, I was able to get my hands on the information I wanted.

'To think Hyeokryeon Geuk and Bukgung Son had joined hands.'

Bukgung Son had believed the proposal to invade the Central Plains in cooperation with the Demonic Cult in exchange for help in seizing the Young Palace Head's body.

Watching Bukgung Son's burning soul, which had been deceived by Hyeokryeon Geuk, I recalled the memories of past lives that no one knew.

It was because the steadfast mental power accumulated while living through multiple lives saved me.

Especially the Mental World Realm created through meditation accumulated while ruminating on past lives was solely my 'World'.

Fwoosh-

The Flame Demon, Bukgung Son, perished like that without obtaining a new body.

Float- Float-

I picked up the Fire Spirit Jade floating in the air and looked at the sky.

"By the way, how do I get out of here?"

Since I fell underground, do I have to climb back up; the moment I was worrying.

"Young Master Hyeokryeon!"

Rumble.

From far away, something like a door opened, and Cheon Deung-jin revealed his appearance.

"Young Palace Head?"

"What a relief! You were safe! I was so surprised when I heard you were driven into the Fire Spirit Land!"

I felt a sense of him running urgently.

“Thank you, I was actually worrying about how to get out, but there was an exit door.”

“Let’s go! Ah, that is.....”

Cheon Deung-jin swallowed a gasp at the sight of me holding the Fire Spirit Jade.

“It is fine. It is safe.”

The Fire Spirit Jade no longer spewed out Fire Spirit Qi.

“Now the Fire Spirit Jade will not make the Young Palace Head suffer.”

Cheon Deung-jin nodded while looking at the Fire Spirit Jade whose threatening appearance of spewing Fire Spirit Qi had disappeared.

“Really... thank you.”

“If you are thankful, could you help me a little?”

“Yes?”

I smiled looking at Cheon Deung-jin.

Although meeting the Flame Demon through the Fire Spirit Jade was actually beneficial to me,

‘I should still get paid for being used as he pleased.’

***

I moved to the Palace Lord’s Hall to meet the Potala Palace’s Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa, while talking with Cheon Deung-jin.

“Young Master!”

“Captain!”

“Are you alright!”

As we returned to the Palace Lord’s Hall.

Voices welcoming me were abundant.

“Somehow, it feels like I haven’t seen you in a long time.”

I saw Wi Ji-yeong, Baek Mu-yong, and Tae Un-seo surrounded like prisoners by the monks of the Potala Palace.

Clack-

At their behavior of blocking with staffs as if they couldn't approach me, the Small Snow Squad members sent gazes at me.

What those gazes meant was,

-If you just give the order, we will take care of these things and go to you, Captain!

That meaning.

But I shook my head with a relaxed expression even after seeing that sight, as if I knew this would happen.

"Jin-ah! What are you doing!"

At that moment, the Potala Palace's Palace Lord, Cheon Jeok-pa, and the Guardian Monk, Arhat, frowned seeing the appearance of Cheon Deung-jin returning with me.

"Palace Lord, it seems I have a lot to talk about with you."

The Jiangshi that was standing guard over the Fire Spirit Jade in the Fire Spirit Land.

And even the flame ghost that was attached to the Fire Spirit Jade.

Could Cheon Jeok-pa really not have known about this?

I subtly placed my hand on Cheon Deung-jin's shoulder while saying that.

Flinch-

I felt Cheon Deung-jin's trembling flinch.

If someone saw, it might look like I was taking Cheon Deung-jin hostage.

"You bastard! Won't you put that hand down!"

The reaction returned more intensely than I thought.

This was similar to the feeling of Seol Baek-ho, the Palace Lord of the North Sea Ice Palace, breathing fire from his eyes upon seeing me with the Young Palace Head, Seol Ye-rin.

‘Men can put their arms around each other’s shoulders.’

I took my hand off Cheon Deung-jin and spoke straightforwardly.

“You see, I suffered quite a lot in the Fire Spirit Land. So, I have many things I want to ask the Palace Lord, and also, I think I need to take the Young Palace Head back to the Ice Palace to completely cure him.”

Having said that, I signaled toward the monks of the Potala Palace with my eyes.

Because the story I was about to tell from now on was not a story that would be good for them to hear at all.

“Dismiss them.”

“However, Palace Lord.”

“Hurry!”

“Yes, understood.”

At the instruction of the Guardian Monk, the monks of the Potala Palace tried to leave the Palace Lord’s Hall.

“Wait. Please return my subordinates.”

“I will.”

“……?”

Cheon Jeok-pa returned the Small Snow Squad members more meekly than I thought.

The Small Snow Squad members also wore puzzled expressions, perhaps not knowing they would be released this easily.

Perhaps having seen my questioning expression, Cheon Jeok-pa spoke.

“It was a process needed to decipher whether you had been defeated by the guy inside there or not. I am sorry for committing a discourtesy to a benefactor.”

This… the thought occurred that conversation might work better than I thought.

“Then…….”

Just as I was about to pour out the questions I was curious about.

“Before we start the story.”

Cheon Jeok-pa cut me off.

“Jin-ah.”

“Yes, Palace Lord.”

“Show respect to the benefactor.”

“Yes.”

“……?”

At Cheon Jeok-pa’s instruction, Cheon Deung-jin, who was standing next to him, looked back at me.

“I offer my gratitude once again for curing the Young Palace Head of the Potala Palace, this humble woman.”

“……?”

This humble woman?

……This humble woman?!

At the words that Cheon Deung-jin was a woman, I looked at Cheon Deung-jin with an astonished expression.

-Hm? Were you unaware?

-Oh my, I thought you were doing that while knowing everything.

The Sword Venerable and the Demon Queen started to giggle seeing my expression.

Those voices did not reach my ears.

It was because, in that instant, Seol Ye-rin’s cold expression came to mind.