

MYST, MIGHT, MAYHEM

Chapter 3: Opportunity (3)

Mok Gyeong-un, who died instantly as his neck was broken.

The intruder was dazed for a very brief moment.

However, it didn't last long.

"You bastard!"

Thwack!

The intruder, his anger boiling over, swiftly reached out to the boy, grabbing his neck and slamming him against the wall.

Thud!

It was absurd.

Even if Mok Gyeong-un was only a third-rate martial artist with mediocre skills, the boy was an ordinary civilian.

Even if he was a death row inmate, the difference between him and someone who had learned martial arts was stark.

But even if it was a surprise attack, did it make sense for Mok Gyeong-un's neck to be broken in an instant?

As he wondered in disbelief, the boy spoke to him with an expressionless face.

“...Even if you used sleeping incense, you shouldn't make a commotion, right?”

“What? You bastard, now you're...!?”

The intruder furrowed his brows.

He was grabbing the boy's neck, but there were no signs of distress.

Rather, the boy was speaking perfectly fine.

‘This guy, now that I think about it, why is his neck so...’

The boy's neck muscles were quite developed, like someone who had trained their external martial arts.

To the extent that proper internal energy would be needed to break it.

'Could he have cultivated external martial arts? No, that can't be. If he had, he should have at least some internal energy.'

Even external martial arts required the foundation of internal energy circulation.

However, this fellow truly had no internal energy.

It seemed he wasn't a simple one.

Although the intruder's mind was getting complicated, that wasn't the important matter at hand.

"You crazy bastard. The young master gave you an opportunity, but you've really gone mad. To actually do this to the person who gave a mere death row inmate like you a chance..."

"Am I misunderstanding the purpose of being a stand-in?"

"What?"

"In the first place, being a stand-in means taking on risks in place of the real person. Of course, for me, it's an opportunity to extend my life by about three days, but if you went as far as breaking a death row inmate out of prison to have them act as a stand-in, doesn't it also mean you can dispose of them at any time?"

The boy spoke calmly.

At his words, the intruder was momentarily at a loss for words.

This fellow was more intelligent than he thought.

If he were an ordinary civilian and a typical death row inmate, he would be preoccupied with overcoming the current crisis.

'No, how could he even do something like this in the first place?'

Not only did he analyze the situation in an instant, but he was also taking a gamble.

Even though he could die at any moment.

'What kind of guy is he...?'

As he found it absurd, the boy opened his mouth.

"May I ask you something?"

"You bastard, can't you assess the situation..."

"You said you're a bodyguard, but you're quite composed considering your master is dead."

“You little...”

“If you have this much rationality left in a situation where you should want to kill me, it doesn’t seem like you have much affection for your master, does it?”

“Ha!”

The intruder was dumbfounded by the boy’s words.

He was reading his state of mind to an unpleasant degree.

As the boy said, the intruder didn’t have much affection for this good-for-nothing young master.

He was just perplexed and angered by this unexpected situation.

Of course, that didn’t mean his judgment was clouded enough to immediately kill the boy and escape the government office’s prison.

‘This is ridiculous.’

To think he was being swayed by a mere death row inmate boy.

As the boy said, now that things had come to this point, killing him was the right thing to do.

However, if he lost the boy as well in a situation where the young master had already lost his life, the Yeon Mok Sword Manor would hold him responsible with his own life.

'shit, this has become a real mess.'

His plan to somehow make the third young master the Manor Master and become the head of the Yeon Mok Sword Manor, living out his old age in comfort, had turned to dust.

Because of this damned death row inmate brat, all his investments had been for naught.

As he felt frustrated, the boy said,

"If you don't particularly have any affection for him, how about switching horses?"

"Switching horses (sides)?"

"Wouldn't it be more convenient to think of the one lying on the floor as a prisoner who will be executed the day after tomorrow?"

The boy spoke nonchalantly.

Looking at him, the intruder was both dumbfounded and somehow felt a chill run down his spine.

Wasn't this damned death row inmate essentially saying he would become Mok Gyeong-un now?

Squeeze!

The intruder tightened his grip on the boy's neck.

"Urgh..."

Only now did the boy let out a slightly pained groan.

The intruder glared at him and said,

"Did you, a mere death row inmate, kill the young master with that in mind?"

At his words, the boy chuckled and said,

"Is there... any other... reason?"

'!?'

The intruder gulped at the boy's words.

Just what kind of creature was he?

His very thought process seemed to be on a completely different wavelength from ordinary people.

His cunning was no joke.

No, perhaps that's why he ended up as a death row inmate in the first place.

'This guy is dangerous.'

Regardless of whether the Yeon Mok Sword Manor held him responsible or not, he thought it might be better to kill him now.

His instincts were strongly telling him.

Regardless of martial arts or age, getting involved with this fellow would bring nothing good.

Squeeze!

"Ack!"

He applied even more force to his grip.

It would be difficult for the boy to endure with internal energy.

“Don’t make me laugh. It’s better for you to just die here.”

Let’s kill him.

Even if it meant starting anew.

At that moment, the boy suddenly grabbed the intruder’s wrist.

Smack!

“It’s no use. I might have killed the young master with luck, but I’m different.”

The intruder tried to lightly slap away the boy’s hand with his opposite hand, infused with internal energy, but,

Smack!

‘This brat?’

The boy resisted.

It felt like hitting a thick tree trunk.

He felt the resilience in the boy’s wrist, and his muscles were extremely firm.

Enough to withstand a force infused with internal energy.

In an instant, the intruder swiftly tore off the sleeve of the boy's prisoner's garment with his quick hand movements.

'!?'

The intruder's eyes widened.

The shape of dense muscles was clearly visible.

He almost let out a gasp at the sight of the muscles, developed as if he had trained only external martial arts for over a decade.

Now the mystery was solved.

'...No wonder the young master was overpowered.'

It wasn't just luck from a surprise attack.

Judging by the density of this fellow's muscles, it would be difficult to inflict damage without considerable martial arts skill.

With just his physique, he surpassed the level that a third-rate martial artist could handle.

'If a guy like this had properly learned martial arts...'

He might have become a high-level expert.

However, to properly cultivate internal energy, one had to start between the ages of five and ten.

If it was too late, impurities would accumulate in the meridians throughout the body, slowing down the circulation of internal energy.

Squeeze!

At that moment, the wrist grabbing the boy's neck started to ache.

The boy was applying force, trying to remove the intruder's hand.

'What kind of strength does this bastard have?'

He was using the power of a seventh-level martial artist, yet the boy was trying to push it away with brute force.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say he was a powerhouse based on strength alone.

If he let his guard down, it seemed like the boy might really break free.

'This won't do.'

The intruder then employed the Grappling Hand Technique technique.

Releasing the hand gripping the boy's neck, he grabbed the boy's wrist and twisted the joint, making it face towards his lower back.

'Huh?'

It happened so quickly that the boy's wrist was twisted without any chance to resist.

'How did he do that?'

Was this also a martial art?

If so, it seemed quite ingenious.

He had used the boy's own strength to twist his wrist.

However, thanks to that, the hand gripping his neck was released, making it easier to breathe and speak.

Shing!

The intruder was seen drawing something from his waist.

It was a dagger.

It seemed he was going to stab the boy with it.

The boy then said,

“Is there really a need to kill me?”

“What?”

“Since I’ll die without the antidote, I have no choice but to listen to you, right?”

At those words, the intruder momentarily stopped his attempt to stab the boy.

The situation was so absurd that he had forgotten, but the boy had taken the poison pill he had brought.

But remembering that made it even more ridiculous.

‘Ha!’

To think a guy who had even taken a poison pill would do such a crazy thing.

He was so puzzled as to why the boy had done this when he couldn't even live if the intruder didn't give him the antidote.

'Is it because he's the only substitute if the young master dies?'

His cunning was too much.

Then the boy said,

"I have no interest in the Yeon Mok Sword Manor or being the third young master."

"No interest? Then why are you doing this crazy thing now..."

"I just have a reason to live a little longer."

"Live longer?"

what the was he talking about?

As he wondered, the boy spoke in a meaningful tone.

"Since you have the antidote, you can control me like a puppet as you wish."

The intruder flinched at the boy's words.

He had only thought his retirement plan had been ruined.

Because he had wanted to obtain a peaceful life, unlike in the past.

And he wasn't without a sense of being fed up with going somewhere else and investing time.

How much investigation and time had he spent to find the place he considered ideal?

'Control as I wish...'

For a moment, he fell into contemplation.

It was a tempting offer, but he wasn't a fool.

Although he had only briefly experienced it, this fellow was extremely dangerous.

He was cunning and difficult to control.

However, if he was someone who clung to his life to this extent, he wouldn't be able to defy the intruder for the time being, even if it was because of the poison pill.

'...Should I take this opportunity to switch sides?'

There was only one reason he had tried to find a substitute in the first place.

To save the young master's life.

But the young master was already dead.

Then using this fellow to switch sides was also a good method.

If he became a powerful figure and tried to control this fellow from behind, it would only give him a headache as time passed.

'Yes, let's use him and dispose of him.'

After a brief contemplation, the intruder made a decision.

To use the boy only until he could switch sides.

The intruder warned,

"If you show even the slightest suspicious sign, I'll kill you. If you disobey my orders, you die."

“Understood.”

The boy answered without a moment’s hesitation.

“If you don’t take the antidote for the poison within twelve hours, the poison will spread throughout your body, so you better remember that.”

Thwack!

Finally, the intruder released the twisted arm.

And as the boy got up, he said,

“From this moment on, you... are Mok Gyeong-un.”

“Understood. Should I call you Sir Guard Gam?”

“Yes.”

“In front of others, I can speak casually to you, right?”

“...Right.”

He didn’t want to be spoken down to by the boy, but it was certainly better to be clear.

Then the boy, no, Mok Gyeong-un, approached the collapsed 'real Mok Gyeong-un'.

And he started undressing him.

'Hmm.'

Guard Gam watched with a displeased look.

Even without being told, the boy was trying to swap clothes with the real one, showing how extremely cunning he was.

He only felt sorry for the dead 'real Mok Gyeong-un'.

Swish swish!

Mok Gyeong-un took off the prisoner's garment top.

'...Look at this guy.'

Inside his upper body were highly developed, dense muscles.

Even with the red-stained bandages wrapped around his chest and abdomen, the shape of his muscles was distinct enough to imagine how developed they were.

'To think this is a body that hasn't trained external martial arts.'

He was even more amazed now than before.

Guard Gam, who had been staring intently at Mok Gyeong-un's upper body, narrowed his eyes.

'But the bandages suggest he suffered a severe injury, so why does he look fine on the outside?'

That was the question.

If it were an old wound, it would be understandable, but it was recent.

Yet Mok Gyeong-un's complexion and movements seemed unaffected.

'what the is going on?'

He became curious about what this fellow had done to end up as a death row inmate.

It seemed he would have to meet the government official acquaintance again.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un, who had changed clothes, turned his head to him and said,

“May I borrow your dagger?”

“Dagger... Why?”

Mok Gyeong-un pointed to the head of the dead ‘real Mok Gyeong-un’ and spoke nonchalantly.

“The young master’s body is more frail than mine, so I think I’ll have to take the body and leave only the head.”

“ ... ”

It certainly made sense, but as expected, this fellow was unsettling.

It seemed the best course of action was to switch sides quickly.