

# **Myst, Might, Mayhem**

## **#Chapter 81 - Read Myst, Might, Mayhem Chapter 81**

Chapter 81

Upon hearing about some of the memories gleaned from Gyu Soha, who had possessed Neung Hwa-yang's body, Mok Gyeong-un showed an intrigued reaction.

He still had no interest in how the martial world worked, but with the information Soha had read, he could now surmise the relationship between the Righteous Alliance and the Heaven and Earth Society.

'Adversaries.'

What was interesting here was the reason for their conflict.

They were hostile towards each other due to differences in beliefs and ways of thinking.

To Mok Gyeong-un, this felt quite outdated.

What kind of emotions drove people to risk their lives not over simple grievances, but over differing values they believed in?

"Justice...it's quite inefficient."

-Inefficient. Yes, that's true too. But there's nothing more fearsome than values and beliefs.

"Why is that?"

-Nothing is more draining than believing oneself to be absolutely right, even more so than resentment.

"Ah, I can relate to that."

Cheong-ryeong was right.

Although he hadn't met that many people, Mok Gyeong-un also found those who considered themselves unconditionally righteous the most tiresome.

Most of them saw everything other than themselves as wrong.

Perhaps that's why Mok Gyeong-un despised such people the most.

“Just hearing the names of the groups is exhausting. Righteous Alliance? Do they call themselves that because they consider themselves just?”

“That’s how those types are.”

“But the Righteous Alliance calls the Heaven and Earth Society evil or demonic?”

-Nonsense!

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Cheong-ryeong raised her voice.

-They have a dichotomous way of thinking. They’re stubborn fools who think if they’re white, everything else must be black.

“Is that so? Then I suppose the Heaven and Earth Society isn’t the evil faction they make it out to be.”

-The Heaven and Earth Society we created was not such a simple organization.

‘We created?’

Mok Gyeong-un narrowed his eyes.

Had she also contributed to creating this massive organization?

However, without expressing it, he questioned a different part.

“It wasn’t a simple organization?”

-Yes. The notions of demonic cult or evil ways are repulsive labels imposed by those hypocrites. But the Heaven and Earth Society was established to reject that and create a true martial world.

“A true martial world?”

-Since when did the righteous way become justice and everything else the root of evil in the martial world?

“I wouldn’t know that either.”

-Ah, of course.

There was no way for Mok Gyeong-un to know.

He had lived a life far removed from the martial world from the start.

Cheong-ryeong clicked her tongue and spoke.

-What the Heaven and Earth Society pursued was for the martial world to return to its most primitive form.

“Primitive? What’s that?”

-The weak are meat, the strong eat. Survival of the fittest. The strong dominate. The essence of martial arts is ultimately to prove one’s own strength. In the beginning, it was called the martial forest because it was entangled in pursuit of pure strength. But the current martial world is merely a war of rotten values.

“.....”

-Where is there black and white in the world? Even white paper turns black when ink is poured, and a butcher becomes a Buddha when he lays down his knife. If you want to discuss the world in terms of color, shouldn’t it be gray?

Her voice was full of resentment.

That anger felt not one-dimensional like Mok Gyeong-un’s own, but directed at the world.

Mok Gyeong-un then asked as if curious.

“Then are you saying the Heaven and Earth Society is gray?”

-.....

At that question, Cheong-ryeong suddenly fell silent.

‘I see.’

Just from that, he could tell what she thought of the current Heaven and Earth Society.

It was likely not the gray she spoke of.

That was probably why she felt disillusioned with the current Heaven and Earth Society.

Mok Gyeong-un changed the subject.

“Well, putting that aside, thanks to this, I learned some good information. The emissaries of the Righteous Alliance...”

When possessing someone, one could read some of the target’s memories.

Not all of them, but he had obtained useful information.

-When an organization's scale grows to thousands or tens of thousands, naturally gaps form and sending spies to each other becomes frequent. It's only natural, nothing to be surprised about. But they're more foolish than I thought.

"What do you mean?"

-I'm talking about these Silent Strides spies.

"Them?"

-Yes. For spies, secrecy for intelligence is their lifeblood. But for the dispatched spies to share this much information about each other...tsk tsk.

Mok Gyeong-un nodded as if agreeing with her words.

It was his first time seeing the existence of spies, but considering they infiltrated enemy organizations as fake members, it seemed like quite a strategically poor choice.

In a situation like now, if one person opened their mouth, they would all be exposed one after another.

However, what mattered now was not their foolishness.

-So what will you do?

"Who knows."

-It seems too late to just leave them be.

It appeared he had made quite an enemy of the Silent Strides spies.

Of course, it was understandable.

Because of him, their numbers had dwindled, and the probability of successfully completing their mission had also drastically decreased.

-It may be revenge for losing comrades, but they likely think killing you will make it easier to pass future checkpoints.

"From the latter perspective, it's not a wrong choice."

-It's not the right choice either.

"True."

If they succeed, it's a different story, but if they fail, they must pay the corresponding price.

That was the current situation.

Gyu Soha, who had taken over Neung Hwa-yang's body, spoke in an eager voice.

"Master. Shall I go and deal with them one by one?"

They had obtained the body of Neung Hwa-yang, a Silent Strides spy.

Since they knew each other's identities, she could easily induce carelessness to kill them or destroy their danjeon and turn them into half-cripples, just as they had tried to do.

However, Mok Gyeong-un shook his head.

-What? Don't tell me you're going to let them off?

"No. It seems there's no need to go through that trouble."

-No need? Then what will you do?

"This might be better."

The corner of Mok Gyeong-un's mouth curled up eerily.

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-Pat pat!

"Hahahaha! To think you found the spies, it's all thanks to you!"

One of the red-belted warriors patted Mok Gyeong-un's back, praising his achievement.

Mok Gyeong-un's choice regarding the Silent Strides spies was simple.

There was no need to deal with them one by one.

It was to inform the red-belted warriors of who the spies were.

'Killing two birds with one stone.'

He dealt with them without getting blood on his own hands and gained an opportunity to earn merit with the Heaven and Earth Society by revealing the spies' existence.

It was truly killing two birds with one stone.

Of course, the only one in an unfortunate situation was Green Spirit Gyu Soha, who had to divulge being a spy with the body she had barely obtained and then discard it again.

“Ah! That guy over there is also from the Silent Strides like me!”

However, Gyu Soha faithfully played her role.

The place Gyu Soha pointed to with her finger was the stairs leading to the upper floor, and a boy there looked flustered and at a loss.

‘Huh?’

Mok Gyeong-un recognized who that boy was.

It was the boy who had passed the second checkpoint in his group.

He remembered him because he had tried to kill Mo-ha-rang, who had lost consciousness after getting injured while fighting Mok Yu-cheon.

Was his name Ma-sang?

At that moment,

-Swish!

Ma-sang hurriedly leaped up the stairs.

“Get him!”

-Swish swish swish!

The red-belted warriors shouted and chased after him.

If the information in the Silent Strides spy Neung Hwa-yang’s memory was correct, he should be the last of the four spies who barely survived.

He had come looking for them himself, what bad luck.

However,

‘Why is he glaring at me like that?’

Mok Gyeong-un looked at Mok Yu-cheon, who was glaring at him as if he wanted to kill him.

His eyes were filled with considerable resentment.

Come to think of it, it seemed he had come down the stairs alongside Ma-sang, the Silent Strides spy.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes narrowed.

'He seems to know something.'

There was no way he would glare at him like that otherwise.

What a simple guy.

If it were him, he wouldn't have shown such emotions if he had some connection or collusion with the spies.

Yet Mok Yu-cheon was very honest with his own feelings.

Mok Gyeong-un smirked at this.

'Simple-minded.'

Was it because he was still young?

Should he just use this opportunity to brand that guy as a spy along with the fleeing one and deal with him?

In a split second, Mok Gyeong-un internally rejected this idea.

'Not yet.'

Although it was fake, in the Heaven and Earth Society, he and Mok Yu-cheon were from the same Yeon Mok Sword Manor's lineage.

If he gave even the slightest cause for suspicion while they were connected, it might hinder his assimilation into the Heaven and Earth Society.

'I should leave him be a bit longer.'

There would be plenty of opportunities to deal with him.

Mok Gyeong-un waved at Mok Yu-cheon and gave him a smile.

As if even more enraged by this, Mok Yu-cheon stomped up the stairs with a reddened face.

Just then, someone approached and spoke to him.

“Mok Gyeong-un.”

“Ah. Yes.”

It was a middle-aged man who looked older than the other red-belted warriors.

A senior warrior, was it?

He pointed to the lower floor and spoke to Mok Gyeong-un.

“The master is summoning you.”

‘Master?’

Did he mean the one with the demon mask?

Mok Gyeong-un followed the senior warrior and headed downstairs.

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The first-floor lodging was being used by the red-belted warriors conducting the checkpoints, and the room attached to the office in the center was being used by the master of the Corpse Blood Valley.

-Knock knock!

Someone knocked on the door and spoke.

-I’ve brought him, my lord.

At the voice coming from outside, someone who had been sitting in a chair in the office, gazing at a bronze mirror, opened his mouth.

“Have him wait a moment.”

-Yes.

The person sitting in the chair pushed the bronze mirror to the side.

Through the gap of the mirror being moved aside, a face with burn scars briefly flashed by.

Soon, the person put on a mask that had been placed on the office desk.

It was a demon mask.

“Send him in.”

-Yes.

At the demon mask’s command, the door soon opened, and a handsome boy entered.

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

Mok Gyeong-un lightly bowed his head in greeting.

The demon mask waved his hand and pointed to a chair for receiving guests.

“Sit.”

“Yes.”

As Mok Gyeong-un sat in the chair, the demon mask also rose from his office chair and walked over to sit across from him.

The demon mask stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un.

In response, Mok Gyeong-un also met his gaze head-on without avoiding his eyes.

‘Look at this guy.’

He was bold to not avoid his gaze.

A glint of interest flashed in the demon mask’s eyes visible through the gaps of the mask.

Since taking on the role of master of the Corpse Blood Valley, this was the first time he had encountered such a fellow.

Naturally, there had occasionally been those with outstanding martial talent who passed the checkpoints in a short time or used unexpectedly clever methods, but this guy was different.

They say you can tell a tree that will grow well by its leaves.

This fellow seemed to have something that could take him higher than any of the ones he had seen so far.

However, there was one thing he needed to clarify.

“Mok Gyeong-un.”

“Yes.”

“You’re from the righteous faction’s Yeon Mok Sword Manor, right?”

“Yes.”

“You don’t have to give short answers now.”

“.....I understand.”

“From what I’ve heard, you and that fellow named Mok Yu-cheon were brought here as hostages in exchange for leaving the Yeon Mok Sword Manor alone as an expelled disciple. Is that correct?”

At the demon mask’s words, Mok Gyeong-un inwardly felt puzzled.

Did he not know the exact reason why he had come here?

He had thought he would know that it was to memorize and master the secret manual called the treasure of the Heaven and Earth Society.

‘Then.....’

He didn’t feel the need to reveal this.

Mok Gyeong-un just nodded and replied.

“That’s right.”

At this answer, the demon mask’s eyes narrowed through the gaps of the mask.

Then he spoke in a somewhat heavy voice.

“But it’s strange.”

-Shing!

No sooner had he finished speaking than a sword was pressed against Mok Gyeong-un’s neck.

‘!?’

Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes sharpened at this.

He was sure he had heard the sound of the sword being drawn and even saw the muscles moving.

Yet without blinking, the sword was suddenly at his neck.

‘.....Fast.’

It was a quick blade, too fast to even recognize.

He understood why Cheong-ryeong had said his current skills were still far from being able to do anything within the Heaven and Earth Society.

It was difficult to gauge how strong he was.

As he pondered this, the demon mask continued.

“Even though you were forcibly brought here against your will, why did you reveal the Righteous Alliance’s spies?”

This was what the demon mask wanted to confirm.

No matter how much he thought about it, he couldn’t understand why Mok Gyeong-un had revealed this.

“I had hoped to be rewarded for informing you of the spies, so this is unexpected.”

“Before you speak of rewards, you must first convince me.”

“Hmm. Is that so?”

One of the demon mask’s eyebrows rose.

He had the tip of a sword pressed against his neck, and with just a bit of force, the sword would pierce through.

He was in a situation where he was being doubted, yet he showed no signs of wavering.

The demon mask spoke in an impressed tone.

“Do you realize that you’re in a position to be suspected?”

“How could I not when there’s a sword at my neck?”

“Then are you gutsy? Or do you have something that can dispel suspicion in an instant?”

“Let’s say it’s the latter.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the demon mask clicked his tongue.

Then he warned in a low voice.

“Let me warn you in advance. Within the Corpse Blood Valley, the authority over life and death lies with me. You may leave this office as a corpse.”

-Sizzle!

No sooner had he finished speaking than a scorching heat emanated from the sword.

Wondering what this was as the sword’s heat rose, Cheong-ryeong’s voice rang in his ear.

-It seems that this man is his descendant.

‘Huh?’

What did she mean by that?

As he felt puzzled, Cheong-ryeong spoke.

-Mortal. Ask the man in front of you.

With that, Cheong-ryeong informed Mok Gyeong-un of something.

Meanwhile, the demon mask brought the sword tip, heated by the scorching energy, even closer and spoke.

“My patience is not very long. Quickly convince me...”

“Has the Lee family now gained control over the Fiery Yang Qi within their bodies?”

‘!?’

As soon as he finished speaking, the demon mask’s eyes trembled.

The only visible body part through the mask was his eyes, but one could tell he was considerably shocked. Just as Mok Gyeong-un had anticipated, the demon mask was truly surprised.

How does this kid know about this?

Information about the Fiery Yang Qi[1] was something only a few within the Heaven and Earth Society knew.

-Smack!

The demon mask pulled away the sword and grabbed Mok Gyeong-un's collar with his other hand, pulling him close and interrogating in a whisper.

"Who the hell are you? How do you..."

To him who was trailing off, Mok Gyeong-un smiled brightly and said, "Are you asking about the Crimson Flame Sword Art[2]?"

'!!!!!!!'

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Mok Gyeong-un smiled brightly and said,

"How do I know the secret of the Crimson Flame Sword Art, you ask?"

'!!!!!!!'

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, the demon mask's eyes widened even more.

Just who was this fellow?

He was clearly brought here as a hostage from the Yeon Mok Sword Manor and sent to the Corpse Blood Valley on that man's orders.

[It is his order. Don't concern yourself with whether they're hostages or not and proceed as usual.]

So he had taken it to mean they could even be killed.

But how did this brat know about the relationship between the Crimson Flame Sword Art and the Fiery Yang Qi?

This was a secret known only to a few, including the Society Leader.

Only four people: himself, the head of the Lee family, the young master who was his successor, the master of the Sinister Valley, and the Society Leader.

No one else in the Heaven and Earth Society knew.

Overwhelmed by countless questions, the demon mask finally revealed his emotions.

-Smack!

Grabbing Mok Gyeong-un's collar, he pressed the sword against his neck again.

"Who the hell are you really? Are you truly the Yeon Mok Sword Manor's scion?"

"There's no way I'm not."

"Nonsense! Does it make sense for a mere child of the Yeon Mok Sword Manor to know the secrets of our family..."

Suddenly, the demon mask's eyes narrowed.

Right, he had thought something was strange.

Could it be that person, no, the Society Leader was testing him?

[Show your loyalty for four generations. Then, I will allow the Lee family to regain the title of king.]

That had become the Lee family's shackle.

To prove they had no involvement in the bloody calamity of the Hoeryeong Battle, they had stepped down from the position of king.

From his grandfather's generation to himself, they had taken on the duty of the Corpse Blood Valley for three generations.

During that time, their loyalty had been tested several times.

And they had firmly proven it.

Soon, when his eldest son, the young master, inherited his position, they would reach the promised fourth generation.

-Bite!

The demon mask bit down hard on his lip.

'I thought we had proven enough.'

Was it still not enough?

So had he sent this to provoke him?

If he were to be emotionally swayed here, it would become an excuse, and the prospect of regaining the title of king would become distant.

No, perhaps there was no intention of returning it from the start, so this continued.

The demon mask gradually regained his composure.

-Swish!

The demon mask pulled away the sword and released his grip on the collar.

Then he spoke in a calm voice.

“Did the Society Leader send you to test me?”

“Hmm. What do you mean by that?”

“Don’t play dumb. Thinking about it, it was strange. It’s odd to bring in two hostages who aren’t even the eldest and have them enter here.”

“.....”

“If you’re acting on his orders, I won’t interfere further.”

“Something...”

“No need to say more. The reason I summoned you was to confirm whether you were a spy or not. But if you’re someone sent by the Society Leader, there’s no reason to question further.”

While saying this, the demon mask felt relieved that he had regained his composure on his own.

If he had been provoked by this fellow or had coveted him as a talent midway, it would have reached the Society Leader’s ears.

Fortunately, he had regained his reason partway.

Just then,

“Why aren’t you answering my question?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, the demon mask frowned.

Was this fellow trying to provoke him now?

Glaring slightly at Mok Gyeong-un, he warned in a low voice.

“Even if he sent you, know your place. Even if I’m not one of the Five Kings or Three Chief Masters, I am one of the Four Valley Masters who rank within the top twelve in the Heaven and Earth Society.”

The Five Kings and Three Chief Masters.

It was a title given to the eight high-ranking executives of the Heaven and Earth Society.

Below them were the Four Valley Masters.

Although the title of Valley Master was lower than the Five Kings or Three Chief Masters, it was still certain that they were among the top twelve in the Heaven and Earth Society and were figures of power and unrivaled masters.

‘Oh?’

Within the top twelve in rank?

Mok Gyeong-un thought he had obtained good information.

Just then, Cheong-ryeong’s voice echoed in his mind.

At this,

“The Lee family should have received the title of king from the Three Veins, so how did you end up becoming a Valley Master?”

“You dare...”

The demon mask flinched for a moment as his anger surged, then soon stopped.

If he were not someone sent by the Society Leader, he would have severed an arm right then and there.

The demon mask spoke with fury emanating from him.

“If you don’t get out of here right now, I’ll cut you down regardless of whether you were sent by the Society Leader or not.”

For a moment, Mok Gyeong-un saw a vision of himself being cut down.

Just from the murderous intent alone, it felt as if invisible sharp blades were being drawn in his mind, making his skin tingle.

Perhaps because it was the first time experiencing this phenomenon, rather than fear, he found it intriguing.

It was like the feeling of looking at a high scenic view.

'This bray?'

The demon mask was dumbfounded by Mok Gyeong-un's reaction.

He had deliberately threatened him out of anger, but instead, he was smirking.

Was he truly gutsy?

'Society Leader.'

Was it intentional this time?

Had he sent him to provoke him to the end?

Even knowing, this test truly made it difficult to suppress his anger.

Just then, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

"Is the reason you're wearing a glove on your right hand and a mask because you still can't control the Fiery Yang Qi and suffered burns?"

"....."

The demon mask's hand trembled.

He barely restrained himself from reaching for the sword hilt right then.

This fellow truly had a great talent for infuriating people.

"If you can't leave on your own feet, it seems I'll have to personally escort you out."

-Smack!

The demon mask rose from his seat and reached out his hand to chase Mok Gyeong-un out.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un grasped his sword-pointing finger and assumed a sword-drawing stance.

'How dare he insolently do this in front of me...!?'

The demon mask, who was about to instantly break this with the Golden Spiral Technique, suddenly hesitated.

It was because he was surprised to see Mok Gyeong-un's sword-drawing stance.

The demon mask's eyes trembled.

'Th-this is?'

Who among the Heaven and Earth Society's executives would not recognize the sword-drawing stance of this sword art?

It closely resembled the sword-drawing stance of the Heavenly Vein Sword Art[1].

'Could it be?'

The demon mask looked at Mok Gyeong-un with surprised eyes.

Something was strange.

He remembered the faces of all the Society Leader's disciples.

But no matter how much he thought about it, he had never seen this fellow before.

Could it be that he had recently taken on a new disciple?

The demon mask parted his lips with a cautious voice.

"Could it be that you're his..."

Just then,

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un extended his sword-pointing finger towards him and gently drew a circular trajectory.

It was like a full moon.

'No.'

Seeing this, the demon mask's pupils shook.

Although it resembled the Heavenly Vein Sword Art, the flow of the form was proceeding differently.

This was not the Heavenly Vein Sword Art.

'This is...'

-Swish swish swish swish swish swish smack!

The circular trajectory Mok Gyeong-un drew was now precisely targeting the eight vital points along the demon mask's central line.

The demon mask inwardly exclaimed at the flawless precision of the sword form.

If one only considered the sword form itself, without the sword intent, it was as if an unrivaled sword master was displaying sword techniques.

-Tap!

The demon mask retreated half a step.

At the same time, with one hand behind his back, he grasped his sword-pointing finger and blocked Mok Gyeong-un's sword techniques without injecting sword intent or internal energy.

-Swish swish swish swish smack!

Although it was a light form, Mok Gyeong-un's sword techniques were all blocked.

Except for one.

'I can't avoid this.'

The demon mask leaped backward to avoid Mok Gyeong-un's sword-pointing finger stabbing towards his brow.

Because the completion of the sword form was higher than the sword techniques he had displayed, it was difficult to block the final move in any way.

If Mok Gyeong-un had continued his sword techniques in this state, it would have been even more troublesome.

-Gulp!

The demon mask swallowed dryly.

'No doubt about it.'

He had never seen it directly.

But he had heard about it from his grandfather.

He unconsciously blurted it out.

“The Lunar Vein Sword Art.”

“Oh. You recognize it.”

“What?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the demon mask momentarily hesitated in bewilderment.

He had hoped it wasn’t, but was it really the Lunar Vein Sword Art?

“I thought the grandson of Lee Hwa-mun might not recognize it because of the mask, but this is unexpected.”

He repeated exactly what Cheong-ryeong had said.

Then the demon mask’s reaction was,

-Shing!

He swiftly drew his sword and aimed it at Mok Gyeong-un’s neck, emanating an immense murderous intent.

“Who are you? How do you know the Lunar Vein Sword Art? And what did you just say?”

“Hmm. I’d prefer if you asked one question at a time.”

That way, he could relay Cheong-ryeong’s words one by one.

But it was truly a strong aura that made one’s flesh tremble.

-Sizzle!

The sword wasn’t even touching him, but the heat emanating from it felt like it would melt his flesh.

Earlier, he had only felt the heat, but now the sword had become so hot that it visibly glowed scarlet.

‘I can’t block this.’

Could it be possible if he concentrated his death energy into a single point?

It seemed unlikely.

This man's martial prowess seemed no less than that of the Bright Sword King Son Yun, who had wielded that huge blade.

-Hiss!

Steam flowed from the arm of the demon mask holding the sword.

The heat was not limited to the sword but seemed to spread throughout his entire body.

The room became sweltering with heat in an instant.

The demon mask glared at Mok Gyeong-un and spoke again.

"I don't have time to play word games with you. Speak immediately. Otherwise, I'll take you to the sect's headquarters right now..."

"Take me and report that I learned the Lunar Vein Sword Art..."

"Shut up!"

-Smack!

With those words, the demon mask grabbed the edge of his mask and took it off.

Along with it, a face with one side grotesquely distorted by burns was revealed.

It was a severe burn that made it understandable why he wore a mask.

The demon mask spoke with trembling eyes.

"The Lunar Vein Sword Art's lineage has been severed. Even the only secret manual couldn't be read by anyone and was lost, so how could you..."

"Are you asking because you truly don't know?"

"What?"

"You just said it yourself."

"...That you read the secret manual? How is that possible?"

Even with the power of the head of the Primal Killing Pavilion, who oversaw the Heaven and Earth Society's esoteric arts, that secret manual couldn't be deciphered.

Yet this fellow claimed to have read it?

The demon mask, no, Lee Ji-yeom frowned.

It was hard to believe he had read the secret manual, but the words this fellow was spouting were even more beyond the scope of understanding.

He spoke as if he knew too much about his own family, the Lee family.

“That’s impossible. Just by reading the secret manual...”

“Of course, you can’t know.”

“What?”

“How could I know about the Lee family’s Crimson Flame Sword Art or Fiery Yang Qi just by reading the secret manual? Then how do I know?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, Lee Ji-yeom frowned and spoke.

“Could it be that you’re that person’s des...”

“Wrong.”

“If not descendant, then how...”

“I’m that person’s direct previous disciple, you see.”

‘!?’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Ji-yeom’s expression hardened terribly.

Was this brat toying with him now?

He had heard from his grandfather.

The previous Society Leader of the Heaven and Earth Society had personally ripped out his heart, severed his limbs, and beheaded him, displaying it to everyone as punishment for the crime of the bloody calamity.

That was a hundred years ago.

But how could this fellow, who looked no more than seventeen or eighteen, be his direct previous disciple?

“Are you telling me to believe those words? Are you truly wishing for death...”

“Seeing once is better than hearing a hundred times.”

It was as soon as those words ended.

Mok Gyeong-un took out a wooden doll from his bosom.

Then he formed a hand seal and chanted an incantation.

-Smack! Smack! Smack!

“Origin of the world, return to the source, release!”

Seeing this, Lee Ji-yeom was dumbfounded.

Was this fellow truly insane with a death wish?

He wasn't even an esoteric master, yet he was chanting some bizarre incantation...

-Hazy!

At that moment, an unbelievable event occurred.

-Trickle! Trickle!

Blood flowed down the walls of the office, and the surroundings were becoming soaked with blood.

-Shudder!

‘What in the world?’

Thinking Mok Gyeong-un had used some kind of sorcery, Lee Ji-yeom tried to behead him with his sword filled with Fiery Yang Qi.

Right then,

Lee Ji-yeom's eyes widened as if they would tear apart at the sight of the figure rising from the blood pooling on the floor.

‘!!!!!’

A peerless beauty with blood-red eyes, wearing a crown and holding a long pipe.

The moment he saw her, filled with an overwhelming presence, the image of that person his grandfather Lee Hwa-mun had spoken of with a ringing in his ears naturally overlapped.

## Chapter 83

[Grandfather. Is our Lee family truly not a family of traitors?]

[Ji-yeom. Is that question related to the scars on your face?]

[.....]

Eleven-year-old Lee Ji-yeom gave no answer to his grandfather's question.

These things were inevitable while attending the sect's martial arts academy.

Traitors, a family of betrayal.

He endured all kinds of disregard and harassment.

He tried to ignore it and fought back against their bullying.

However, it was meaningless.

It was a shackle that had come down from his grandfather, who had pledged loyalty to the disappeared Lunar Vein, and it was the price.

[.....Is it not a shackle that our Lee family can never escape from?]

[Ji-yeom.....]

His grandfather looked at Lee Ji-yeom, full of scars, with pity.

Then, embracing him warmly, he comforted him with a gentle yet firm voice.

[Do you remember what this old man told you?]

[Lying on firewood and tasting gall.]

Lying on firewood and tasting gall.

It means to endure hardships for the future by sleeping on thorny brushwood and chewing on bile.

His grandfather would habitually say those words to him.

That was because his grandfather's honor, who had been one of the Ten Founders of the sect and walked in high places, had fallen to the bottom after that day.

[.....]

[Why aren't you answering?]

[I don't know anymore.]

He had tried to endure as his grandfather had said.

However, it was futile to try to mend his increasingly shattered heart.

Why did his grandfather, his father, and he himself have to suffer like this?

Even though it was not a sin they had committed, just because they had pledged loyalty, did they have to be rejected by the sect to this extent?

[Grandfather, why don't you just pledge eternal loyalty to the Society Leader...]

[Ah!]

That day, for the first time, he saw a terrifying look on his grandfather's face.

His grandfather, who had never expressed it, was enraged to this degree at the mention of pledging loyalty to the Society Leader and escaping this stigma of a shackle.

Why was he angry at him?

Had he said something wrong?

For the first time, a sense of rebellion arose in his surging heart.

[Did I...did I say something wrong? Why must we, a meritorious family and one of the sect's founding members...]

[Ack!]

Lee Ji-yeom could not continue speaking due to the ear-splitting pain.

To him, suffering in pain, his grandfather spoke with bloodshot eyes.

[Regardless of the outcome, it is natural for a retainer to trust their lord until the end! Did this old man teach you otherwise?]

[That so-called lord has gone astray, and our family has even been branded as traitors. But what meaning does that have? And didn't you also accept that fault, which is why you accepted being demoted to a Valley Master and imprisoned in the Corpse Blood Valley for four generations?]

The more he thought about it, the more infuriating it was.

Why didn't his grandfather strongly assert that he had no connection to that person?

Why were they sharing in that person's sins?

Because he was a retainer?

'I can't accept it!'

After that day, Lee Ji-yeom no longer conversed with his grandfather.

And he gritted his teeth and immersed himself in martial arts training.

He couldn't endure it without immersing himself in something.

As a result of his immersion in training, he became the first in his family to successfully reach the 5th stage of the Crimson Flame Sword Art's advanced technique, the Blazing Cultivation, before coming of age.

Lee Ji-yeom became even more motivated by this opportunity.

'I can do it.'

Among his family's ancestors, no one had completed the Crimson Flame Sword Art.

Even his grandfather's limit was the 8th stage.

This was because the more one cultivated the Blazing Cultivation, the stronger the Fiery Yang Qi became, and it didn't just end with it becoming stronger but also burned the practitioner's own body.

However, he was confident that he could surpass the 8th stage and reach the 9th and even the 10th stage realm.

And perhaps this excessive desire became poison?

-Do not attempt the 6th stage until the 5th stage is perfectly ingrained in your body.

[Ahhhhhh!]

Ignoring his father's warning, Lee Ji-yeom's body burst into flames as he recklessly attempted the 6th stage.

Upon reaching the 6th stage of the Blazing Cultivation, one could imbue the Crimson Flame Sword Art with Fiery Yang Qi, but he had failed and suffered a backlash.

In an instant, the flames engulfed his arm and half of his face, and he couldn't come to his senses.

The rampaging Fiery Yang Qi had already surpassed the level he could control.

[Ahhhhh!]

Was he going to die like this after being too greedy?

At that moment, someone grabbed him as he was rampaging.

And they absorbed the rampaging Fiery Yang Qi and stabilized it.

'!?'

The one who absorbed the Fiery Yang Qi from his burning body was none other than his grandfather, Lee Hwa-mun.

Barely regaining consciousness amidst the pain, Lee Ji-yeom couldn't hide his shock.

Like his grandfather and father, if one forcibly accepted the Fiery Yang Qi without being able to perfectly control it,

-Sizzle!

The fire would turn against oneself.

Thanks to taking away the Fiery Yang Qi, Lee Ji-yeom's body could be stabilized, but his grandfather Lee Hwa-mun was not the same.

In an instant, his entire body was engulfed in flames.

It was on a level incomparable to Lee Ji-yeom's.

[Ah, no! No! Grandfather! Grandfather!]

Lee Ji-yeom rushed forward, trying to calm Lee Hwa-mun's Fiery Yang Qi.

However, Grandfather Lee Hwa-mun used his profound true energy to prevent him from entering his vicinity, making it impossible to approach.

[Grandfather! No, Grandpa!]

It had been nearly four years since they had been this close, and it had to be like this.

Thanks to his profound internal energy, his body was slowly burning, but his grandfather's flesh had already turned red and oozing.

[Grandpa! Please! Please!]

Lee Ji-yeom tried to forcibly break through his true energy.

Grandfather Lee Hwa-mun slowly shook his head at him with a bitter face.

He could tell from the shape of his lips.

'Don't come, my grandson.'

That sight tore Lee Ji-yeom's heart apart.

Watching his grandfather's body slowly burn right in front of him, his feelings were utter despair.

He waited for his grandfather's true energy to weaken and tried to somehow subdue the Fiery Yang Qi, but this was too painful.

[Please! Please!]

He begged his grandfather to withdraw his true energy.

However, his grandfather did not withdraw his true energy until his flesh was completely burned away.

Only when his breath ceased did the barrier formed by his true energy disappear.

[Ahhhhhhh!]

Lee Ji-yeom screamed.

His despair at witnessing his grandfather dying from start to finish because of him was tragic.

If possible, he wanted to exchange his life with his grandfather's.

However, that was impossible.

[Ugh.]

After wailing and crying for more than half a day, Lee Ji-yeom could only stop when he fainted from exhaustion.

After waking up like that, everything proceeded quickly and in a complicated manner.

It was because he had to hold a funeral for his deceased grandfather.

He confessed to everyone in the family, including his father, that his grandfather had died because of him.

However, no one blamed him.

[Even if you were hasty, it's not your fault. It's the fault of all of us for not teaching you properly and giving weak warnings.]

[Please...please punish me.]

His father, who had become the head of the family, shook his head and firmly refused.

It was because his grandfather Lee Hwa-mun would not have wanted that.

[But.....]

[If your grandfather had resented you even a little until his last breath, then do so.]

[.....]

He hadn't.

Even while enduring the immense pain of his body burning, his grandfather never showed it.

He just kept his mouth shut with the most indifferent face possible, as if worrying about him would hurt his heart.

All of that was consideration for him.

Throughout the funeral, Lee Ji-yeom silently shed tears.

After holding his grandfather's funeral amidst sorrow, Lee Ji-yeom came across a line of poetry left behind by his grandfather.

It was like the deceased's last will.

-Ah, the day I looked at the black robe and followed behind always lingers. No matter how much time passes, how could I ever forget that time in my dreams?

He thought he had no more tears left to shed.

Yet seeing this, painful tears flowed out as if being squeezed.

Even though he was one of the Ten Founders, most of the executives, including the Society Leader, did not attend the funeral due to the stigma of disgrace, yet he insisted on loyalty until the end.

Did that mean he believed in that person that much?

‘.....’

His heart grew complicated.

Lee Ji-yeom found that person so hateful.

However, after seeing his grandfather’s last words expressing longing for his former lord, he felt conflicted.

That person whom his grandfather had believed in until the end.

The bastard who inherited the Lee family’s orthodox lineage had insulted his grandfather’s loyalty and will.

‘Grandfather.’

At that moment, Lee Ji-yeom made a decision.

His grandfather’s will, which he had upheld nobly until death while enduring everything with patience.

He would inherit that will.

‘This unworthy grandson.....will carry on that loyalty.’

Even if it was a terrible stigma.

Even if it was a time of suffering.

He decided to carry on that will in order to restore his deceased grandfather’s honor.

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‘It can’t.....be.’

The master of the Corpse Blood Valley, Lee Ji-yeom, couldn’t hide his shock at the sight unfolding before his eyes.

At first, he thought Mok Gyeong-un was using some bizarre sorcery.

However, seeing that being taking form amidst the blood, he was at a loss for words.

A peerless beauty with blood-red eyes, wearing a crown and holding a long pipe.

That face where arrogance and majesty coexisted.

The moment he saw this, the image of that person his deceased grandfather Lee Hwa-mun had spoken of with a ringing in his ears naturally overlapped.

[Don't hate that person too much. The master that this old man devoted half his life to serving was not the despicable traitor you think. That person was stronger and more beautiful than anyone else in the sect.]

He had just lightly brushed off his grandfather's words.

It was because he didn't think it outweighed the wounds he had received while growing up.

However, the moment he saw her, he understood his grandfather's words.

They say those who rule are born to do so.

'Ah!'

The being before his eyes seemed literally born to rule.

Just by looking down as if to subdue, he felt a shudder and even reverence at her overwhelming presence.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un's voice reached his ears.

"How do you feel after directly seeing that person?"

"That person....."

Lee Ji-yeom's heart pounded and raced.

Was this being before his eyes truly that person his grandfather had longed for until the end?

At that moment, Lee Ji-yeom knelt on one knee as if his legs had given out.

-Thud!

It didn't matter whether the being before his eyes was a ghost or whatever.

He had vowed before his grandfather's spirit tablet.

To inherit the noble loyalty he had upheld until death.

Lee Ji-yeom bowed his head, clasped his hands together, and paid his respects.

"Lee Ji-yeom, head of the Lee family, pays his respects to the lord, the master of the Lunar Vein!"

At Lee Ji-yeom's utmost greeting, a glint of interest flashed in Mok Gyeong-un's eyes.

On the other hand, Cheong-ryeong glanced at Mok Gyeong-un with a triumphant gaze.

'Did you see that, mortal?'

She had boasted to Mok Gyeong-un.

Even if the other rotten ones were unknown, if it was the blood descendant of Lee Hwa-mun, whom she knew, he would still uphold that loyalty.

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un had inwardly sneered.

A whole century had passed.

Yet it was ridiculous to think that the will of loyalty would remain.

'You've become a vengeful spirit, yet you believe in humans?'

He found it truly foolish.

Even in just a few years, everything fades.

So, thinking that loyalty would continue when the person in question had died and disappeared, wasn't that just a vain hope?

However, something truly unexpected happened.

'It turned out differently from my intention.'

Mok Gyeong-un smacked his lips.

He had wanted to see her reaction, unable to hide her disappointment as her vain hopes were shattered.

Yet he had ended up making her elated instead.

'How unfortunate.'

Well, it wasn't entirely bad.

The fact that the loyalty had been passed down even after a hundred years meant it was worth using.

Just as Cheong-ryeong was about to open her mouth,

-Long.....

Right at that moment,

-Clap! Clap! Clap! Clap!

Mok Gyeong-un formed a hand seal with one hand and extended the wooden doll towards Cheong-ryeong.

"Forbidden seal, formless figure, two names become one, quickly obey and seal!"

As soon as the incantation ended,

Her spirit body, which had barely emerged, was instantly sucked into the wooden doll.

With that, the blood-stained Ghost Realm formed by Cheong-ryeong disappeared, and the office instantly returned to its original state.

-Shudder!

Noticing this change, Lee Ji-yeom frowned and raised his head.

Where had that person who was there just a moment ago disappeared to?

Of course, Cheong-ryeong was inside the wooden doll.

-Squirm!

The wooden doll wriggled, and Cheong-ryeong's voice echoed in Mok Gyeong-un's ear.

-You damn mortal bastard! What the hell are you doing?

She had barely revealed her spirit body and confirmed his loyalty.

Then, she should have drawn this fellow in and given him orders, but why was he suddenly sealing her back into the wooden doll?

Meanwhile, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“Did you see? That person has become a vengeful spirit with lingering resentment and is with me.”

“You bastard.....”

Lee Ji-yeom stood up and looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

That person’s appearance just now was definitely not an illusion or anything like that.

Lee Ji-yeom asked Mok Gyeong-un.

“Where is that person?”

“I just told you. That person is with me.”

“.....Then let me see that person again. I have so many things I want to ask.”

At Lee Ji-yeom’s request, Mok Gyeong-un pointed at himself with his thumb.

“Isn’t that person right in front of your eyes?”

“What?”

At Lee Ji-yeom’s retort, asking what he was talking about, Mok Gyeong-un smiled brightly and said,

“I am that person’s vessel of possession. It may be difficult for you to understand, but when that person possesses me, that person and I become one.”

-Ha!

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Cheong-ryeong inside the wooden doll was dumbfounded.

He had barely shown her form, so why did he seal her back inside this?

Mok Gyeong-un’s purpose was clear.

‘That loyalty spanning generations. I’ll take it for myself.’

Chapter 84

Cheong-ryeong, who had noticed Mok Gyeong-un's intention, clicked her tongue inwardly.

What kind of guy was he?

The Lee family had maintained their loyalty to her for over a hundred years, spanning generations.

Yet watching Mok Gyeong-un snatching away that loyalty in this manner made her anger surge.

She felt like breaking the sealing wooden doll right away, popping out, and beating the hell out of that mortal fellow's head with her long pipe.

However, that anger did not last long.

'What are you trying to do, mortal?'

Rather, she became curious about Mok Gyeong-un's intention.

He could have borrowed the power of the Lee family through her, so why did he need to snatch it away like this midway?

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

"You know that I am that person and that person is me, so why are you just standing there?"

"That's..."

At those words, the master of the Corpse Blood Valley, Lee Ji-yeom, suddenly hesitated.

He knew well what the word 'possession' meant.

It literally meant being possessed by a ghost, didn't it?

'Vessel of possession for that person?'

Then should he consider this fellow Mok Gyeong-un as the master of the Lunar Vein?

Since he did not have much faith in the strange arts, even though the Heaven and Earth Society had consulting esoteric masters, he felt somewhat hesitant.

It also gave him a strangely uncomfortable feeling.

Then Mok Gyeong-un said,

“You directly saw the spirit body, yet you still can’t believe it?”

-The atmosphere and everything is completely different, so would you believe it if he suddenly lied about being possessed?

Cheong-ryeong clicked her tongue and interjected.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un smiled brightly and said,

“I was confident that you would inherit loyalty spanning generations, and that’s why I even revealed this secret, but it’s disappointing.”

“N-no, that’s...”

“Then if I keep the promise from back then, will you believe me?”

“When you say back then?”

“The Crimson Flame Sword Art.”

“Could it be?”

Lee Ji-yeom’s eyes trembled.

That was because he recalled the words he had heard when learning the Crimson Flame Sword Art from his grandfather.

[The Blazing Cultivation was originally devised by that person and this old man together. We had tried to create the most suitable advanced cultivation technique for the Crimson Flame Sword Art. However, before we could complete it, that tragedy occurred.]

Just like him, Mok Gyeong-un also recalled what Cheong-ryeong had said.

[Once, I made a promise with the head of the Lee family, that fellow’s grandfather Lee Hwa-mun. To complete the unfinished Blazing Cultivation together.]

However, that promise could not be fulfilled while alive.

It was fulfilled after death.

As she became a higher-grade vengeful spirit over a long time, she regained her reason and gradually realized the parts she had not understood while alive.

One of those was the Blazing Cultivation of the Crimson Flame Sword Art.

Mok Gyeong-un extended his hand to Lee Ji-yeom with a smile and said,

“Although I have returned as a vengeful spirit with deep resentment, if the Lee family follows me once again, I will teach you the completed circulation technique of the Blazing Cultivation that I realized only after death.”

‘Damn you, mortal!’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Cheong-ryeong’s frustration surged.

She had just informed him of what was wrong with the technique and what needed to be changed.

An ordinary person would forget after hearing it once, but,

‘This bastard has memorized it, hasn’t he?’

Mok Gyeong-un’s memory surpassed common sense.

She had gotten angry and wanted to see how he would persuade without her help.

But it seemed he was truly going to snatch away the loyalty.

‘Completed circulation technique...’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Ji-yeom’s eyes trembled even more.

Three generations, from his grandfather to himself, had tried to complete the technique but failed.

In fact, it was difficult to complete from the beginning.

One had to bear the huge risk of directly verifying it by sending the Fiery Yang Qi to the acupuncture points, which could cost one’s life if done incorrectly.

[If it had been with that person, we might have completed it.]

‘Grandfather...’

[But you should be able to do it.]

Recalling his grandfather again, Lee Ji-yeom’s heart ached.

At this, he looked at Mok Gyeong-un’s face, pounded his tingling chest, and knelt on one knee.

“I’m not kneeling because of the completed circulation technique.”

“Then why?”

“It’s because you didn’t forget the promise you made with my grandfather, no, our family, and that’s why I’m pledging my loyalty once again like this.”

“Promise...”

“You have returned even as a vengeful spirit to resolve the long-cherished wish of my grandfather and our Lee family, so how could I dare to doubt you?”

-Thud!

Then Lee Ji-yeom completely prostrated on the ground.

“Lee Ji-yeom, head of the Lee family and master of the Corpse Blood Valley, once again pledges his loyalty to the master of the Lunar Vein. Please accept my bow!”

With that, he touched his forehead to the ground three times, expressing his respect and loyalty.

Looking down at this, Mok Gyeong-un raised the corner of his mouth as if satisfied.

Then Cheong-ryeong’s voice rang in his ear.

-You crazy mortal bastard. What are you doing, snatching away other’s loyalty?

“...”

-The loyalty would have naturally passed on to you if you had just stayed still, since you’ve become the direct previous disciple and I won’t be dragging you around forever even after death. Are you feeling refreshed after forcibly taking it?

She seemed quite angry.

This was the first time he had seen Cheong-ryeong talk so much.

Well, it made sense for her to be angry after he had snatched away the loyalty of a faithful retainer who had waited for her for a hundred years, separate from her grudge.

She probably thought he was trash.

However,

‘I understand your feelings, but my goal is not to be swayed by your hand.’

Mok Gyeong-un had only one reason for coming here.

It was to find the Ghost Sword, who might be related to taking revenge on the one who killed his grandfather.

However, if Cheong-ryeong took the lead, moved her former subordinates, and wielded that power, things would only flow in the direction she wanted.

Mok Gyeong-un did not want the situation to be created that way.

'It's only secondary to me.'

Resolving Cheong-ryeong's grudge was definitely not a priority for him.

She was also a vengeful spirit who would have tried to devour him if not for their predestined bond.

Although they had now established a master-disciple relationship due to their absolute bond of fate, Mok Gyeong-un fundamentally never trusted anyone.

Therefore, he had no intention of giving Cheong-ryeong the initiative.

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"Is this...the circulation technique completed by you, my liege?"

The master of the Corpse Blood Valley, Lee Ji-yeom, received the circulation technique written by Mok Gyeong-un with trembling hands.

It had been the aspiration of the family to complete the technique for three generations, so he could not hide his excitement.

Exclamations flowed from Lee Ji-yeom's mouth as he read through the technique.

"Ah!"

How could they have approached the qi circulation method in this way?

Lee Ji-yeom spoke in amazement.

"It's truly remarkable. I never thought of directly circulating the Fiery Yang Qi from the diaphragm to the Yang-acupoints. But if this works, it seems we can control the energy to enter the 9th stage. To devise this so easily..."

-Easily devised, my ass. I only realized it after death when my ghost eyes opened.

Cheong-ryeong grumbled in an angry voice, still not appeased.

An advanced cultivation technique like the Blazing Cultivation that could directly handle Fiery Yang Qi had a high risk in the first place, so it could only be completed after countless trials, errors, and sacrifices.

In a way, from Lee Ji-yeom's perspective, it could be said that he had encountered a fateful opportunity.

As he continued reading the technique, Lee Ji-yeom frowned.

Then he carefully said to Mok Gyeong-un,

"But my liege, it seems you haven't written the entire technique."

"That's right."

"Pardon?"

"I only wrote half of it."

At those words, Lee Ji-yeom was about to ask why but soon closed his mouth.

Looking at Mok Gyeong-un's smiling face, he could guess what his intention was.

"...Did you do it on purpose?"

"That's right."

"Why did you..."

"Even though I completed the technique, we should be careful. I did it because I was worried that you might be too hasty and get burned again."

"Ah..."

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Lee Ji-yeom let out a small gasp.

Was it because he was concerned that he might bring about a situation where he would be consumed by the Fiery Yang Qi if he recklessly tried to master the completed technique?

He seemed to have misunderstood.

He had thought that it might be because Mok Gyeong-un couldn't fully trust him yet.

Cheong-ryeong snorted.

-Even after receiving a pledge of loyalty, you sure have a hard time trusting.

She knew Mok Gyeong-un well.

She was certain that the reason he didn't teach the entire technique was definitely not out of concern for Lee Ji-yeom.

'Yes, correct.'

Of course, that was accurate.

Mok Gyeong-un did not completely trust Lee Ji-yeom even though he had pledged loyalty.

That's why he had only provided the appropriate bait.

-Trust him moderately. I guarantee you Lee members' loyalty towards me.

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un showed a faint smile.

Her trust in her former loyal subordinate was her freedom.

But he was different.

He intended to maintain some level of vigilance until he was certain.

At that moment, Lee Ji-yeom put the paper with the technique written on it into his bosom and spoke.

"But my liege, if it's not disrespectful, may I ask what happened that day at the Hoeryeong Battle a hundred years ago?"

'Hoeryeong Battle?'

What was that?

At his question, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes narrowed.

He didn't expect the master of the Corpse Blood Valley, Lee Ji-yeom, to suddenly ask about Cheong-ryeong's past that he didn't know about.

At this, Cheong-ryeong spoke in a sneering voice.

-Do your best. I won't help or interfere with anything related to the Lee family, especially with you, mortal.

She had no intention of telling him the information since he had snatched away the Li family's loyalty.

It meant for him to bear the hardship properly.

'Hoeryeong Battle.'

It was a memory she could never forget.

That memory had become the root of her becoming a vengeful spirit.

In the first place, she had no intention of telling this mortal fellow right away, so she thought it was perfect.

Just then,

Mok Gyeong-un spoke nonchalantly.

"You want to know about that?"

At this, Cheong-ryeong was dumbfounded.

Was he asking what he wanted to know without knowing anything?

Then Lee Ji-yeom replied.

"Yes. My grandfather believed in her liege until the end, but due to the incident that day, he was demoted from a king to a valley master, and our main family was expelled from the castle and has been imprisoned here in the Corpse Blood Valley for three generations."

'Ah...'

At Lee Ji-yeom's words, Cheong-ryeong felt bitter.

The Lee family was a founding family of the Heaven and Earth Society, yet they were humiliated like this.

Just how far were they willing to insult her and ruin the Heaven and Earth Society?

Indeed, she could never forgive him.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“How does the Valley Master know about what happened that day at the Hoeryeong Battle? I’m curious about how you and the sect know about it.”

‘What!?’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, Cheong-ryeong inwardly clicked her tongue.

This fellow always found a way out somehow.

On the contrary, she did not expect him to throw a question back like this.

No, was it because he could come up with words in any way since he had no difficulty lying at all?

‘You mortal bastard, really...’

As she found it absurd, Lee Ji-yeom carefully said,

“...I apologize, but is it alright to tell you this as it is?”

“It’s fine. You have to tell me as it is so that I can tell you what happened that day at the Hoeryeong Battle.”

Mok Gyeong-un spoke as if he didn’t mind.

While doing so, he glanced at the wooden doll in his bosom and smirked.

‘You should have just given me a hint.’

Then there would have been no need to be led like this.

But could he find out what kind of relationship Cheong-ryeong had with the Heaven and Earth Society and what secrets she held through this?

Chapter 85

‘Damn mortal bastard!’

Was he finally trying to find out about her past in this way?

For a moment, she pondered whether she should break the seal of the wooden doll and leave.

Just then, the master of the Corpse Blood Valley, Lee Ji-yeom, spoke.

“Since my liege has spoken thus, I will briefly commit a discourtesy. How did the incident of that day...”

-Damn mortal! Stop him right now. My past, in this way...

Feeling desperate, she shouted for him to stop.

However, Mok Gyeong-un had no intention of doing so.

In any case, if he encountered something related to her past, like with the Li family, he would find out what had happened one way or another.

Just what had she experienced to become a vengeful spirit...

-Flinch!

At that moment, the master of the Corpse Blood Valley, Lee Ji-yeom, and Mok Gyeong-un simultaneously looked in a certain direction.

It was towards the outside of the building.

-What is it? Why are you acting like that?

Cheong-ryeong, sealed inside the wooden doll, could not sense the external energy.

So she was puzzled when the two reacted simultaneously like this.

The master of the Corpse Blood Valley, Lee Ji-yeom, had already approached the window.

-Clack!

As he opened the paper-covered window, the courtyard in front of the lodging was revealed.

There were red-belted warriors standing guard in front of it, and nothing was happening.

At this, Lee Ji-yeom slightly tilted his head.

He was sure there was something that stimulated his senses just now.

But it had disappeared in an instant.

‘What was that?’

The energy he felt just now was too ominous to ignore.

However, now that it had disappeared, it was difficult to search for it blindly.

As he pondered this, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“Valley Master.”

“Ah. Yes, my liege. It doesn’t seem to be anything...”

“May I go out for a moment?”

“Pardon?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s sudden mention of going out, Lee Ji-yeom frowned as if in a difficult position.

On the other hand, Cheong-ryeong inside the wooden doll inwardly felt relieved.

She didn’t know what was going on, but thanks to that, the attention could be diverted.

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About a quarter of an hour ago.

On a mountain hill about 1 li (approx. 0.5 km) away from the lodging.

There, about ten red-belted warriors were transporting four spies whose energy cores had been destroyed and whose bodies were restrained.

Among the spies was Neung Hwa-yang, who could be considered the only female.

The other spies had resisted, getting their arms and legs cut off, and were unable to endure the pain of having their energy cores destroyed, so they all fainted.

However, she was the only one still conscious.

The reason was that she was possessed by Gyu Soha.

‘Ah...’

Gyu Soha couldn’t hide her regret.

She had barely obtained a decent body, but it was a pity to use it and discard it like this, but she had to carry out her master’s orders.

When the time came, she believed her master would find her a suitably decent body.

If that happened,

'...Will I be able to see that person again?'

Her own younger brother who had driven his own flesh and blood to death.

She had endured on the cliff of solitude with her anger towards him.

If her master went into the castle of the Heaven and Earth Society, she might see him again.

It had been fifteen years since her death.

There was no way he would have died in just that time.

[You damn bastard. If only you die, everything will be resolved.]

[You... you...]

[Acting all superior every time, pitying me as if you had everything...]

[I... I'm not...]

[You were just born before me, that's all.]

-Clench!

Strength entered her hand.

The last face she saw at the moment of her death was his face filled with ecstasy.

With that face, he had repeatedly smashed her face with a rock.

It was an indelible yoke of hatred.

-Creak!

While she was pondering this, the cart carrying them suddenly stopped midway.

Wondering what was going on, Gyu Soha squinted and observed why.

'Huh?'

The red-belted warriors were greeting someone.

Both were wearing Taoist robes, one was a white-haired old man, and the other was wearing an eye patch and leaning on a cane.

One of the senior warriors leading the red-belted warriors clasped his hands together and greeted.

“Bong-yang, a senior warrior of the Corpse Blood Valley, greets the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion.”

The identity of the old man was none other than In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, which was in charge of esoteric arts consultation under the Heaven and Earth Society.

And next to him was the middle-aged man with the eye patch leaning on a cane, his disciple and Taoist master, Jo Ui-gong.

‘Why have they come here?’

Bong-yang, the senior warrior of the Corpse Blood Valley, couldn’t hide his bewilderment.

That was because there were Taoist masters dispatched within the Corpse Blood Valley, so there was rarely any reason for the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion to come here.

However, he couldn’t figure out why they had come here.

Just then, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, asked the senior warrior.

“Were there any unusual incidents during the checkpoints?”

At his question, the senior warrior slightly frowned.

Although he was cooperating under the Society Leader’s orders, matters related to the checkpoints were ultimately the responsibility of the master of the Corpse Blood Valley and his subordinates.

He had no obligation to report to the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion.

‘Is this old fart trying to create more trouble?’

He was already doing the bothersome task of categorizing and moving the corpses one by one because of the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion.

So he was even more reluctant to say anything.

Perhaps his thoughts were showing on his face?

“Hey. Do you take the Primal Killing Pavilion lightly? The Pavilion Master is asking, so why aren’t you answering?”

Jo Ui-gong frowned and pressed him.

At this, the flustered senior warrior hurriedly spoke.

“No, that’s not it. How could that be? There were no major problems in conducting the checkpoints.”

At his answer, Jo Ui-gong clicked his tongue as if dissatisfied.

The warriors of the main castle were mindful of the Primal Killing Pavilion, which was favored by the Society Leader.

On the other hand, the warriors of the Corpse Blood Valley were not.

Was it because the master of the Corpse Blood Valley himself was close to being rebellious, as the Blade King had said?

“Tsk tsk. Does the Pavilion Master coming all the way here seem like nothing special happened?”

“What do you mean by that?”

“The cliff...”

-Swish!

At that moment, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, extended his hand and cut off Jo Ui-gong’s words.

Jo Ui-gong closed his mouth and quietly stepped back, unable to upset his master and teacher.

Then, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, spoke with a somewhat serious expression.

“Don’t ignore my words. Something unusual is happening. If there’s even the slightest suspicious or strange incident, speak of it. Otherwise, I’ll have no choice but to report to the Society Leader and halt the checkpoints of the Corpse Blood Valley this time.”

“Pardon?”

What on earth was he talking about?

Why would he halt the checkpoints of the Corpse Blood Valley that were proceeding normally?

The senior warrior couldn't help but be perplexed.

Just what had happened for the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion to personally come here and say such things?

"Was there really nothing unusual?"

In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, asked again.

At this, the perplexed senior warrior Bong-yang hurriedly spoke.

"There was nothing that could be a problem. The Taoist master in the cave also said it was fine that the monster making pig squealing sounds died during the previous checkpoint..."

"Wait."

"Yes?"

"What do you mean by that?"

In Seo-ok asked with narrowed eyes.

At this, senior warrior Bong-yang carefully repeated what he had said.

"The monster making pig squealing sounds died..."

"Gal-jeo? Gal-jeo died?"

Did that monster also have a name?

He wasn't sure what it was, but it seemed to refer to that wolf monster making pig squealing sounds, so senior warrior Bong-yang nodded and replied.

"Yes. It seems to have died during the second checkpoint."

"What do you mean?"

In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, couldn't hide his bewilderment.

That was because he knew how the checkpoints were conducted due to the 'thing' in the cave and the Spirit God Parasitic Poison Art.

Moreover, didn't the Primal Killing Pavilion manufacture the flag used in the second checkpoint?

In the first place, the key point of that checkpoint was to run away from the monster, and there was no one who could catch it.

"That can't be..."

"One of the trainees killed it."

"What? You're saying one of the trainees killed Gal-jeo?"

At these words, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, couldn't hide his surprise.

Even ordinary wolves were difficult to deal with without weapons or martial arts.

Yet they were saying that among the boys aged 16 to 19, there was someone who killed the phantom wolf with bare hands?

"Is that true?"

He found it hard to believe.

Jo Ui-gong also seemed to have the same thought as his master In Seo-ok, as he asked back in disbelief.

Then, senior warrior Bong-yang spoke as if frustrated.

"Sigh. It's true. We also couldn't believe the report at first, but that kid tore apart the monster's mouth and killed it. If you truly can't believe it, the monster's corpse should be in the cave..."

"What? Tore apart its mouth?"

"No. Can't you just go and see for yourself?"

At senior warrior Bong-yang's words, Jo Ui-gong was dumbfounded.

There were also ranks among the phantom wolves.

Even the lowest grade, the Fierce Beast, required Taoist masters to be at least at the Moon-level to deal with it.

Let alone the Monstrous Beast, which was one rank higher.

It was something an ordinary human could not handle.

As he was in disbelief, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, asked.

“Is the trainee safe, at least?”

“He’s safe. Rather, he was less injured than the other trainees.”

“My word.”

An exclamation flowed from the mouth of In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion.

Just what kind of fellow was he to be able to do such a thing with bare hands?

From the perspective of a Taoist master, he couldn’t help but be interested.

So he asked.

“May I ask for the name of that trainee?”

Well, that wasn’t difficult.

“It’s a kid named Mok Gyeong-un.”

“Master!”

As soon as those words were spoken, Jo Ui-gong called out to In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, in an excited voice.

He was so surprised that he unconsciously called him master as soon as he heard the name.

Realizing his mistake, Jo Ui-gong suppressed his excitement and spoke.

“It’s that child.”

“That child?”

“Didn’t I tell you? The child I accepted as a disciple was sent to the Corpse Blood Valley by the Society Leader’s order, so please inform him...”

At those words, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, frowned.

The child his disciple he had accepted as a disciple had killed the monster?

This was quite surprising.

So he asked.

“When did you accept that child as a disciple?”

“It hasn’t even been half a month since I accepted him.”

“What?”

The eyes of In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, widened.

A kid who had only received teachings on esoteric arts for half a month had single-handedly caught the monster Gal-jeo?

Since he was sent to the Corpse Blood Valley, he wouldn’t have had talismans or magic tools, right?

Then Jo Ui-gong whispered to him.

“Just in case, the disciple gave him a ring with incantations inscribed on it, but even so, isn’t it remarkable that he did this alone with his own strength?”

At his words, In Seo-ok stared intently at Jo Ui-gong.

He knew better than anyone what a ring with incantations inscribed on it was.

He had directly taught the method of making it, so there was no way he wouldn’t know.

However, even if he had that, catching a phantom wolf of the Ghost Beast level was definitely not an easy task.

No, it was practically impossible.

‘If what Ui-gong says is true, he has accepted a disciple with an absurdly outstanding talent.’

He had no choice but to acknowledge it.

He understood why Jo Ui-gong had insisted so much on informing the Society Leader.

If he had that level of talent, it was only natural for him to do so.

‘I want to see him in person.’

What kind of fellow he was.

However, there was something he had been suspicious of from the start.

He had tried to brush it off, thinking there was no way, but this feeling was unmistakable after all.

“Hand me the cane.”

“Pardon?”

“Didn’t I tell you to hand it over?”

At his master’s words, Jo Ui-gong looked puzzled but handed over his cane.

Then, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, lightly tapped the ground with the cane.

-Thud!

-Jingle jingle!

At that moment, the silver coins on the head of the cane shook strongly.

Along with it, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, muttered softly.

“Ma-yang-gak-seo Seo-won-un-jeong Jeo-won-gi-yun...”

-Swoosh!

The jingling sound of the silver coins gradually grew louder.

Then finally,

-Thud!

The red-belted warriors, who had been nodding off, collapsed on the ground as if they had fallen asleep.

Even the senior warrior Bong-yang was no exception.

“What on earth is...hmm.”

-Thud!

“Master, what...”

Jo Ui-gong couldn't hide his bewilderment at In Seo-ok's sudden incantation.

That was because his master's chanted incantation was not just for putting people to sleep or making them faint.

It was invisible to ordinary people's eyes, but to Jo Ui-gong's eyes, the gray-colored lines that appeared whenever In Seo-ok shook the silver coins on the cane were clearly visible.

-Swoosh!

The gray-colored lines that appeared like that created a semicircular curtain covering a distance of about 15 jang (approx. 50 meters).

'Spell power barrier.'

Spell power barrier.

It was a barrier created by a Taoist master's spell power.

Among the Taoist masters of the Divine-Sun-Moon-Profound-Transmission, only those whose spell power reached the Sun level or higher could create it, and it was comparable to the Ghost Realm created by high-grade vengeful spirits.

However, why did his master, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, suddenly create a spell power barrier?

Just then,

-Swoosh!

At that moment, chains shot out from the cart carrying the spies and pounced on In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion.

“Master!”

-Swish!

“Don't interfere.”

In Seo-ok shook his head and lightly swung his cane.

Then, the chains that had been rushing towards him were all bent and crashed to the ground.

“This is?”

Jo Ui-gong instantly realized that the chains were made of spiritual power.

He looked at the cart,

“Ugh...”

There, he saw a girl with black blood vessels bulging all over her body, writhing.

The girl was the spy Neung Hwa-yang.

Looking at the girl suffering in pain, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of the Primal Killing Pavilion, lifted the corner of his mouth eerily and spoke in a meaningful voice.

“So this is where my Gu poison was.”

Chapter 86

Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique[1].

It was a technique referred to as a forbidden secret art.

More than 60% of the current magical techniques were derived from Taoism, and there once existed a Taoist sect that popularized and brought prosperity to these techniques.

That was none other than the Mosan Sect[2].

In Seo-ok, the Primal Killing Pavilion Master, was no exception. When he reached the age of Gapja, 60 years old[3], he discovered various secret techniques engraved inside a deep cave in the valley.

One of them was none other than this Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique.

[The gods of heaven and earth have aided this Master.]

Upon discovering this, the Primal Killing Pavilion Master could not hide his joy.

However, that joy did not last long.

It was because more than 80% of the secret techniques he discovered were prohibited by the Sixty-Four Diviner Sects.

That was understandable, as most of the sacrifices for the techniques were living beings.

'This cannot be.'

At this, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing pondered deeply.

The world of the forbidden, which had been barren until now, was on the verge of opening, but as a diviner pursuing the ultimate heights of magic, it was unacceptable to let it go to waste due to the rules.

Therefore, he left the Sixty-Four Diviner Sects and joined the Heaven and Earth Society.

He made this decision with the conviction that only the Heaven and Earth Society could fulfill his aspirations.

-Screeech!

"Aaaargh!"

On the cart, agent Neung Hwa-yang, or rather Gyu Soha, who was possessing Neung Hwa-yang's body, could not endure the pain.

That was understandable, as it was difficult to maintain the possessed state due to the immense spiritual pressure.

'Damn it.....'

Moreover, the timing was not favorable either.

Thanks to the dense undergrowth, the sunlight was somewhat shielded, but during the day, when the energy of Yang was abundant, the ghost was inevitably weakened.

This was true even for those of high ranks.

-Bulging!

The black bulging of blood vessels was a symptom of weakening possession.

'I need to escape.'

Gyu Soha instinctively reached a conclusion.

The two humans before her eyes were completely different from ordinary individuals.

Especially that old man holding a staff was a true monster.

The spiritual force emanating from the man's entire body was overwhelming the surroundings.

-Pat!

Enduring the pain, Gyu Soha jumped off the cart and leaped backward.

However, there was another problem here.

The two meridians in the legs of this body were severed, and its danjeon had already been destroyed.

"Damn it!"

If it were not a weakened state or daytime, she could have controlled the body and restored it to some extent, but now it was impossible.

After a moment of contemplation, Gyu Soha decided to abandon the body.

In the current situation, this body was nothing more than an obstacle hindering her escape.

-Swish! Thud!

Neung Hwa-yang's body collapsed to the ground.

Simultaneously, Gyu Soha, who had emerged from the body, tried to soar into the sky.

However,

-Whooooosh!

'!?'

A gray membrane covering the sky and extending to a radius of 15 jang.

Seeing this, she was at a loss for words.

'What kind of human.....'

Could they create something like a Ghost's Domain that only the high-ranking ghosts could form?

The spiritual pressure created by their spiritual force was also absurd.

Having been trapped alone in the cliff, she did not know much, but this was not a monster she could handle even at night.

'Tsk!'

However, she could not just stand still.

-Swish!

Gyu Soha reached out her hand toward the sky.

Then, numerous iron chains erupted from the ground, converging toward a single point.

She then concentrated her power, trying to break through the membrane in any way possible to escape.

However,

"Hohoho. Who said I'm letting you go?"

-Pak! Pak! Pak!

Pavilion Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion formed hand seals with his left hand.

He wielded his staff, sweeping it across the Geumgangji (Vajra Mudra), Doji, and then Geomgyeolji[4] seals.

Then, strangely,

-Whooooosh!

The tree trunks in the undergrowth elongated, and they flew like whips, grasping the iron chains created by Gyu Soha.

'Ah!'

Gyu Soha hurriedly waved her hand downward.

Then, some of the iron chains changed direction, targeting Pavilion Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion.

At that moment, someone blocked the way.

It was Diviner Jo Ui-gong.

-Pak! Pak! Pak! Pak!

Im (臨)! Tu (鬪)! Gae (皆)! Jae (在)!

They were the hand seals of the Nine Character Technique.

Overlapping the index and thumb fingers of both hands, he aimed at the charging iron chains.

-Clang!

-Crash!

The iron chains bounced off and flew back toward Gyu Soha.

It was the Reversal Technique among the Nine Character Techniques.

In an instant, the iron chains that flew back pierced through the thigh of Gyu Soha, who was trying to dodge by twisting her body.

-Aaaaargh!

With the weakened spiritual body, it was naturally painful when the chains pierced through.

However, if she made the iron chains disappear, they would be crushed by the tree trunks, and it would be futile to gather them at a single point to break the membrane.

'I must endure.'

-Whooooosh!

The iron chains collided with the gray membrane, and blue and red sparks simultaneously flashed like lightning.

It was a phenomenon caused by the clash of spiritual force and spiritual energy.

"Where are you trying to escape to!"

Diviner Jo Ui-gong took out a talisman from his bosom and tried to chant a spell.

But before that, Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion took out a talisman first and threw it toward the Green Spirit Gyu Soha.

"The Demonic Fire Burns and the Strong Spirit Transforms, Hurry Up!"

As soon as the spell ended,

-Whooooosh!

The flames took the form of a bird and flew toward Gyu Soha.

With the iron chains stuck in her thigh, Gyu Soha could not move and was directly hit by it.

-Boom!

-Aaaargh!

With a scream, the iron chains that were shaped by spiritual energy disappeared.

Then, Gyu Soha fell to the ground.

Gyu Soha, whose entire body was charred black by the flames created with spiritual force.

Her condition was far from ideal.

-Damn Diviner!

“Hohoho. Your mouth is foul. This Valley Master is like a parent to you.”

-Swish!

Pavilion Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion waved his staff, and the sound of clinking coins accompanied the golden glow emitted by the red letters engraved on the surface of the staff.

Along with it, an earthen hand erupted from the ground, simultaneously grasping Gyu Soha's arms and legs.

-Grab! Grab!

-Let go!

“Do you think you can escape?”

-Screech!

Gyu Soha tried to generate spiritual energy and create iron chains.

However, when her arms and legs were grabbed, it became strangely difficult to exert strength.

“It’s useless. No matter how high your rank is, when caught by this Spirit Trap Hand, your spiritual energy disperses, and you cannot exert strength.”

-Ugh.

It was difficult to deny as she felt her own strength gradually draining away.

It was to the extent that she could even feel her spiritual body going limp.

Meanwhile, Pavilion Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion approached Gyu Soha, leaning on his staff.

Then, he lifted Gyu Soha’s chin with the end of the staff.

-Swish!

“Ho. It has matured better than expected.”

-Roar!

Gyu Soha opened her mouth like a beast, trying to appear threatening to In Seo-ok.

However, it had no effect.

Rather, In Seo-ok clicked his tongue and said,

“Since it hasn’t been tamed yet, it bares its fangs like a wild beast. But don’t worry. This Valley Master will refine you to be quite useful.”

-Don’t make me laugh. Human!

“Hohoho. You have completely forgotten the fact that you were once human. Well, it is a sign that your rank has increased, so it’s not a bad phenomenon.”

Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion seemed rather satisfied.

To him, his disciple, Diviner Jo Ui-gong, approached and said,

“Master, is this it?”

“That’s right. If it had matured a little more, we could have created a Blue Spirit in a short period, which is truly regrettable.”

“Even so, it’s really remarkable, Master.”

Jo Ui-gong spoke with a genuinely astonished expression.

That was understandable, as a ghost with this level of rank was artificially born in just 15 years.

It was an achievement that no diviner had ever accomplished.

Of course, there would be no one who would welcome such an achievement.

“Shall we ripen it further in solitude?”

“No. It’s too risky.”

“Risky, you say?”

“Once the technique is broken, it becomes difficult to continue the solitude technique. Although it’s regrettable that the rank is somewhat lower than expected, it’s sufficient to make use of it to this extent, so we should create a new jar.”

-Grr!

At these words from the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, Gyu Soha gritted her teeth.

She didn’t understand what they were talking about, but from what he heard, were these people the ones who created that hellish cliff?

Upon learning the truth, anger surged within her.

-Damn old man. You!

-Whooooosh!

“Hohoho. As expected of a ghost, your anger alone is enough to try to recover your spiritual energy. But.....”

-Clink clink!

-Aaaargh!

When In Seo-ok shook the coins on his staff, Gyu Soha covered her ears and writhed in pain.

The sound generated by the coins engraved with incantations caused pain that stimulated the spiritual body of ghosts.

“If you don’t want to become a servant spirit, it’s best to stay still.”

-Ugh.

Perhaps feeling fear at the mention of becoming a servant spirit, Gyu Soha flinched.

No matter how much of a ghost one was, it was natural to feel fear at the mention of becoming a servant spirit.

Seeing such Gyu Soha, Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion stroked his beard and said,

“But I’m truly curious.”

“About what, Master?”

“This Master’s Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique is perfect. But I don’t understand how it managed to escape.”

There was not the slightest flaw in the technique.

Yet it was broken.

If this Green Spirit before his eyes had been completed to the level of a Blue Spirit, it would have been understandable.

But that wasn’t the case either, so it was incomprehensible.

“Could it be that Taoist Yun neglected the management of the cliff?”

“That’s impossible. This Valley Master also periodically checked on it.”

At the master’s firm words, Diviner Jo Ui-gong scratched his head, looking embarrassed.

Then, Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion shook his head and took out a talisman from his bosom.

“Well, it doesn’t matter either way. If it wasn’t due to negligence, we can investigate and find out gradually.”

With that, he brought the talisman to Gyu Soha’s forehead.

Sensing an ominous feeling, Gyu Soha tried to turn her head to avoid it.

“I told you it’s useless.”

-Pak!

In Seo-ok forcibly attached the talisman to her forehead.

The talisman had the following written in red ink:

[Fated Connection (命緣)]

Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion spoke as if he wanted his disciple, Diviner Jo Ui-gong, to listen.

“Watch carefully. I will show you how to turn a ghost born from the Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique into a servant spirit.”

Anticipation appeared on In Seo-ok’s face.

That was understandable, as it was nearly impossible to use a ghost as a servant spirit under normal circumstances.

However, this technique, which was connected to the Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique, could make the impossible possible, surpassing all existing magical systems.

“Servant Spirit Creation Technique.”

With those words, In Seo-ok chanted a spell.

“The Heaven and Earth, Yin and Yang, Bless this Day, The Divine and Wondrous Spirit, Obey My Command, Gather the Water and Soil, Fulfill My Wish, On this Day, I Enter the Tomb, Communicate with the Spirit, Receive My Wish, Depart from Evil, Return to Good, The Spirit Faces Upward, Hurry Up!”

-Whooooosh!

As soon as the spell ended, the talisman burst into blue flames.

Then, the ashes glowed faintly and scattered over Gyu Soha’s entire body.

Watching this, the corners of Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion’s mouth curled up.

It was finally the moment he had been waiting for.

‘If a high-ranking ghost can be used as a servant spirit.....’

It might even be possible to use ‘that’ as a servant spirit, which was called a calamity.

In Seo-ok smiled and spoke to the Green Spirit Gyu Soha.

“Who is this Master?”

Now, he expected the word “Master” to come out of Gyu Soha’s mouth.

However, just as he was watching with anticipation,

-Shitty old man.

‘!?’

Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion frowned.

What?

Gyu Soha should have become his servant spirit through the servant spirit Creation Technique.

But why wasn’t this spirit calling him master?

Was it because its rank was high and its self-awareness was strong?

Then,

“Call this Master your lord.”

-Get lost!

“.....”

The eyes of Master In Seo-ok of the Primal Killing Pavilion narrowed.

Something was wrong.

There was clearly no problem with the technique, so why wasn’t it serving him as its master?

In Seo-ok spoke in a voice filled with anger.

“This Master is your lord. Obey this Master’s command at once.”

-Who says you’re my lord? Fucking old man. If you want to act like a master, bark like a dog in front of me.

“You bastard!”

Finally, the enraged In Seo-ok struck Gyu Soha's head with his staff.

-Thwack!

Gyu Soha, hit by the staff engraved with incantations, let out a scream of agony.

-Argh!

"This Master is your lord..."

At that moment, someone's voice was heard.

"Old man. Why are you beating someone else's dog like that?"

"What?"

At the sound of the voice, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, frowned and looked in that direction.

There stood an exceptionally handsome boy, who had approached unnoticed.

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

"I am its owner."

At this voice, the Green Spirit Gyu Soha shouted with a face filled with delight.

-Master!

'Master?'

The expression of In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, distorted frighteningly.

## FOOTNOTESS

1. 靈神蠱毒術[↔]

2. 茅山派, Mt Mao, Daoist mountain southeast of Jurong county 句容[Jùróng], Jiangsu Province .

The Mosan Sect was a renowned sect in Taoism, but it had been extinct for a long time.

Now, not even a trace of it remained.

There were various theories about its extinction, but the most prominent one attributed it to the sect's submission to and collusion with the government during the martial world's persecution under the 6th emperor of the Yan Dynasty.

Although most of the techniques that remained in the extinct Mosan Sect had lost their successors, occasionally, some of these past legacies were discovered.

One of them was,

“Alas. I thought the Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique had gone to waste.”

It was the Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique discovered by In Seo-ok, the Primal Killing Pavilion Master.

The successive masters of the Primal Killing Pavilion, based in Shaanxi Province, had often explored the collapsed valley once called Sealed Forest, Bongrim[[封林[↔]

3.甲子[↔]

4.A hand formation[↔]

‘Master?’

What in the world did that mean?

In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, was momentarily dumbfounded by the Green Spirit Gyu Soha's exclamation.

It was none other than himself who had used the servant spirit Creation Technique, a secret art that forcibly turned ghosts into servant spirits.

Yet the Green Spirit, born through the Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique, suddenly called a boy who appeared to be around 17 or 18 years old his master.

What on earth was going on?

As he was thinking this,

“Gyeong-un!”

Diviner Jo Ui-gong shouted upon seeing Mok Gyeong-un.

At that shout,

“Gyeong-un?”

Did his disciple know that guy?

While he was puzzled, Diviner Jo Ui-gong spoke in an excited voice.

“Master! Master! That child is the one I told you about.”

“What?”

The eyes of In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, narrowed.

That guy was the child his disciple Jo Ui-gong said he had accepted into his sect?

Wait a moment.

But why was that child here?

Shouldn't he be undergoing the trials at Corpse Blood Valley?

Moreover, he couldn't understand why the Green Spirit called that guy master upon seeing him.

“That child....?”

-Swish!

Diviner Jo Ui-gong was about to say something, but In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, raised his hand as if to stop him.

“Master?”

“Let's see. Are you the child named Mok Gyeong-un?”

At this question from In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, Mok Gyeong-un looked at Diviner Jo Ui-gong.

Then, Diviner Jo Ui-gong sent a glance and spoke softly.

“He is your Grand Master and the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing.”

‘!?’

At those words, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes sparkled with interest.

On the way to Heaven and Earth Society, Diviner Jo Ui-gong had briefly explained about the Primal Killing Pavilion, so he roughly knew what kind of people were in the valley.

Was that old man, who appeared to be in his seventies, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing?

'This is a diviner of a Master rank.'

Mok Gyeong-un, who had opened his Ghost Eye, possessed eyes that could concretize energy.

Therefore, he could clearly see.

The immense spiritual power that unconsciously emanated from the old man.

'The difference is this vast.'

It seemed to be nearly three times more than Diviner Jo Ui-gong.

It was not yet at a level he could handle.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un put his hands together and bowed respectfully, saying,

"Ah. You were the elder of our sect. I am Mok Gyeong-un, who has been accepted under Master Jo's tutelage."

"....."

At this greeting from Mok Gyeong-un, Diviner Jo Ui-gong silently stared at him.

On the other hand, the Green Spirit Gyu Soha, whose face had brightened at the arrival of her master, had her eyes wide open.

'What does this mean?'

This spirit's master was a member of this old man's sect?

Then did that mean he was related to those who had trapped her in this hellish place?

If that was the case, it would be quite confusing.

As she was thinking this, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, opened his mouth.

"Repeat what you just said."

At those words, Mok Gyeong-un, who had his hands together, tilted his head, then smiled brightly and said,

“Ah. You are an elder of our sect. Master Jo’s....”

-Thud!

Before Mok Gyeong-un could finish his sentence, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, stamped the end of his staff on the ground.

Then, with a frightening expression, he said,

“Are you trying to fool this Pavilion Master?”

“No. How could that be?”

At that brazen remark, Diviner Jo Ui-gong became even more anxious.

He knew this guy was bold and different from ordinary people, but the other party was his master and the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing.

But what was with this attitude?

“Apologize to Pavilion Master at once!”

Jo Ui-gong raised his voice and urged.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un lowered his head with his hands together and said,

“I apologize to the Pavilion Master.”

Although it sounded polite with no rise in his voice, something felt off.

However, since he did as he was told, there was nothing more he could say, so Jo Ui-gong glanced at the face of his master, In Seo-ok.

‘Alas.’

As expected, his expression was not good.

Just a moment ago, he had shown a quite favorable reaction, so he had hoped that he could somehow get him out of Corpse Blood Valley.

But now it was the complete opposite.

At that moment, In Seo-ok snorted and said,

“Did you say you were the master of this ghost?”

At that question, Diviner Jo Ui-gong frowned and looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

Come to think of it, this guy had definitely said that earlier.

[I am its owner.]

What did that even mean?

While he was puzzled, Mok Gyeong-un slowly raised his lowered head and said,

“Yes. Is there a problem with that?”

“What?”

Jo Ui-gong’s expression stiffened.

Did this guy not deny it but affirm it just now?

Then did he really make that Green Spirit, created through solitude by ghosts devouring each other, his servant spirit?

‘How in the world?’

Wasn’t this guy undergoing the trials at Corpse Blood Valley all this time?

But by what means did he make this ghost his servant spirit?

Moreover, a ghost as a servant spirit.....

‘Ah!’

Come to think of it, this guy had a ghost with a rank reaching Yellow Spirit as his servant spirit.

According to him, there was no special method, but the one who tried to possess his body was coincidentally captured and made into a servant spirit, didn’t he say that?

Having confirmed the extent of the guy’s magical knowledge, he had thought he was really lucky.

But not only that, he said he made a ghost with a rank reaching Green Spirit his servant spirit?

‘.....How is this possible?’

That was not something that could be attributed to luck.

Even his master, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, had tried to use the forbidden secret art of the extinct Mosan Sect to turn ghosts into servant spirits, hadn't he?

"Is that really....."

"Command it once."

Before Diviner Jo Ui-gong could say anything, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, spoke again.

"What do you mean?"

"Anything is fine."

'Is he trying to confirm it?'

In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, seemed to want to directly confirm it.

There were several ways to verify a servant spirit, but the simplest was for the master to give a command.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un casually said,

"Soha. Get up and come over here."

"Yes. Master."

As soon as Mok Gyeong-un's command was given, the Green Spirit Gyu Soha got up.

And as if he had been waiting, he approached Mok Gyeong-un.

Seeing this, Diviner Jo Ui-gong clicked his tongue.

'Ha!'

It was true.

The Green Spirit was really following the command.

He had been quite surprised when it was a Yellow Spirit, but a Green Spirit was a ghost that even decent diviners found difficult to handle, yet he made it his servant spirit?

Jo Ui-gong couldn't help but ask.

"How in the world did you do it?"

“Do what?”

“Are you pretending not to know now? You should have been undergoing the trials at Corpse Blood Valley, so how could you make that ghost, which was undergoing solitude, your servant spirit?”

At this question from Jo Ui-gong, Mok Gyeong-un shrugged his shoulders.

“Who knows? As I told you last time, I never really intended to do anything.”

At this answer from Mok Gyeong-un, Diviner Jo Ui-gong’s eyes narrowed.

Last time, he had thought it could really be a coincidence, but answering like that made it seem like he was hiding something.

“Oh, my. You’re trying to make a fool of this master now, aren’t you? Then let’s see if you still won’t answer even like this.”

-Pak! -Pak!

Diviner Jo Ui-gong formed hand seals.

And he chanted a spell.

“The Wheel Turns and the Stone Breaks, All Returns to the Mirror, The Meaningless Child.....”

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un focused on where Diviner Jo Ui-gong’s gaze was directed.

It was the iron shackle on Mok Gyeong-un’s wrist.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un could guess in an instant that he was trying to do something through this iron shackle.

‘As I thought?’

[Wear that on your wrist and say this. I, Mok Gyeong-un, will become Jo Ui-gong’s disciple and follow his will.]

[What happens if I make that oath?]

[A restriction is placed.]

[Restriction?]

[If you make that oath, you will not be able to harm me in any way. It is almost absolute.]

That was what Diviner Jo Ui-gong had said.

However, Mok Gyeong-un believed that there was definitely another hidden restriction here.

And as he guessed, it seemed like he was about to reveal that restriction now.

-Pak!

“Hurry up!”

Diviner Jo Ui-gong pointed the Geumgangji seal at Mok Gyeong-un and cast a spell.

Upon hearing the final “Hurry up!” Mok Gyeong-un realized.

“Hurry up!” meant that it had to be urgently executed like a command of the law.

In other words, it was an expression to follow the order.

‘So that’s how it was.’

The restriction was to control him.

He saw Diviner Jo Ui-gong’s gaze shift from the bracelet to his face.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un, without showing any signs, put on a dazed expression as if his soul had left his body.

Seeing this, the corners of Jo Ui-gong’s mouth slightly curled up.

“From now on, you must answer my questions accurately.”

“Yes.”

Mok Gyeong-un answered in a powerless voice.

Seeing this, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, looked at the iron shackle on his wrist and said,

“It’s an iron shackle with an incantation.”

“Yes. Master. As you can see, he has just become a disciple and is not yet controlled like a young colt, so I put it on him to tame him.”

At those words, In Seo-ok snorted and scoffed.

Among the disciples he had taught, the most cunning one who resembled him the most was Jo Ui-gong.

As expected, he had taken appropriate measures.

The iron shackle with an incantation could force one's will through self-restraint by making an oath.

"If you have any questions, please ask."

Diviner Jo Ui-gong pointed at Mok Gyeong-un and said.

Now, no matter what he asked, he would answer truthfully.

-Step step!

At these words, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, approached Mok Gyeong-un.

"Master?"

"One must always verify if it's properly set."

Then, he swung the head of his staff and struck Mok Gyeong-un's face.

-Thwack!

Mok Gyeong-un's head turned to the side.

No matter how much martial arts he had learned, if he was hit while not circulating energy and in a defenseless state, he would naturally feel pain.

He should have reacted in some way, but,

'Hmm.'

Mok Gyeong-un showed no change in expression as if he felt no pain at all.

Even after being struck on the face with the head of the staff, if he was like this, it seemed his will was indeed restrained.

However, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, was cautious.

-Thwack!

In Seo-ok struck the opposite side of the face with his staff.

As if that wasn't enough, he kicked Mok Gyeong-un's abdomen with his foot and knocked him down.

-Thud!

"Master. There's no need to go that far...."

"Wait."

-Pak!

In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, climbed on top of Mok Gyeong-un's chest and stepped hard on his neck with one foot.

-Kkkkk!

As his neck was pressed down, blood vessels bulged on his face, and his face turned red.

However, there was still no change in Mok Gyeong-un's expression.

If he pressed down a little more, his windpipe would be cut off.

Yet he remained still.

-Gasp!

After staring at this, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, nodded as if he finally believed it and climbed down from Mok Gyeong-un's chest.

Then he said to Diviner Jo Ui-gong,

"Now ask the boy if he had entered the cliff valley."

"Understood. Gyeong-un. Get up."

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un silently got up from his spot with a dazed expression.

Seeing his face covered in wounds, Diviner Jo Ui-gong clicked his tongue inwardly.

Although he was his master, he was so cautious that he had no mercy in his hands.

'Well, he won't remember it when he comes to his senses.'

That was the power of the incantation shackle.

Jo Ui-gong asked Mok Gyeong-un,

"Did you enter the cliff valley where the solitude technique was being performed?"

"Yes."

At this question, Mok Gyeong-un answered straightforwardly with a dazed face.

At this, In Seo-ok clicked his tongue.

"The culprit has been revealed."

During the Spirit God Parasitic Poisoning Technique, no one should have entered there.

No, to be precise, one should not enter because it was dangerous.

In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, frowned and looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

'But how did he survive?'

Rather, that was the question.

At first, it was a mystery how he made the Green Spirit his servant spirit, but now that was even more curious.

That was because the cliff valley where ghosts lost their sense of self and devoured each other was literally like hell.

Yet not only did a guy who hadn't learned magic for long survive, but he also made a Green Spirit his servant spirit?

"Ask him how it happened."

"Yes. Tell us in detail what happened in there."

What on earth could have happened there?

As the two focused their attention on Mok Gyeong-un,

"The Society Leader....."

'!?'

Their expressions suddenly stiffened.

Society Leader? What did he mean by that now?

Could he be referring to the Society Leader of Heaven and Earth Society?

“The Society Leader.....”

However, after mentioning the Society Leader, Mok Gyeong-un whispered softly as if muttering, making it inaudible.

Diviner Jo Ui-gong raised his voice and said,

“What did the Society Leader do? Speak properly and loudly.”

“The Sect...Society Leader.....”

Mok Gyeong-un muttered again in a trailing voice, mentioning the Society Leader.

At this, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, grew impatient with Mok Gyeong-un mentioning and muttering about the Society Leader, who could be considered the head of Heaven and Earth Society.

He approached Mok Gyeong-un, grabbed his hair, pulled him close to his ear, and said, “Tell him to say it properly again.”

“Mok Gyeong-un, speak properly.”

At that command, Mok Gyeong-un opened his mouth again.

“The Society Leader.....”

“Yes. What about the Society Leader?”

“Is there any reason for him to come?”

‘!?’

-Squelch!

“Ugh!”

At that moment, In Seo-ok’s eyes widened as if they would tear apart.

Somehow, Mok Gyeong-un’s hand had pierced through his chest.

What on earth was happening?

Clearly, this bastard was bound by the incantation shackle....

‘!!!!!!’

In In Seo-ok’s widened pupils, Mok Gyeong-un was not wearing a dazed expression, but had the corners of his mouth raised in a grim smile.

Chapter 88

It was something no one had anticipated.

The incantation shackle was originally designed to restrain one’s will through self-oath, so like a servant spirit bound by a contract, it was absolutely impossible to disobey an order.

Therefore, neither In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, nor Diviner Jo Ui-gong, who had received the incantation oath, could have imagined such a thing would happen.

“Ugh!”

In Seo-ok’s eyes widened as if they would tear apart.

Somehow, Mok Gyeong-un’s hand had pierced through his chest.

‘!!!!!!’

In In Seo-ok’s widened pupils, Mok Gyeong-un was not wearing a dazed expression, but had the corners of his mouth raised in a grim smile.

‘This, this bastard, how did he...?’

No matter how you looked at it, it wasn’t the face of someone pressured by the incantation shackle.

At that moment, the startled Diviner Jo Ui-gong hurriedly chanted a binding spell.

-Pak! -Pak!

“The Wheel Turns and the Stone Breaks, All Returns to the Mirror, The Meaningless Child.....”

With the shackle on, if a binding spell was chanted, he would be unable to move.

“Cough.....”

-Swish!

Enduring the pain of his pierced chest, In Seo-ok tried to move his fingers to form a hand seal.

Among the forbidden secret arts he knew, there was a technique that could rapidly increase healing power by exhausting one’s vital energy.

However,

“Ah, that won’t do.”

-Crack!

“Aaaaargh!”

A scream burst from In Seo-ok’s mouth.

As he tried to form a hand seal, Mok Gyeong-un had bent all his fingers backward.

Due to his pierced chest, he couldn’t even scream properly.

The pain was agonizing, but with the thought that he might really die like this, he desperately tried to chant a spell with his mouth.

“Bi-gyeong.....”

“Mouth!”

-Pak!

“Kuh!”

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un struck In Seo-ok’s uvula with the blade of his hand between his thumb and index finger.

In Seo-ok, hit in the uvula, coughed up blood and writhed in agony.

He had to somehow cast a spell, but Mok Gyeong-un didn’t give him a chance to do so.

‘This, this bastard.....’

Seeing him in agony, Mok Gyeong-un smirked and said,

“As expected, a diviner who can’t use spells is worse than an ordinary person.”

These mocking words from Mok Gyeong-un did not reach In Seo-ok’s ears.

He had already completely lost consciousness.

The pain was so severe that he was on the verge of dying.

At that sight, Jo Ui-gong shouted with a distorted face,

“What? Weren’t you being restrained?”

At his shout, Mok Gyeong-un smiled brightly and said,

“Who knows? Why could that be?”

There was no need to explain it one by one.

Of course, the reason it didn’t work was that the name Mok Gyeong-un was not his real name in the first place, so the incantation oath was meaningless.

Diviner Jo Ui-gong glared at Mok Gyeong-un with a fierce expression.

‘This bastaaaaaard!’

He didn’t know what was going on, but the incantation shackle didn’t work on Mok Gyeong-un.

Naturally, there was no way he would reveal the reason it didn’t work.

At this, Jo Ui-gong quickly made a decision.

-Pat!

He had to distance himself from Mok Gyeong-un.

Since the guy was from a martial arts background, if the distance was close, it would be dangerous for himself.

‘I apologize.’

His master, In Seo-ok, was already as good as dead.

Since he didn’t teach the forbidden secret art of resurrection even to some of his disciples, there was no way to save him.

Jo Ui-gong took something out of the pouch at his waist while distancing himself.

They were wooden figurines with talismans attached.

[Wooden Figurine Spell]

He threw three wooden figurines with that written on them in front of In Seo-ok.

And he quickly formed hand seals and chanted a spell.

“Ghost wolf, ghost wolf, the yellow bridge is alive and well, the five prohibited acts are the gods’ will, the face of the bridge is the wind and the beast, the four seasons and eight festivals are the sacrifices, the fragrant incense is offered daily, the fierce and the bright, the sun rises in the east, the god’s talisman is unparalleled, the kitchen is in the north, the five peaks, the great old lord, hurry up!”

As soon as the chant ended,

-Tremble!

The wooden figurines trembled like crazy, and then the soil on the ground stuck to them.

Then, the soil that stuck to them transformed into giant figures whose height was at least two heads taller than ordinary adult males.

‘Hoo.’

The transformed wooden figurines held swords in both hands and took a stance.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes sparkled with interest.

This was a technique that Diviner Jo Ui-gong had not taught him.

“What kind of technique is this?”

“Do you think I’ll tell you, bastard?”

Jo Ui-gong shouted.

Of course, he had no intention of telling him.

This was a technique he hadn’t even taught his master, In Seo-ok.

They were Willow Spirit Generals[1] created by carving a willow tree over a hundred years old, placing it in a shrine, and infusing it with spiritual energy for a long time to deal with martial artists.

It took a tremendous amount of effort to create just one, and it took ten years to create three of them.

For Diviner Jo Ui-gong, it could be considered his secret technique.

“You stubborn bastard, release the master at once.”

-Chak!

Jo Ui-gong formed the Geomgyeolji hand seal and pointed at Mok Gyeong-un.

-Pa pa pa pa pak!

Then, the Willow Spirit Generals surrounded Mok Gyeong-un with remarkably fast movements.

Each one of them was stronger than a Fierce Beast-level when it came to skill.

Of course, they were not as strong as a Monstrous Beast level.

Nevertheless, three Willow Spirit Generals stronger than Fierce Beasts were enough to take pride in being able to face even the Peak Realm masters spoken of by martial artists.

‘The guy still lacks experience.’

On the other hand, he had sparred dozens of times in preparation for battles with martial artists due to his friendship with the Underworld King.

His master, In Seo-ok, had told him to spend that time refining his spiritual power instead, but Jo Ui-gong believed that he should prepare to some extent for battles with martial artists as well.

The result was the Willow Spirit Generals.

‘.....It was a mistake.’

Jo Ui-gong clicked his tongue inwardly.

Blinded by the guy’s innate talent, he had accepted him, but that bastard was nothing more than a mongrel who could not be controlled by anyone.

To him, Mok Gyeong-un said with a smile,

“You still have a lot to learn, Master.”

“Shut up! Who’s your master?”

“Wasn’t it said that once a master, always a master?”

-Grr!

Thinking that Mok Gyeong-un’s words were mocking him, Diviner Jo Ui-gong gritted his teeth, feeling absurd.

A disciple accepted into the sect had killed the Grand Master.

Such cases were absolutely rare.

“I was foolish to think I could control you, bastard.”

-Pak! Pak!

Diviner Jo Ui-gong formed hand seals and shouted, pointing at Mok Gyeong-un,

“Kill the.....”

“Ah. It would be better not to do that. If you keep doing that, the Grand Master here might pass away soon. Are you okay with that?”

At those words, Jo Ui-gong was dumbfounded.

Once his hand had pierced through the chest, it was already a lost life.

Rather, it was strange that he was still breathing. How could he save him?

“You’re deliberately stalling for time, but it’s useless.....”

“Master. You’re too quick to throw away the opportunity I’m offering you.”

“What?”

What nonsense was this bastard spouting now?

As he was thinking that, Mok Gyeong-un spoke in a meaningful voice,

“You want to become the next Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, don’t you?”

'!?'

At those words, Diviner Jo Ui-gong hesitated for a moment before giving the order to kill the guy.

What was he saying now?

Jo Ui-gong spoke in a chilling voice,

“Are you crazy, bastard?”

“What do you mean?”

“Are you saying that since the master will die, an opportunity has arisen for me to become the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing?”

It was so absurd that he let out a dry cough.

Even if one coveted a higher position and killed the person above, did he think that position would become his?

Moreover, In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, had three disciples.

Among them, the closest to being the successor was naturally the eldest brother disciple, Jo Tae-cheong of Bangwon.

Therefore, if the master died, the opportunity would become even more distant.

“I guess you don't have much attachment to the position.”

“Kill him!”

It seemed he shouldn't listen to the guy's words any longer.

He kept trying to deceive him with words, but he had now become certain of one thing.

This guy had to be killed no matter what.

He wasn't someone he could control.

-Pa pa pa pa pak!

As soon as the order was given, the three Willow Spirit Generals surrounding Mok Gyeong-un simultaneously charged at him.

At that very moment,

-Whoosh!

Iron chains erupted from the ground and restrained the bodies of the Willow Spirit Generals all at once.

-Kkkkkk!

“What?”

The one who did this was none other than the Green Spirit Gyu Soha.

-You damn diviner. You think I'll let you touch my master?

‘What the?’

Diviner Jo Ui-gong frowned.

That Green Spirit had clearly exhausted a lot of spiritual energy and was in a state where he couldn't exert such strength.

But somehow, his appearance had almost returned to normal.

‘What kind of trick did he use?’

It wasn't night, and there was no situation to obtain energy to recover spiritual power.

As he couldn't understand, Mok Gyeong-un suddenly grabbed the head of the dying In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing.

And then,

-Pak!

‘!!!!!!!!!!’

He ripped out the heart that was inside the chest.

It was truly shocking.

After becoming a diviner, he had seen all sorts of gruesome things and countless corpses, but seeing his master who had taught him magic having his heart ripped out while alive, his feelings were beyond words.

‘This, this guy is really.....’

To the dumbfounded Jo Ui-gong, Mok Gyeong-un said, twitching his lips,

“I’ll give you one last chance.”

“What?”

“If you take my hand even now, you won’t lose anything, Master.”

“.....No matter how you try to deceive me with your words, I won’t believe.....”

-Squish!

At that moment, the heart in Mok Gyeong-un’s hand was crushed.

Soon, Mok Gyeong-un shoved that crushed heart into the mouth of In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, whose breath had stopped.

Seeing this, Diviner Jo Ui-gong’s eyes trembled.

Because the moment he saw this, he could guess what Mok Gyeong-un was trying to do.

‘Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique?’

Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique.

It was a forbidden secret art for creating Living Corpse Ghosts.

If one fed the blood of one’s own heart, which could be considered the source of oneself, to someone who had just died, and gathered the negative energy of those who had not been dead for long in one place and performed the technique, this would be born.

A living corpse ghost.

It would transform into a being befitting that name.

However, Living Corpse Ghosts were even more difficult to create than ordinary Corpse Ghosts or Jiangshi.

‘The effectiveness is too low.’

That was because in order to create a single Living Corpse Ghost, nearly thirty people had to be killed and their energy gathered in one place, and Living Corpse Ghosts had too many weaknesses.

If they couldn’t periodically kill people and fill themselves with the negative energy of the dead, their bodies would rot, so their effectiveness was extremely low.

Endless sacrifices were required for a living corpse without its own will, so it became a technique banned by the Thirty-Six Valleys of Bangwon.

Of course, this wasn't a problem for the diviners of the Primal Killing Pavilion, who originally practiced forbidden techniques, but,

“Ha!”

Diviner Jo Ui-gong clicked his tongue.

By what means was he going to turn the Valley Master into a Living Corpse Ghost now?

Thirty people had to be killed, and their corpse energy had to be filled in the body to replace the heart, but even if he killed all the collapsed people here, there were only ten of them.

-Pak! Pak! Pak!

Mok Gyeong-un formed incantation hand seals with his hands instead of talismans.

And he began to chant a spell.

“Purify the Earth and Nurture the Golden Corpse, The Weak Enters the Fairy Realm, One Transforms into Ten Thousand.....”

‘It’s a foolish act. Unless you bury the newly dead around and gather their negative energy, a Living Corpse Ghost absolutely cannot.....’

-Twitch!

It was at that moment.

The body of In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, whose head was being held by Mok Gyeong-un’s hand, moved.

Seeing this, Diviner Jo Ui-gong’s eyes widened.

What on earth was happening?

“Uhhh.....”

Then, he even made a sound from his mouth.

Those symptoms of blinking his rolled-back white eyes were the signs of turning into a living Corpse Ghost.

At that sight, Jo Ui-gong was at a loss for words.

'Impossible.'

The negative energy of the dead was not sufficient, so how could this happen?

As he was thinking that, at some point, the pupils in In Seo-ok's eyes came back to life.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un released his hand from the head.

-Thud!

The staggering In Seo-ok soon stood up straight with his own strength.

"Ma, Master!"

Diviner Jo Ui-gong called out to In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, like that.

At that call, In Seo-ok slightly turned his head, then shifted his gaze toward Mok Gyeong-un with a dazed expression.

Then, he staggered over and knelt on both knees.

'!!!!'

Seeing this, Diviner Jo Ui-gong was truly shocked beyond words.

Without fulfilling the condition of the negative energy of the dead, he had really succeeded in the Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique.

'This guy is.....'

As he was bewildered, Mok Gyeong-un turned his head, smiled at Diviner Jo Ui-gong, and said,

"Do you still not want to take the opportunity?"

The moment he heard this, chills ran down his entire body.

"Do you still not want to take the opportunity?"

The moment he heard this, chills ran down his entire body.

That smile reaching up to his ears looked so full of malice.

'.....I took this guy too lightly.'

He had thought of him as a novice with outstanding talent but still had much to learn.

But now that he looked at him, that wasn't the case.

This guy was no different from a beast that would tear into you the moment you showed the slightest weakness.

Jo Ui-gong's eyes darted back and forth.

-Kkkkkk!

The three Willow Spirit Generals still bound by the iron chains and unable to break free.

In Seo-ok, his master and the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, who had become a Living Corpse Ghost through the Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique and lost his own will.

The strength gradually drained from Diviner Jo Ui-gong's clenched fists.

He did have a hidden trump card.

But strangely, he felt it wouldn't work on that guy.

'I had a disturbing dream.'

Something like today's events must have been the reason.

A turning point in life, so to speak.

It seemed to have occurred.

After briefly looking up at the sky and letting out a long sigh, Diviner Jo Ui-gong lowered his head and parted his lips.

".....If I accept the opportunity, what do I gain?"

"You've made a good choice."

At his words, Mok Gyeong-un nodded as if it was natural and tried to approach,

"Don't come closer. I haven't made a decision yet. Answer my question."

"Didn't I tell you earlier? I said I would help you become the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing."

Mok Gyeong-un pointed at In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, with a nod.

At this, Diviner Jo Ui-gong's eyes narrowed.

It seemed to imply that he would control the master and make him hand over that position to him.

But there was a problem here.

“Do you think my senior brother won't notice that our master has become a Living Corpse Ghost?”

“Will he notice?”

“With just his spiritual power and magical skills, senior brother is already on par with my master. If they meet in person, he will definitely notice.”

Senior brother Jo Tae-cheong.

It was said that In Seo-ok, the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, accepted him as a disciple thirty years ago.

His talent was so outstanding that it was no exaggeration to say he was already selected as the next Pavilion Master of Primal Killing due to his excellent spiritual power.

It wasn't easy to deceive the eyes and senses of such a senior brother.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un said with a smile,

“Shouldn't you make sure they don't meet in person until the Grand Master hands over the position, Master?”

“What?”

“I've set the table for you, do I need to spoon-feed you too? I think you should naturally be able to do that much.”

At these words from Mok Gyeong-un, Diviner Jo Ui-gong silently stared at him.

Was he saying to be prepared for this level of risk?

Jo Ui-gong silently clicked his tongue inwardly.

Then he said,

“I understand. If you transfer part of the control over the Living Corpse Ghost to me as well, I'll somehow manage that.”

“Is that all?”

“No. There are two more things.”

“Two things?”

“Yes. Cooperating with you means I also have to be prepared to lose everything I’ve built up until now.”

“So you need more compensation for that?”

Mok Gyeong-un’s voice became somewhat softer.

It signified that he was becoming emotionally uncomfortable.

But Diviner Jo Ui-gong had no intention of backing down either.

He thought that if he didn’t firmly establish it here, he would end up being dragged around by the guy in an ambiguous manner.

“So what do you want?”

“The Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique.”

“The Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique?”

“I want the secret you possess.”

Mok Gyeong-un’s Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique that succeeded without fulfilling the condition of the negative energy of the dead.

Seeing this, Diviner Jo Ui-gong was inwardly shocked beyond words.

What kind of trick did he use to make this possible?

This purely stimulated a strong curiosity as a diviner.

‘I want to know.’

Mok Gyeong-un’s Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique could be said to have compensated for the existing weaknesses, to put it mildly.

If the numerous sacrifices required to create a single Living Corpse Ghost could be omitted, there was no technique with higher effectiveness.

‘Will he really teach me?’

To be honest, he was half in doubt.

If it were himself or his master In Seo-ok, they wouldn't share this secret with anyone.

However,

"If that's what you want, I'll teach you."

"What?"

For a moment, Jo Ui-gong stared at Mok Gyeong-un with a blank expression.

He would teach this?

He had just blurted it out, thinking it was worth a try.

His real goal was what came next.

But he never thought Mok Gyeong-un would really say he would teach the secret of the Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique.

At this, Jo Ui-gong asked with a somewhat excited, trembling gaze,

".....Is that true?"

"Didn't you say you wanted that as compensation?"

"Yes!"

Seeing the strength in his voice, Mok Gyeong-un smiled with a snort.

It seemed he really wanted the secret.

Of course, teaching that wasn't a difficult task.

However,

'Will he be able to do it just by knowing?'

Only he himself, with a unique constitution capable of absorbing the negative energy (死氣) of the dead, could do it.

If what the Blue Spirit said was true, living beings couldn't accept negative energy into their bodies.

Therefore, even if he knew, it would be utterly useless.

“What is the last third compensation?”

At this question from Mok Gyeong-un, Diviner Jo Ui-gong, who couldn't hide his excitement, composed himself and said,

“Since we've agreed to work together, make an oath to me.”

“An oath? What do you mean?”

“If you swear not to harm me or seek my life, I will sincerely help you.”

This was more important than the other compensations.

Seeing this guy, he had no hesitation in killing someone if necessary.

Therefore, he wanted to firmly establish it here.

Of course, even if he made that oath here, he would never believe it.

It was just that if he made the oath, he would try to maintain it for a while according to his needs, so he was just trying to buy time.

‘And since I've demanded this much compensation, he'll believe I'll faithfully follow him.’

His real goal was here.

He would devise a plan after making the guy trust him.

By what means could he trust and follow a guy who nonchalantly killed even the Grand Master?

Diviner Jo Ui-gong said, hiding his true intentions,

“What will you do?”

“If you're uneasy, of course I should do it for you.”

“.....”

Somehow, this guy's words sounded polite, but there was something that subtly grated on his nerves.

But since it was a situation where he had to lower himself, he didn't show it.

It was truly coincidental how the situation had reversed in just half a month.

As he was thinking that,

“There’s a way to make you feel most at ease, Master.”

“A way to feel at ease?”

What was he trying to say?

As he was puzzled, Mok Gyeong-un took off the incantation shackle on his wrist, shook it, and said,

“If you wear this and make an oath to me, it should be fine.”

“What?”

For a moment, Jo Ui-gong was dumbfounded.

Was he telling him to wear that and make an incantation oath now?

“You bastard, are you seriously saying that.....”

“Bind him.”

-Whoosh!

As soon as he finished speaking, the iron chains of the Green Spirit Gyu Soha erupted from the ground and restrained his body.

‘Damn it!’

At this, Jo Ui-gong tried to move his fingers to quickly form a hand seal,

-Tap!

But it was at that very moment.

“Huh?”

What the? As he was thinking that, Mok Gyeong-un had already reached him.

The distance was about ten steps, but he arrived in the blink of an eye, startling Jo Ui-gong, who hurriedly tried to complete the hand seal.

However, before that, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his wrist first.

-Grip!

“Ugh!”

He gripped it so tightly that he was seized by pain as if his wrist would break.

Unable to breathe properly due to the agony, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“I’m telling you this because you seem to have some misunderstanding, but I’m giving you the opportunity so that you can be a more voluntarily loyal dog.”

“Let, let go of this.....”

-Clank!

Mok Gyeong-un put the incantation shackle on the wrist of the agonized Jo Ui-gong.

Then he smiled brightly and said,

“If you trust and follow me, Master, why would I need to harm you? So make the oath like I did last time.”

-Kkkkkk!

Jo Ui-gong, whose wrist was grabbed, writhed in pain.

It really felt like it would break.

“Or you can keep enduring. It would be fun to break them one by one.”

‘This, this bastard.....’

He looked at Mok Gyeong-un in agony, but he was smirking at him as if enjoying this.

Seeing that, Jo Ui-gong realized he had no choice.

This guy was enjoying this situation.

If he didn’t make the oath, he would really do as he said.

At this, Jo Ui-gong barely endured the pain and said,

“I.....I, Jo Ui-gong, will follow the will of Mok Gyeong-un.....”

“Ah. Don’t say Mok Gyeong-un, but Jeong, will do.”

“What!?”

Jo Ui-gong's eyes trembled.

'Ha!'

Now the question was solved.

The incantation contract could only restrain one's will if it was made with one's real name.

Naturally, since he was the son of the Yeon Mok Sword Manor and they all called him Mok Gyeong-un, he had never doubted it.

But he had lied about his name?

'To fall for such an absurd trick.....'

It was utterly disheartening.

"Now, stop being surprised and do it properly, shall we?"

-Kkkkkk!

Mok Gyeong-un applied more strength to his hand.

At this, Jo Ui-gong hurriedly said,

"Kkkkk. I.....I, Jo Ui-gong, will follow the will of Jeong."

As soon as he finished speaking, the shackle rattled and trembled.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un released the wrist he was holding.

"Gasp....Gasp....."

Jo Ui-gong, whose face had turned bright red and was drenched in sweat from the pain, gripped his wrist and gritted his teeth.

To even make an incantation oath to the guy he had accepted as a disciple.

How did it come to this?

As he was agonizing, Mok Gyeong-un placed his hand on his shoulder and said with a smile,

"I'm so grateful that you're helping your disciple like this, Master."

‘.....What have I done?’

It seemed he had accepted a demon as a disciple.

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This place was Honghyebang, a brothel located on the outskirts of the outer city of Heaven and Earth Society.

There, a seductive and beautiful woman was squinting her eyes and trying to look at the distant mountains.

She was Ha Chae-rin, a candidate for the sect leader of Flying Killing Sect, one of the three major assassination groups, or rather Go Chan, who was possessing her body.

‘Damn it. Where should I set my eyes?’

Go Chan was truly distressed.

With the help of a makeup artist, he had successfully applied makeup.

When the skills of the brothel’s makeup artist, who could be considered a master, touched Ha Chae-rin’s face, which was quite beautiful even without makeup, it transformed into an even more radiant flower.

‘It’s driving me crazy.’

But there was only one reason why Go Chan was so distressed.

There was nowhere to look.

The place he was in now was the common room where the courtesans of the brothel waited, and their clothes were all so thin that the inside was completely visible if you stared a little.

“Oh my. Sister. Aren’t you putting too much effort there?”

“You fool. If you don’t put in effort on a day like today, what will you do? You’re also fully prepared, with your skin showing through.”

“Hehehe. You’re right. How could I miss an opportunity like today?”

At the conversation of the courtesans who were overflowing with enthusiasm, Go Chan only pricked up his ears and turned his head toward the ceiling.

According to what he heard, a tremendous guest had made a reservation today.

He had asked to prepare the courtesans who were the most skilled in entertaining and had the best looks, so this was the situation.

[I heard someone with a quite high position in Heaven and Earth Society is coming.]

At the makeup artist's words, he thought it made sense and asked to be included, but this was truly a difficult situation.

Out of the forty or so courtesans here, only six could go inside.

So, they were checking each other while calling each other "sister," and it was no joke.

They were smiling and engaging in a battle of energy, and it was exhausting.

Even the thought of having to go this far and infiltrate Heaven and Earth Society for the sake of his master, Mok Gyeong-un, crossed his mind.

As he was thinking that, someone approached Go Chan.

"Hey, you."

"....."

"Newbie. I'm talking to you."

At that call, Go Chan pointed at himself with his hand.

Then, the mature-looking courtesan who appeared to be in her mid-20s snorted and said,

"You're not even answering when your sister is talking to you. What an amazing newbie. Who told you to come into this room?"

"Uh.....um....."

What should I say about this?

For a courtesan, mid-20s was quite old, but his actual age was different from this body.

So, he couldn't readily say anything.

He definitely had to act, but his male pride wouldn't allow him to say "sister."

'Damn it.'

At this, Go Chan bowed his head to avoid unnecessary trouble.

“You’re not answering until the end?”

As soon as he did that, the courtesan in her 20s suddenly tried to slap Go Chan’s cheek.

There was no way Go Chan, possessing the body of a Peak Realm master, could be slapped.

-Swish!

He lightly dodged the courtesan’s flying wrist.

At this, the courtesan raised her eyebrows and raised her voice.

“Oh my. You dodged your sister’s hand?”

Go Chan, who thought it would be tiresome to deal with her further, waved his hands and said,

“Look here, young lady. I have no intention of fighting with you. So let’s stop here.”

At these words from Go Chan, the courtesan’s expression turned blank.

“What’s with.....that uncle-like way of speaking?”

“.....”

At the courtesan’s words, Go Chan realized his mistake.

He should have tried to imitate the way young women spoke to some extent, but he had made a mistake in trying to avoid trouble.

Then, the courtesan said,

“If you dodge your sister’s hand again this time, you better be prepared.”

The courtesan seemed to need to slap him somehow to feel satisfied.

At this, Go Chan said with a serious expression,

“You keep calling me sister, sister, but young lady.....no, I’m probably older than you.”

“What?”

“Even though I look like this, I’m twenty-seven.”

Go Chan spoke an age that seemed older than her.

Seeing how she kept calling him “sister” and asserting hierarchy, he thought that if he mentioned an older age, she might let it go.

He couldn’t ruin the plan by unnecessarily causing a dispute here.

Then, the courtesan snorted and said, “Aha. Is that so? You’re a newbie, but you’re quite old despite your appearance.”

“Ahem. So let’s stop this pointless battle of energy here.....”

-Swish!

The courtesan rolled up both her sleeves and spoke as if she wanted everyone to hear, “Watch closely.

This is a fight between sisters.”

“.....”

Go Chan seriously contemplated whether he should change this plan.

Chapter 90

On the way back to the inner castle of Heaven and Earth Society, Diviner Jo Ui-gong had a complicated expression as he looked at the back of the old man walking ahead of him.

The old man silently walking was his master and the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing, In Seo-ok.

“Sigh.”

How did it come to this?

That fearsome master now moved according to his commands.

The reason was because he had received partial control from Mok Gyeong-un.

[I’ll let you command him as agreed.]

It was the only compensation Mok Gyeong-un kept.

None of the other conditions were kept.

The second proposal, the secret of the Six-Person Spirit Summoning Technique, was not taught, saying it would be impossible to do even if taught, and the third turned out like this, as you can see.

-Clank!

The incantation shackle on his wrist had turned him into a slave instead.

Now he had to follow the guy regardless of his will.

[I'll stay at Corpse Blood Valley, so Master, please go back and become the Pavilion Master of Primal Killing.]

'Damn it.'

He casually gave such an order to him.

Although he received control over his master In Seo-ok, who had become a Living Corpse Ghost, he couldn't recklessly take over the position.

There were procedures, and he needed a proper justification.

'What should I do?'

As expected, the biggest problem was senior brother Jo Tae-cheong.

Primal Killing Pavilion had been skilled in hand seal-based magic and Corpse Ghost techniques using dead bodies for generations.

However, senior brother Jo Tae-cheong was not only skilled in hand seal-based magic but also in servant spirit techniques, so he had even subjugated a Monstrous Beast level creature that even his master couldn't handle.

'.....It's not for nothing that he's called the next Pavilion Master of Primal Killing.'

If his senior brother found out that their master had become a Living Corpse Ghost, a big problem would arise.

No, his limbs could be torn apart by the Monstrous Beast in an instant.

He had to find a way to naturally deceive senior brother.

'It's giving me a headache. But.....'

Something had been strange for a while.

There was something he couldn't remember, but he didn't know what it was.

What order did Mok Gyeong-un give him with the incantation that made him lose part of his memory?

'It's unsettling.'

What could it be?

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'So it can be used that way too.'

Mok Gyeong-un thought the order he had given to Diviner Jo Ui-gong earlier was quite useful.

The order Mok Gyeong-un gave was simple.

[Forget that you heard my real name when making the incantation oath. Keep remembering me as the third son of the Yeon Mok Sword Manor.]

He wasn't sure if this would really work, but it actually did.

It was possible because the principle was to restrain one's own will.

He wanted to obtain a few more of these incantation shackles.

[Can I get more?]

[I want to, but it's difficult.]

According to Diviner Jo Ui-gong, the incantation shackle was a magic tool created by Great Monk Myeong-ryul, one of the Six Directions Gods, and was one of the four that his master In Seo-ok had received as a gift while attending the general meeting of the Sixty-Four Diviner Sects.

Even his master In Seo-ok had tried to uncover this secret and conducted research for over ten years, but failed to recreate this principle.

'What a pity.'

But there were three more besides the one he put on Jo Ui-gong, so he wanted to obtain them if he had the chance.

Anyway, thanks to that, he erased the memory of mentioning his real name from Diviner Jo Ui-gong's mind.

It wouldn't be a problem.

"Then shall we continue the conversation from earlier?"

Mok Gyeong-un said to Lee Ji-yeom, the Master of Corpse Blood Valley.

This was Lee Ji-yeom's office.

Having returned here immediately, Mok Gyeong-un was about to finish the conversation and ask what he was curious about.

What could be the secret of the Blue Spirit?

At that moment, the Blue Spirit's voice echoed in Mok Gyeong-un's ears.

-Hey. Mortal.

'I'm sorry, but it seems difficult to answer right now.'

He couldn't respond because Lee Ji-yeom, the Master of Corpse Blood Valley, was sitting across from him.

But then she spoke in a serious voice.

-I sincerely ask you. Don't ask now.

'.....'

Why?

Didn't she become a ghost for revenge and accept him as a disciple despite disliking him?

But why didn't she want to hear this? He didn't understand.

As he was puzzled, the Blue Spirit said,

-Even if not now, you will eventually find out when the time comes. Instead, if you do as I say, I will teach you one of the Eight Forms of Thought Destruction.

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes narrowed.

She was someone who didn't give any clues about the forms, saying that one had to realize them on their own.

But now she was saying she would teach him one of the forms she had realized.

It was a slightly tempting offer.

-If you agree to my words, make a circle with your index finger and thumb.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un moved the fingers he had placed on his thigh.

Then,

-.....

The Blue Spirit snorted as if dumbfounded.

It was because Mok Gyeong-un hadn't drawn a circle with his fingers, but stretched out his index and middle fingers.

It meant he wanted her to teach him not one, but two.

'.....You never settle for a loss, do you?'

Even knowing one of the Eight Forms of Thought Destruction was infinitely useful and valuable.

However, she thought the forms she had realized could be more harmful than helpful even if Mok Gyeong-un knew them now, so she hadn't taught him.

So she was trying to teach him one form that was relatively safe, but,

-Fine, you greedy bastard.

In the end, she agreed to teach him.

She wasn't sure if he could embody what she had realized, but she didn't want Mok Gyeong-un to know about this matter right now.

No, she herself didn't want to hear how it was revealed either.

She had a guess anyway.

'When you're ready.....'

It wouldn't be too late to hear it then.

With their agreement reached, Mok Gyeong-un said to Lee Ji-yeom, the Master of Corpse Blood Valley, who was about to speak to continue the conversation,

"That day....."

“Please wait a moment.”

“Yes?”

“Can we hear that story later?”

“Hear it later.....? But don’t you need to know what really happened back then to understand the situation of the sect.....”

“Let’s have this conversation after my position is a bit more established.”

“After your position is established?”

To the puzzled Lee Ji-yeom, Mok Gyeong-un pointed at himself and said,

“In your eyes, Valley Master, what level do I seem to be at now?”

“Level?”

“In martial arts.”

“Martial arts. Hmm.”

At this, Lee Ji-yeom slightly frowned, then looked Mok Gyeong-un up and down.

Then, in a voice that didn’t seem fully confident, he said,

“Is it alright if I speak honestly?”

“Yes.”

“Just based on the energy I sense, you feel like a first-rate martial artist.”

‘First-rate?’

At his words, Mok Gyeong-un tilted his head slightly.

He still had almost no clear realization of the energy corresponding to the Peak Realm.

However, the amount of death energy he possessed had reached the Pinnacle of Peak Realm.

Moreover, his opened middle danjeon was also filled with condensed energy reaching the Pinnacle of Peak Realm, so he could be said to have twice as much energy as a master of the same level.

'Can he not feel the energy?'

As he was puzzled, the Blue Spirit's voice was heard.

-Perhaps that could be the case.

'Huh?'

-In the first place, humans cannot accumulate or feel the energy of death in their bodies. At most, they would feel a chill or coldness.

'.....'

-Moreover, even if such death energy is gathered in the danjeon, it would be strange for ordinary people to accurately sense it.

'Is that so?'

As the Blue Spirit said, death energy was completely different from ordinary energy, so even a great master like Lee Ji-yeom, the Valley Master of Corpse Blood Valley, might have difficulty grasping it?

No, come to think of it, this could be a good thing.

'If the opponent doesn't know my level, I can deceive them.'

This alone had considerable value.

After all, letting one's guard down was useful for creating the opponent's weakness.

Then, Lee Ji-yeom carefully asked,

"Could it be that you are deliberately concealing your energy, my liege?"

The strength of 'that person' that Lee Ji-yeom had heard from his grandfather was no exaggeration to say that she was among the top three even among the strongest people in the history of Heaven and Earth Society.

Therefore, he thought this couldn't be all.

However,

"No. What you see is what it is."

".....Is that true?"

“Yes.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Ji-yeom let out a sigh mixed with some disappointment.

That was understandable, as Lee Ji-yeom thought ‘that person’ had possessed this boy’s body as a ghost to take revenge and regain her past glory and honor.

He naturally thought she would be prepared.

But if that wasn’t the case, what was his liege going to do in this situation?

“You seem quite disappointed.”

“That’s.....”

He couldn’t bring himself to finish the sentence.

To him, Mok Gyeong-un said with a smile,

“Of course you would think that. But it’s only been half a month since I possessed this body, and at that time, this body wasn’t even third-rate.”

‘!?’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Ji-yeom’s eyes sparkled with interest.

It was reasonable, as this meant his liege had reached the first-rate realm in just half a month.

If this was true, it could be considered a tremendous rate of progress.

“Is that.....true?”

“Yes. You don’t believe me?”

“No. How could that be? I’m just surprised.....”

Even with outstanding martial talent, this speed was beyond common sense.

Lee Ji-yeom’s reaction was natural.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“I know you have expectations, but even if my past self that you know is different, I’m also in a position where I have to start from the beginning again.”

“Ah.....”

At those words, Lee Ji-yeom nodded as if he understood.

Then he carefully asked,

“.....Then how long do you think it will take for you to recover to your original level, my liege?”

That was the key point.

Lee Ji-yeom was in a highly excited state after making the loyalty oath.

He wanted to leave this Corpse Blood Valley immediately and regain honor together as the right-hand man of his liege.

To his question, Mok Gyeong-un pondered for a moment.

‘Original level?’

Actually, come to think of it, Mok Gyeong-un had never heard about the level of martial arts Cheong-ryeong possessed when she was alive.

She herself always talked about how strong she was, but the standard for that was vague.

However, seeing even the strong Lee Ji-yeom having reverence, it seemed she was definitely stronger than he thought.

‘Then.....’

It seemed good to set a target period to some extent.

A gentleman’s revenge is not late even after ten years.

It meant that a gentleman’s revenge, even if it takes ten years, is not too late, and to be patient, build up strength, and wait for the right time.

Of course, it was natural to cultivate patience for revenge, but ten years was too long.

So, the period Mok Gyeong-un had in mind was,

-Swish!

‘!?’

Lee Ji-yeom's expression stiffened at the fingers Mok Gyeong-un held up.

-You.....are you crazy?

The Blue Spirit's voice was heard in Mok Gyeong-un's ears.

Why were they reacting like this?

As he was puzzled, Mok Gyeong-un was only holding up two fingers.

-Ha!

The Blue Spirit clicked her tongue as if dumbfounded.

Meanwhile, Lee Ji-yeom, the Master of Corpse Blood Valley, spoke in a slightly trembling voice,

"Could it be twenty years....."

"No. That's too long."

At those words, Lee Ji-yeom gulped and continued speaking as if he couldn't believe it.

"Is that really.....possible for you?"

"Is there anything I can't do?"

An answer without a moment's hesitation.

At this,

"Ha....."

Lee Ji-yeom let out an exclamation with eyes full of genuine reverence.

He was trying to set the target period as short as possible and aim for it, but was this level of reaction necessary?

Then the Blue Spirit clicked her tongue and said,

-A guy who hasn't even gained proper realization of the Peak Realm is boasting that he will surpass the barrier and reach the realm of Transformation (化境) within 2 years.

Transformation Realm (化境).

It was the supreme martial arts realm that could only be reached by surpassing the barrier and attaining the states of Three Flowers Gathered at the Crown[1] and Five Energies Paying Homage to the Origin[2].

It was said that only the Six Heavens and Eight Stars[3], known as the greatest masters in the current martial arts world, had reached that realm.

Yet Mok Gyeong-un had declared that he would reach the same level as them in 2 years.

'Is it difficult?'

As if reading Mok Gyeong-un's thoughts, the Blue Spirit said,

-Die and wake up a hundred times. See if that's possible. No, if that happens, I will call you Lord for the rest of my life and attend to you.