Former Mastermind To Chaebol Son-in-Law

Chapter 130 : Management Will Be Needed Too

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After parting ways with Noah Vantrail disguised as Gordon Grimes, In-hyuk returned to the car first.

During that time, a commotion from the forest unsettled his ears.

Others might not have noticed it, but In-hyuk could clearly hear the loud footsteps of Baek Si-hwan, who was busily leaving the area.

Before long, he arrived at the clearing where the car was parked.

Baek Si-hwan then stepped out, looking neat as if he had never moved from the car.

"Did you finish your business?"

"Fortunately, it didn't take long."

As In-hyuk got into the car, Baek Si-hwan closed the door and sat in the driver's seat.

At that moment, In-hyuk casually spoke.

"Let's wait here for about 30 minutes."

"... Excuse me? Why is that?"

"There's a reason. Just do as I say."

Not long after, a black vehicle emerged from the inner part of the clearing and pulled onto the road.

In-hyuk watched the situation calmly, saying nothing.

On the other hand, Baek Si-hwan was anything but calm inside. It was too obvious who owned that vehicle.

He hurriedly memorized the car's license plate. The letters in the middle of the plate revealed it was a rental car.

In fact, this was good news for him—if it was a rental, there would be a record of who paid for it in some form or another...

"Let's get going now."

Only after thirty minutes had passed did In-hyuk speak.

Baek Si-hwan couldn't send a message right away and could only grip the steering wheel.

'He must be really anxious inside.'

From the back seat, In-hyuk noticed Baek Si-hwan's mood. He soon took out his phone and dialed a number.

After a few moments, as the ringing ended, a heavy voice was heard.

[Yes. Division Director Kang In-hyuk.]

The one answering was Do Jung-geol, secretary to Hongu Society chairman Baek Ji-woong.

"Would it be possible to speak with the chairman?"

[Please hold just a moment.]

Meanwhile, a faintly heard voice from the receiver seemed to reach Baek Si-hwan, too.

He glanced at the rearview mirror, gauging the situation, then turned back to face forward.

While observing him out of the corner of his eye, In-hyuk heard the phone handed over to someone else.

[I hear you've been busy lately. What brings you to call me?]

"It's about the favor you asked last time. I've received an answer and wanted to contact you right away."

Baek Ji-woong let out a sigh.

[Ohhh~ You mean Gordon Grimes, CEO? Weren't you only able to deliver the message?]

Despite clearly being briefed about the situation by Baek Si-hwan, Baek Ji-woong feigned ignorance with a sly voice.

"Luckily, I received a response as well. However... he said it would be difficult to meet."

[Is there any reason you were able to find out?]

In-hyuk smiled slightly.

"I wasn't able to ask that much."

[That's quite disappointing. Still, I know this wasn't an easy task, so thank you for conveying it.]

"No, it's the opposite—I'm sorry I couldn't deliver a more satisfying answer."

[Well, let's try to meet when I have time next.]

After the call ended, In-hyuk said to Baek Si-hwan,

"It'll be lunchtime soon, so let's grab some kalguksu nearby before we go."

"... Understood."

Baek Si-hwan briefly pulled over to the side of the road and searched for something.

Watching him, In-hyuk casually added,

"Seafood kalguksu, please."

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WISE&WIRE Group Chairman's Office.

Baek Ji-woong's brow furrowed after finishing the call with Kang In-hyuk.

Beside him, Do Jung-geol cautiously spoke up.

"Is there a problem?"

"Do you think I could find Gordon Grimes with the people I currently have available?"

A few days earlier, the Organization had handed down a punishment.

The result was a limitation on his authority as Elder.

At the same time, the number of agents Baek Ji-woong could mobilize was drastically reduced.

Naturally, the support from outside domains was affected as well.

For that reason, the personnel he'd just dispatched numbered less than ten.

"He disappeared from Hong Kong without leaving a single trace... It'll be difficult, to say the least."

"Exactly. Honestly, it's almost impossible."

A heavy pause came with such an obvious answer.

Do Jung-geol then offered his opinion.

"Why not spread information about Gordon Grimes instead? Then the Organization's leadership might..."

"They would probably mobilize their agents directly."

Contact with Gordon Grimes was closely tied to key matters of the Organization.

That was not an opportunity the higher-ups would miss out on simply because Baek Ji-woong asked for help.

"Right now, our purpose is important, but I think it's time to withdraw for a bit."

Baek Ji-woong let out a bitter laugh at his concern.

"Are you worried about me?"

"The tasks ahead of you are important, but I just thought you should also consider your standing in the Organization."

Within the Organization, Baek Ji-woong's position was little more than Treasury Keeper.

He was given Elder-class treatment mainly for form's sake.

But even that had now been largely stripped from him due to repeated mistakes.

"If I trip up here, it's the end anyway. With no retreat possible, the only way is forward."

"But Hyottoko is sure to try to seize this chance."

Im Deok-chang, who went by Hyottoko, had also lost track of Tae Ju-ha and Kang In-hyuk in Russia.

On top of that, he moved his forces around without sharing information about catching Gordon Grimes, getting a strong rebuke just like Baek Ji-woong.

That's why Baek Ji-woong's isolation could be another opportunity for Im Deok-chang.

"If it's him, I'm sure he will. But given the current situation, it won't be easy."

Do Jung-geol, considering what Baek Ji-woong might be getting at, cautiously asked,

"Are you referring to the National Intelligence Service?"

"Honestly, isn't it strange?"

Baek Ji-woong's meaningful counter-question made him tilt his head.

"What do you mean?"

"Until recently, the National Intelligence Service didn't even know about the shell companies moving funds to Notex. But all of a sudden, at an unexpected timing, the trail got picked up. Even the fact that the original money courier, Delta Scourge, was attacked by Oruch Al Pasha... Isn't it strange?"

It all began with a slight suspicion.

But the crack widened quickly, and now most things had come to light.

"Are you saying... Skull orchestrated the entire thing?"

"Honestly, I was on the fence for a while. But looking at the situation I and Im Deok-chang are in, it's no different from Jung Yoon-ju. I could have easily ended up in Jung Yoon-ju's place."

"So, does that mean you know everything behind the Notex incident... Is that possible?"

The fund movement through Notex was a long-established practice.

Except for this time, it had never once been exposed, which made it hard for him to dismiss the suspicion that this wasn't an accident.

"What if Skull knew about it all along and was just waiting for this moment?"

"Do you really think he would go that far?"

"He's the most likely suspect. Of course, the method changed after Aoshika disappeared, but the basic framework remained the same."

"But he wouldn't have pulled this off without giving us a heads-up, right?"

'He' mentioned by Do Jung-geol was Nomen, whom Baek Ji-woong had previously spoken with on the phone. The two had walked the same path from the beginning.

"I didn't think so at first. But now, everything keeps circling back to Aoshika."

This was the reason Baek Ji-woong had previously connected Skull and AMK Partners.

Currently, Aoshika was being forgotten in the Hongu Society. Of course, not completely—while gathering strength, he was quietly waiting for an opportunity.

But Skull, who had suddenly appeared, was leaving behind only traces suggesting a perfect connection to Aoshika.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll have to try meeting Nomen in person soon."

"Will permission be granted?"

"I have to see him, no matter what. I can't just stand by in this situation."

With a sigh, Baek Ji-woong sent something from his phone.

And about an hour later, a message came to Do Jung-geol's phone with the plate number of the car Gordon Grimes had boarded.

It was a message from Baek Si-hwan.

But the car was found only in the parking lot; they'd missed Gordon Grimes again this time.

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【AMK Velion Open Bidding! The joint venture Velbyte Technology announced that exclusive import, distribution, and sales rights for the PowerForge X1 will be conducted through a country-by-country public bid. It is expected that incentive conditions will be attached based on revenue, market expansion, and contract renewal...】

【The joint venture Velbyte Technology also stated that it would coordinate with other companies for future patent licensing and production...】

【The real Midas touch, AMK Partners! The company's name is interpreted as 'Ark of the Midas is Kite,' meaning 'the Ark of Midas rises'... True to its name, the value of AMK Partners is skyrocketing in line with investor listing expectations...】

【Who is AMK Partners' founder, Gordon Grimes? Not once has he ever shown his face in an official capacity. For this reason, Norman McGrath, AMK Partners' Korea branch manager, is in charge of most public affairs, while the CEO is praised for handling the overall investment strategy himself...】

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As news around Velbyte Technology became official, the media continued to buzz.

With the attention of countless companies and businesspeople focused there, there was barely any moment for things to cool down.

At the same time, AMK Partners, which held a 50% stake in Velbyte Technology, drew ever-more interest.

All this time, In-hyuk kept up his daily routine of going to and from work. Even now, he was getting out of the car and waiting for the elevator with Baek Si-hwan.

Step, step—

Footsteps could be heard from the direction of the parking lot as Oh Kang-goo, executive vice president of Taeshin Asset Management, entered with his secretary.

Noticing him first, In-hyuk gave a slight nod and spoke.

"Seems I haven't seen you in a while."

It came off as arrogant, no matter who heard it.

But Oh Kang-goo didn't take issue, maintaining a calm expression.

"Division Director Kang, you're always so busy."

It really had been a while since they last met. In fact, chatting like this was the first time since Mi-ah's interview.

Of course, they sometimes met during major meetings, but Oh Kang-goo had never approached him first.

Moreover, those meetings were just for M&A／PEF division decisions to be shared and reported, so there was nothing to discuss.

"True, I've had a lot on my plate lately."

"Hmmmf—!"

Maybe it sounded like sarcasm, because Oh Kang-goo's face briefly threatened to contort before relaxing again.

Previously, Oh Kang-goo was the leader of the faction that made up half the executives at Taeshin Asset Management.

However, thanks to AMK Partners, In-hyuk's standing had rapidly solidified, and the faction's influence declined just as quickly.

Naturally, Oh Kang-goo was dissatisfied with the situation, but with no effective way to strike at In-hyuk, he could only stew inwardly.

"Oh, I plan to launch a project soon through the Bond Investment Division."

"Bonds, you say?"

"Yes—I'm gathering information on undervalued or high-yield bonds. We'll need to check the risks, so I'd like to request internal and external research on our current holdings as well."

At that, Oh Kang-goo's face hardened.

"When do you plan to start?"

"Soon. I'm heading to America for a bit, so I wanted to mention it beforehand, and I'll follow up after I return."

"I'm looking forward to seeing what results you produce this time."

"I hope it turns out well too."

Before long, the elevator arrived at the executive office floor.

As everyone got off together, In-hyuk glanced sideways at Oh Kang-goo.

'Sometimes management is necessary, after all.'

The issue he'd brought up regarding bonds was related to the corruption Oh Kang-goo and the other executives had going on.

He'd dangled it intentionally, to make sure Oh Kang-goo could recognize it.

Of course, with so many dirty dealings, In-hyuk could dig up just a few to cut him off at any time.

But that would just mean there'd be even fewer people to keep the machine running at Taeshin Asset Management.

That's why In-hyuk kept a leash on him, giving it a tug whenever necessary.