Former Mastermind To Chaebol Son-in-Law

Chapter 14

The Reward Is Fine

In-hyuk, looking a mess, revisited the home of KQ Group Chairman Kang Cheon-gyu with Tae Ju-ha.

He had considered sending her home separately, but since there could be others involved besides Pyo Jun-woo, it was unavoidable for her to accompany him.

As they soon entered the living room, Kang Cheon-gyu sat with a solemn expression, with Security Chief Nam Hyo-chang and Secretary Chief Noh Geun-cheol standing behind him.

"You've both had a tough day—thank you for coming. Are you all right?"

Beside him stood only the security guards.

Judging by the calm atmosphere, his wife and son, Kang Do-young, seemed to have returned to Seoul after the event.

"I just needed a couple of stitches. CEO Tae Ju-ha said she was fine as well."

"That's a relief. So, you're saying our own security guard tried to kill you and CEO Tae?"

On one side of the living room, Pyo Jun-woo, having been dragged in, was kneeling with only his feet unbound.

"It's hard for me to believe as well, but it's as I explained."

Kang Cheon-gyu glanced coldly at Pyo Jun-woo.

"Do you perhaps suspect I ordered this?"

"No."

The answer came in less than 0.1 seconds, and Kang Cheon-gyu's eyes widened slightly.

"Why not? It was my Security Office's man who acted—by that logic, I'd be a prime suspect."

"That would make things too obvious. Of course, I didn't rule it out at first. But after checking the video and thinking it over in the hospital, I realized it wasn't you."

"Then, whose orders do you think he was following?"

In-hyuk shrugged his shoulders.

"He won't talk, so I don't know that far."

"By the way... was it you who broke his arm?"

He had noticed Pyo Jun-woo's twisted right arm and the pain on his face.

"He attacked me to snatch my phone and SD card, so I had no choice."

"Our security guards aren't exactly amateurs. Did you learn some kind of martial arts?"

"Just a bit of self-study."

KQ Group's Security Office employees included at least athletes in martial arts, special police, and even ex-foreign security contractors and mercenaries.

Taeshin Group's Security Office was similar.

Pyo Jun-woo was a promising boxer before being scouted by KQ Group Security.

Kang Cheon-gyu had already learned this from Nam Hyo-chang.

Yet, In-hyuk had subdued such a person without a scratch—it was hard to believe.

"You must be quite talented."

"I suppose I'm not bad. But I assume you didn't call me here just to run a background check?"

This was a clear sign to cut off meaningless talk and get to the point.

Tae Ju-ha, watching from the side, felt nervous—it was In-hyuk, after all, speaking boldly before none other than Chairman Kang Cheon-gyu of KQ Group.

Meanwhile, In-hyuk calmly waited for Kang's response.

"You haven't reported this to the police yet, it seems. Why is that?"

"Because it involves your man, chairman. With the autobiography event already making the news, if a scandal like this gets out, it could cause further damage."

"Hard to believe you only did it for KQ's sake..."

He figured In-hyuk must have his own agenda.

"I'm not Taeshin Group's spokesperson, but I just didn't want this incident to spark trouble between our companies."

"... Was that your only reasoning?"

"I also felt Chairman wouldn't simply cover it up, even if we kept it from the police. Since your closest men in Security Office couldn't be controlled, I trust you'll take the proper action."

A helpless chuckle escaped Kang Cheon-gyu's lips.

"Heh—when did you ever see me to trust me that much?"

"I trust the KQ name more than the Chairman himself. You wouldn't just stand by, not for the sake of relations with Taeshin Group."

Based on memories from his previous life, In-hyuk already had a fair idea of his character.

Still, confirmation was necessary—to know if Kang Cheon-gyu had truly tried to kill Tae Ju-ha using Pyo Jun-woo.

'So, it wasn't Kang Cheon-gyu... That means there's another power trying to recruit KQ Group security guards... Could it be... Jeon Hae-in?'

The next likely suspect was Jeon Hae-in, Kang Cheon-gyu's wife.

What if, without thinking deeply, she acted just because Kang Do-young, KQ Group's only heir, had shown interest in Tae Ju-ha? It was a stretch, but there weren't many plausible connections to make.

'But would she really do something that reckless...?'

Just then, Kang Cheon-gyu, lost in thought for a moment, spoke up.

"I'd like to wrap up this situation as quietly as possible. Of course, there should be an appropriate recompense."

"... The reward is fine. Instead, if you find out who's behind this, even if you don't report the incident, please let me know."

He did consider trying to get something out of this, but for now, it was more important to see how Kang Cheon-gyu would handle the matter.

At In-hyuk's reply, Kang Cheon-gyu's expression turned grave.

"That, I guarantee."

And that brought their conversation to a close.

Then In-hyuk said something he hadn't considered before.

"Oh, sorry, but could you lend me a car? Preferably one in mint condition. I'll drive myself."

There could always be someone else trying to pull a stunt like Pyo Jun-woo.

"Understandable. Chief Nam, check and set one aside for them."

"Understood."

Nam Hyo-chang, who'd been standing quietly, went to move.

After that, In-hyuk finished his greetings outside with the quietly brooding Tae Ju-ha.

Meanwhile, Kang Cheon-gyu spoke to Secretary Noh Geun-cheol standing behind him.

"Could you look into that young man for me?"

"How deep should I look?"

"Everything that's not publicly known. As quickly as possible."

Understanding what was meant, Noh bowed his head.

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Seoul, Pyeongchang neighborhood, KQ Group's residence.

That house, home to the family, exuded a chill as cold as the surrounding marble.

The person who now appeared was Jeon Hae-in, KQ Group's matron.

But in contrast to her home's atmosphere, she entered the study, her face red with anger, after marching through the living room.

She shouted at Security Team 2 Leader Lee Jung-tae, who'd followed her in.

"You couldn't even finish off that woman and got caught?! Team Leader Lee, how the hell do you do your job!"

Lee Jung-tae replied cautiously, wearing a grave expression.

"... My apologies."

But her anger and irritation lasted only a moment.

Jeon Hae-in quickly regained her composure, fitting for the lady of KQ Group.

"So, what was the problem? You said everything was set! Why did things get so tangled?!"

"It seems the device Pyo Jun-woo installed in the vehicle malfunctioned, causing the accident earlier than expected."

"Then what about the black box footage? Don't tell me that was a mistake, too!"

She'd already received the report that Pyo Jun-woo had been caught by Kang In-hyuk and dragged before Chairman Kang Cheon-gyu.

Had it not been for the black box memory, there would have been no evidence to trace anything back, so her frustration was natural.

"That's the strange part. If it was Pyo Jun-woo, aside from malware, he wouldn't have left any evidence behind."

The Chairman's house was within KQ Group's territory.

With some Security Office staff co-opted, issues with CCTV or witnesses could be handled.

Yet, a problem occurred in a situation that should have been safe.

"Are you saying a video that wasn't recorded somehow suddenly appeared?"

"... I apologize. I'll look into it further."

Jeon Hae-in sighed.

"What about Pyo Jun-woo? How do we resolve this?"

"For now, he doesn't know you gave the orders, madam, so he won't mention you."

"You're sure?"

"You know our chain of command."

Lee Jung-tae had been a member of KQ Group's Security Office before approaching Jeon Hae-in.

Through dealings with someone behind Lee Jung-tae, Jeon Hae-in formed a relationship with a mysterious organization—so secret she didn't even know their name.

Still, she kept Lee Jung-tae close because, whatever the goal, he would do anything, by any means.

"You mean that underlings never know the higher-ups' identities, but follow orders unconditionally?"

"Yes. Pyo Jun-woo doesn't know who I am, either."

It was unclear just how many within KQ Group belonged to that organization.

Jeon Hae-in was wary, but determined to use Lee Jung-tae and his backers for her own purposes.

"All the same, be extra careful."

"I'll make sure there's no cause for concern."

"Oh, and was that man's name Kang In-hyuk?"

She had learned this from a Security Office employee at the Hanam residence via Lee Jung-tae.

"If it's about Kang In-hyuk, the Chairman also instructed Secretary Noh Geun-cheol to look into him."

"Curiosity must've gotten the better of him."

"Seems that way."

"By the way... nothing new about 'that person'?"

"As I mentioned last time, records at that orphanage were lost in a fire, so we're reconstructing a list through contacts. We're checking each one as info comes out—but so far, nothing."

At that, Jeon Hae-in's brow furrowed deeply.

"Haa—! I should have taken care of Yoo Ji-young sooner..."

"Her residence was in the U. S., and judging from the circumstances, she'd deliberately hidden herself."

Yoo Ji-young, the woman just mentioned, was a mistress Kang Cheon-gyu had met 34 years ago.

The problem was that she'd borne Kang Cheon-gyu's child and he learned of her coming to Korea and giving birth only later.

Thus, another child appeared besides Kang Do-young, previously the only bloodline of KQ Group, and Jeon Hae-in determined to eliminate anything that could threaten her son's position.

"She just wants to make a play for KQ Group, which will belong to my son."

"However, since it's been quiet for over 30 years, it's possible the person in question doesn't know their own bloodline or is already dead. They might not even be in Korea."

Lee Jung-tae gave a high-probability analysis of the ongoing situation.

Jeon Hae-in, too, hadn't ruled out those possibilities.

"We can't risk even the smallest threat."

"I understand completely. Given the Chairman's decisions, caution is wise."

It was another reason she was so desperate to find Yoo Ji-young's child.

Currently, because of Kang Do-young's lack of ability, Kang Cheon-gyu had made it clear—through his will—that he had no intention of passing the KQ Group chairmanship to his son.

Upon learning this, Jeon Hae-in joined hands with the mysterious organization reaching out to her.

"I want them found as soon as possible, just in case."

"I'm doing my best."

"I wish you'd just say so... Still, can we really never meet this higher-up? Only after everything is finished?"

It had only been about a year since the deal began.

In that time, Jeon Hae-in still hadn't learned who had sent Lee Jung-tae.

She had considered investigating, but if this organization could infiltrate KQ Group so deeply, that too might backfire, so she'd held back.

"Becoming KQ Group's owner is their minimum condition."

"How powerful are they, to make such ridiculous demands..."

"But aren't you satisfied with the results so far?"

It wasn't untrue.

Except for the recent trouble, Lee Jung-tae had achieved much for Jeon Hae-in over the past year—securing stakes, establishing a separate faction within KQ, and winning business opportunities.

Thanks to him, she'd even learned of Kang Cheon-gyu's outlandish will.

"I won't press you for now, but I'm disappointed this time. If this happens again, not you but your superiors will have to explain directly."

"... I'll relay your message."

With that, Lee Jung-tae left.

The study door closed, and the brow that had briefly smoothed on Jeon Hae-in's face once again twisted in agitation.

----------= Clacky's Corner ----------=

Is it possible that Kang In-hyuk is Kang Cheon-gyu's illegitimate child?

Maybe that was the reason, the Kang In-hyuk that Tae Ju-ha married died in the previous life...

Because of Jeon Hae-in...

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