Former Mastermind To Chaebol Son-in-Law

Chapter 15

Night Fell

The accident that occurred at Chairman Kang Cheon-gyu's autobiography publication event was processed as being caused by a temporary ECU malfunction.

Because the car manufacturer was also involved, and given the significance of the event, it was impossible to let the issue escalate.

During this time, Kang In-hyuk went to work as usual.

For now, by making sure Tae Ju-ha did not die, he saw the possibility that he could avoid death himself as well.

Just then, a payment approval notification sounded from his computer.

It was Deputy Section Chief Jung Jong-hyun, a team member, who had submitted the plan for the second quarter's additional stock operation for approval.

After reviewing the contents, In-hyuk stuck his head out from behind the monitor.

"If your time permits, shall we have a meeting?"

Everyone tore their gaze away from their monitors, exchanging odd glances.

Usually, any submitted approval was immediately granted, so there was never a need for meetings.

"Are you too busy for it?"

"... No, it's fine."

Jung Jong-hyun, the highest-ranking among them, spoke up first.

With that, everyone got up and moved to a small conference room.

"I've reviewed the report Deputy Chief Jung compiled and submitted quite thoroughly."

"Is there a problem with it?"

Jung Jong-hyun had done his best to select investment destinations necessary for profit.

Other team members also found little to object to, since even if returns weren't high, they also weren't bad.

He was prepared to argue back if In-hyuk was just nitpicking.

"The investment picks are appropriate. Just... at the perfect median. The lower the risk, the lower the return."

"But there are clients who want their assets managed safely. Of course, we're well aware, but I don't think we should recklessly take on too much risk either."

"What if there's information with a high probability?"

At that, Jung Jong-hyun and the staff exchanged glances again.

Jung Jong-hyun addressed In-hyuk's words once more.

"We know your returns have been high lately, Team Leader. But all of them have involved high risk—can you guarantee this time will be certain as well?"

"You don't have to join in if you don't want to."

Everyone's eyes darted around quickly.

Even in stock operations, there's a network. People share information, so it was well known who in which company was posting good returns.

Naturally, the recent talk of the town was Kang In-hyuk of Taeshin Asset Management.

A few clients saw higher returns than before, rumors spread, and the clients managed by these staff kept inquiring about it.

"Could you share evidence supporting your returns?"

At that question, In-hyuk met the eyes of Jung Jong-hyun and the other staff.

"I do have it, but I'm not sure there's enough trust to share it yet."

"..... Are you saying we'd pass the information elsewhere?"

"There's nothing to say you wouldn't."

For In-hyuk, his position in Taeshin Asset Management was important, but he didn't intend to be taken advantage of by others.

More than having to argue with those who contested every word, he needed people in the company who would believe in him and follow.

The conference room was quiet for a moment.

In-hyuk continued.

"... As you might already know, I have no intention of keeping quiet or just coasting along. So if you're willing to trust and follow, we can revisit the future management plan together. Please excuse me."

Bzzz— bzzz—

The phone vibrated in his pocket in the meantime.

【KQ Noh Geun-cheol】

He checked the name as he stepped out of the conference room.

After the recent incident involving Pyo Jun-woo, he'd gotten and saved the Chairman's secretary's number.

"This is Kang In-hyuk speaking."

[There's unfortunate news; the Chairman asked me to relay it.]

The tone itself already gave a bad feeling.

"What happened?"

[Pyo Jun-woo was taken during his transfer. While we're tracking him, we haven't been able to find any trace so far.]

At that explanation, In-hyuk let out a short sigh and went back into an empty conference room for the rest of the conversation.

"So information must have leaked from inside KQ Group's security office."

When he'd gone to see Chairman Kang Cheon-gyu again, other security guards had been assigned.

Since Pyo Jun-woo, who had gone to the hospital, was seen being brought back, it would have been a matter of time before someone found out the timing and method of his transfer.

[That's our current assumption.]

"So, you're telling me to let it go since it was unavoidable?"

The ones who had almost died during that incident were In-hyuk and Tae Ju-ha.

While he had turned a blind eye at first for KQ Group's image, it was hard to excuse even losing track of Pyo Jun-woo.

[Please, in view of inter-company relations. Also, the Chairman said to let him know if you need anything.]

In-hyuk didn't think long.

"Understood. And let them know that any requests should be directed at CEO Tae Ju-ha, not me."

[Are you alright, Mr. Kang In-hyuk?]

"I have nothing to ask of KQ Group at the moment. I'll excuse myself as I'm at work."

After ending the call, In-hyuk found and opened a hidden app on his phone.

A map of South Korea appeared on the screen, followed by a single red dot.

The tracking device he'd torn and stashed inside Pyo Jun-woo's jacket pocket during the hospital incident was working.

"Thankfully, it seems they didn't find it."

Along with a black box video transmitter, the tracker was something he had prepared under the assumption that Tae Ju-ha's death was not just an accident.

Of course, he never expected them to become useful so soon.

He had another reason for attaching a tracker to Pyo Jun-woo as well.

'The technique that guy used was definitely TMT. That means he's also connected to UID...'

Tactical Murder Techniques.

Martial arts devised for assassination, based on striking only the most vulnerable spots of the human body.

It was also something one could learn in UID, the intelligence unit of the Defense Intelligence Command where In-hyuk had served in a previous life.

But Pyo Jun-woo was about the same age as In-hyuk.

If he had been in UID, there was no way In-hyuk, who joined at the inception, wouldn't know.

So In-hyuk stared intently at the red dot on his phone.

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Before he knew it, night had fallen.

In-hyuk was near Sambong Mountain in Hwaseong, Gyeonggi Province.

It was the coordinate his phone indicated for Pyo Jun-woo.

"Is it a single road from here?"

That's how it appeared on the satellite map.

He had to leave the highway and follow winding roads a long way to get there.

If you didn't know the exact location, it would be hard to find from the address alone.

"For them to hide out in a place like this, they're much shadier than I thought."

Muttering quietly in the darkness, In-hyuk, dressed entirely in black, got out of the car.

It was about a 20-minute walk to the target point. He entered the nearby forest and took an indirect, quick approach.

When he got close, there was a single dilapidated warehouse that looked to have been built ages ago.

Checking more closely, tire tracks left the paved ground and continued to a nearby greenhouse.

He could also smell cigarette smoke lingering in the air, like someone had just been smoking.

Normally, it would be hard for someone to pick up that scent, but since returning to the past, In-hyuk's senses had become much sharper.

'This must be the place.'

He considered the possibility that the tracker had been found and they might have set a trap in return.

In-hyuk pulled out a full-face black skull mask, like one used in survival games, from his belt and put it on.

He absolutely couldn't expose his face.

'Let's see what kind of guys pulled this job.'

First, he moved away from the greenhouse, picked up a rock, and climbed up the warehouse wall using a rainwater pipe.

Once on the roof, through an old crack, he could see slivers of light and hear men's voices.

At this angle, he could only vaguely see the tops of two heads.

"... The dawn after two days. If you go from Busan Port through Fukuoka to the branch, someone will be waiting. (Japanese)"

"Understood. (Japanese)"

The men were speaking in Japanese, and the voice that had just answered belonged to Pyo Jun-woo.

In-hyuk didn't hesitate long.

He threw the rock he'd picked up toward the warehouse entrance.

Thud—

The conversation stopped at the sound, and a man went to check the door.

At the same time, In-hyuk dashed to the other side, dropped down, and jumped through a window along the warehouse's side.

'Counting the one who went out the door... there are four in total.'

There were also others out of sight through the gap.

While they were distracted, In-hyuk quickly closed in. Of course, they also moved to counterattack.

In the blink of an eye, military knives appeared in the hands of the men as they thrust toward him.

When a blade came right at his face, In-hyuk dodged and struck the first man's windpipe with a knifehand.

"Grrk—!"

With a single shout, In-hyuk knocked the knife out of his grip.

Thwack— Smack—

Now in possession of the blade, In-hyuk flicked it past the man's wrist and torso, and threw it to the next person.

Whoosh— Smack!

"Ngh!"

One of the men, a little farther off, rushed at In-hyuk, now empty-handed.

Then, as In-hyuk's arm swung, something crashed into the man's solar plexus.

"Ugh!"

The man's head jerked from the impact.

In that instant, In-hyuk kneed him in the head.

Thump—

The attack didn't stop there.

As he was reeling, In-hyuk took his knife, knocked him down, and, without the slightest hesitation, sliced both of his hamstrings.

"Aaaargh!"

"... At this point, crawling is your only option."

The voice that came out of the skull mask was different from In-hyuk's own.

He had a voice changer attached inside the mask to disguise it as well as cover his face.

Having neutralized three of the four, he turned toward the entrance.

Pyo Jun-woo, who had gone out to check when In-hyuk threw the rock, was nowhere to be seen.

"You're quicker on the uptake than I thought."

In-hyuk immediately moved outside.

Rustle— rustle—

He heard sounds in the forest behind the warehouse, of someone quickly running through the brush.

"Did he escape that way?"

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Running along the dark forest path, Pyo Jun-woo could not believe what he had just witnessed.

The three seniors from his organization who'd come to rescue him were all taken down in an instant—by a single person.

With his broken arm, he stood no chance against such an opponent, so fleeing was his only choice.

"No way, did KQ's security office send someone?"

The only one with reason to pursue him was them.

But if it was KQ Security, they would have surrounded the warehouse with multiple people, not just one.

"... How did they find where I was? No way...!"

No cars had followed them after their escape.

Sensing something amiss, Pyo Jun-woo stopped running and slipped into the brush.

With his left hand—the only one still mostly intact—he fumbled over his tattered clothes.

Soon he found a hole in the inside pocket of his jacket, and after feeling underneath it, he discovered a device about the size of a fingernail.

"When did they put this in?"

He had made a fatal mistake.

He looked in the direction he had just been running from.

"... Is that guy not coming after me?"

He recalled the opponent's full-face skull mask.

It was a design commonly seen on the internet, but the skills he'd witnessed moments ago made his skin crawl.

"Wait. Come to think of it, the technique that guy used...!"

The sensation was hauntingly familiar for Pyo Jun-woo.

Just then, something dropped swiftly from the tree above.