

Mayhem 271

Chapter 271 – Underground Prison (3)

“This is properly done.”

Mok Gyeong-un, who had peeled off the face of Trainee Ahn Jong-hu to create a new human skin mask, nodded his head while looking down at the Prison Battlefield Map.

This Prison Battlefield Map belonged to the Chief Banner of the Embroidered Uniform Guards who died in the mechanism trap.

The map appeared identical to the other intact ones Mok Gyeong-un had seen before.

Thus, he did not particularly need to worry about the accuracy of the map he had memorized.

However,

“Hmm.”

Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin while looking at the face of the Chief Banner.

He had prevented the incoming volley of arrows from hitting the face, allowing it to also be used as a human skin mask.

But soon, Mok Gyeong-un shook his head lightly.

Time was short, and he needed to hurry, so there was no point in further swapping faces.

After all, they would soon notice something strange anyway.

'Let's just move the Chief Banner's corpse to a location with a different trap.'

That seemed more likely to both delay time and increase confusion.

Somewhere on the lower level of Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

-Click!

Yeom Gyeong, a disciple of Huashan Sect, stopped pulling the food distribution cart and unfolded the Prison Battlefield Map.

As Yeom Gyeong examined the map, he soon frowned.

‘Strange.’

He was clearly moving according to the map but had arrived at a completely unfamiliar place.

Originally, there should have been a passage on the right, but it was blocked, and the left side was open.

What was bizarre was that the path leading to the left was sloped and even more damp.

Somehow, it gave him an eerie feeling.

‘Damn it. Can’t a place like the renowned Embroidered Uniform Guards even draw a proper map?’

He seemed to have lost his way.

Yeom Gyeong pondered whether he should turn back the way he came.

However, having just finished one round of food distribution, if he returned like this, he might get scolded by the Chief Banner who had come as his supervisor.

‘Will he give me demerits?’

That would be troublesome.

In the end, Yeom Gyeong, after some deliberation, pulled the food cart and entered the left passage.

If the map was drawn incorrectly, this was the only path anyway.

He continued pulling the cart for quite a while.

-Whoosh!

‘What? There’s wind coming from inside.’

The torch in his hand flickered.

There shouldn't be any wind blowing in such a deep underground cave.

Maybe that's why it felt disconcerting.

Could it be that he had taken the wrong path?

Just then, a strange sound reached his ears.

-Screech!

'Huh?'

-Screech!

It sounded like something was being scratched.

It came from deeper inside the cave. What could that sound be?

Maybe a prisoner inside the cell was scratching the wall?

As the puzzled Trainee Yeom Gyeong pulled the cart forward, he saw a red line drawn on the cave floor.

‘What is this?’

Among the many colors, seeing it drawn in red made it look like blood, giving him an eerie feeling.

At that moment, the scratching sound came from inside once again.

Judging by how much louder the sound was, it seemed to be getting quite close.

-Flicker!

Yeom Gyeong held the torch forward to illuminate the path.

About twelve steps ahead, a thick iron bar and a human figure inside could be seen.

‘Ah! Did I come to the right place?’

It didn't seem like he was lost after all.

With this, Trainee Yeom Gyeong pulled the food cart and moved forward.

As he crossed the red line and walked,

-Screech!

The scratching sound rang in his ears.

In that instant, Yeom Gyeong's eyes turned blank, and his pupils dilated.

-Thud!

Yeom Gyeong, with dilated eyes, let go of the cart's handle.

Then, with vacant eyes, he walked towards the prison cell, holding the torch.

As the torch drew near, the human figure inside the iron bars gradually became visible.

The figure had their eyes covered with a blindfold and a thick leather gag stuffed in their mouth.

Both wrists and ankles were restrained with heavy shackles attached to weights, immobilizing them.

However, even in that situation,

-Screech!

As the restrained prisoner moved their fingers to scratch the floor,

-Tap! Tap!

Yeom Gyeong, with dazed eyes, began tapping on various parts of the iron bars, as if searching for something.

His actions seemed like he was trying to open the iron bars.

As Yeom Gyeong touched the upper part of the iron bars, characters were engraved there.

[One Hundred and Twenty-Six]

Somewhere else in Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

-Swish!

Blood dripped from Joo Woonhyang's hand, which was grasping sharp iron spikes.

Although he had defended himself with his innate true energy, the force of the fall caused his palm to be torn by the spikes.

If someone other than him had fallen, they would have been impaled by the spikes and met with misfortune.

‘Fortunately, the torch fell first.’

It was a relief that he saw the spikes embedded below beforehand.

Had it not been for that, he would have fallen face-first into them.

“Phew..... Phew.....”

Enduring the pain of his torn hand, Joo Woonhyang reached down with one hand, grabbed the torch that had fallen between the spikes, and lifted it.

Then he bit the handle with his mouth.

‘If I hadn’t learned Wind Cloud Steps from my master, I would have been in big trouble.’

Being able to do a handstand and maintain balance in such an unstable position was also thanks to the Wind Cloud Steps.

Otherwise, his face would have been punctured first.

Joo Woonhyang slowly focused strength in his waist and bent his elbows.

‘Ugh.’

His palms tore further, and it was painful.

But if he couldn't endure it and let go, he would be heading straight to the afterlife.

-Thud!

Joo Woonhyang, who had bent his arms, exerted force and pushed his body away.

Like that, Joo Woonhyang's body flew towards the floor without spikes and landed.

He dropped the torch he was biting and clenched his teeth while looking at his bloodied, torn palms.

'My hands feel like they're burning.'

It was an old spike trap that had been left unattended for a long time.

It wouldn't be surprising if it was laced with iron poison.

'Damn it.'

Enduring the pain, Joo Woonhyang took something out from his bosom.

It was a small amulet pouch, containing Blood Detoxification Pills he had brought just in case.

Though he wasn't sure if it would work against iron poison, Joo Woonhyang chewed one-third of the pill, mixed it with saliva, and spat it onto his palms.

"Urgh."

The pain was no joke.

Gritting his teeth, Joo Woonhyang rubbed the mixture onto both of his torn palms.

It stung and burned like hell, but he endured it.

"Ha..... Ha..... Fuck."

A curse slipped out involuntarily.

Joo Woonhyang, breathing heavily, chewed another one-third of the Blood Detoxification Pill and swallowed it.

He saved the remaining one-third in the amulet pouch, just in case.

-Rip!

Tearing his sleeve further, Joo Woonhyang wrapped it around his palms like a bandage.

Strangely, at first, it hurt as if it was being burned by fire, but at some point, the pain disappeared.

It seemed the Blood Detoxification Pill had some effect.

Now that the bleeding had somewhat stopped, Joo Woonhyang returned to reality.

‘Ha.....’

It was infuriating.

He didn't expect Im Gyu-wol to prepare such a double trap.

Even if he resented him, he never thought he would give a fake map to another trainee like Yeom Gyeong.

Thanks to that, he had been thoroughly backstabbed.

‘Enough to make my head spin.’

He didn’t know this guy was so skilled in trickery.

It was a scheme that had read two moves ahead.

‘That punk Yeom Gyeong must have also suffered a mishap.’

If he had moved according to that incorrect map, he would be in danger as well.

But what mattered right now was not that guy.

It was himself.

‘Can I climb back up?’

Joo Woonhyang looked up while holding the torch.

To crawl back up there and break through the blocked ceiling again, he would have to retrace his steps back to the original path he came from.

However, it was quite high to do so.

He would have to remove all those spikes and then cling to the smooth wall and climb up for a long time.

‘If there’s a mechanism trap, it’ll be even worse.’

Just in case, Joo Woonhyang picked up a stone from the floor where there were no spikes and threw it to test.

Then, from the walls surrounding the spiked area, more spikes protruded.

-Thud thud thud thud!

‘This is crazy.’

If he hadn’t tested it, the moment he clung to the wall, he would have been skewered.

All he had was his body and this torch.

If only he had a hidden weapon, he could try something, but to enter the Prison Battlefield, he had to go in empty-handed.

‘What should I do?’

A sigh escaped involuntarily.

Since he didn’t know when and where a mechanism trap would activate, it seemed dangerous to move recklessly.

However, he couldn’t stay here forever either.

‘Should I just hold out?’

That was also an option.

Even though Im Gyu-wol had set a trap, he wasn't a Thousand-men Commander named Mak Myeong-bo.

As the person in charge, if the trainees who went in as apprentices didn't return, he would conduct a search to find them.

'Until then, I could endure in this place without mechanism traps.....'

-Swoosh!

At that moment, a strange sound was heard.

When Joo Woonhyang looked in that direction, smoke was rising from beneath the spike pit.

'They really went all out.'

Seeing this, Joo Woonhyang clicked his tongue as if fed up.

He didn't know what the smoke was, but there was a high probability it was poison.

Even with the Blood Detoxification Pill, prolonged direct exposure wouldn't be good.

'Damn it!'

Joo Woonhyang gathered as many stones as he could from the floor and ran towards the open passage before the smoke could reach her.

-Tap! Thud thud thud!

The mechanism traps were triggered once every two or three times he threw a stone.

With the traps viciously protruding, Joo Woonhyang couldn't let his guard down for a moment.

'Whoever built Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield, they really did a great job.'

Escaping from here seemed like a distant possibility.

Without a torch, it would be complete darkness itself, so how could one get out of here?

The mechanism traps appeared every twenty steps or so, driving him crazy.

‘Attempting to escape is certain death.’

After running for a while, triggering the mechanism traps along the way, Joo Woonhyang stopped.

He had already used up all the stones he had gathered.

From here, he couldn't move recklessly.

‘.....Hmm.’

Joo Woonhyang took off his outer clothing, tore it, and then twisted it to make a rope-like string.

He took off his shoes, wrapped the string around them, and tied it.

The length was less than 2 jang, but it seemed sufficient.

-Thud!

Joo Woonhyang threw the shoe with the string attached forward.

Then he slowly pulled the shoe back.

-Whirr!

At a certain point, the distinct sound of a mechanism activating was heard, and numerous crossbow bolts shot out from the walls, piercing the opposite wall.

‘Done.’

Joo Woonhyang pulled the shoe back.

A few bolts were stuck in the shoe, but he could remove them and use it again.

In this manner, Joo Woonhyang slowly moved forward, activating the mechanism traps and finding safe footholds.

As he struggled to move like this, Joo Woonhyang thought,

'Ha..... Even for me, with a lot of experience, it's like this, so Yeom Gyeong and Bae Ji-seok..... No, that punk must also be struggling, stuck in a mechanism trap.....'

He almost fell forward.

Now was not the time to worry about others; the urgent priority was to safely escape from here.

At the entrance leading to the inner part of Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

Mok Gyeong-un, wearing the face of Trainee Ahn Jong-hu, looked around and thought.

For Mok Gyeong-un, who had memorized the map and could visualize it three-dimensionally in his mind, it was clear where he needed to go.

Thus, he easily descended to this point while avoiding all the mechanism traps and guard posts on the third floor of the underground prison.

However, there was one problem at this fork in the road.

To pass through the middle passage safely without mechanism traps, he would have to pass by one of the eight guard posts in Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

‘Hmm.’

Dealing with them was not a difficult task.

However, he had heard that each guard post had something to deal with enemy infiltration or escape attempts.

So it seemed best to avoid carelessly disturbing them.

With this in mind, Mok Gyeong-un moved his steps towards the left passage.

‘No choice.’

It seemed he would have to pass through one area with mechanism traps.

Once he got past here, he would be closer to Cell No. 130, where Holy Fire Priestess was imprisoned.

It was a bit troublesome, but it wasn't impossible for him to pass through one mechanism trap.

Like that, Mok Gyeong-un entered the left passage, suppressing his presence.

It was when he had taken a few steps after entering the passage.

-Click!

-Clank clank clank!

The floor sank inward, and soon, mechanical sounds could be heard from inside the walls.

At the same time, numerous holes appeared in the ceiling, and a rain of arrows poured down.

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un walked forward and waved his hand upward.

Then, the countless falling arrows stopped in midair, changed direction, and embedded themselves in the ceiling.

-Thud thud thud thud!

Mok Gyeong-un calmly walked forward.

-Clunk!

-Clank clank clank!

It didn't end there; huge triple-layered blades protruded from the walls one after another.

The blades aimed to instantly cut Mok Gyeong-un's body into four pieces.

However,

-Clang clang!

The blades stopped before even reaching Mok Gyeong-un's body, unable to move properly.

Mechanical sounds came from between the walls, as if something was blocking them, making a racket.

This phenomenon occurred because the blades were held in place by profound true energy.

In that state, when Mok Gyeong-un flicked his finger at the uppermost blade,

-Clang!

The upper blade broke, shattering all the blades below it.

Mok Gyeong-un moved forward again.

After walking about five steps,

-Swish! Swish!

Hearing the sound of air being pierced from ahead, Mok Gyeong-un, without stopping, slightly tilted his head.

Then, two sharp spears that were flying to penetrate his shoulders bent and ended up stuck in the walls on both sides.

-Crash!

“Hmm.”

Mok Gyeong-un glanced at both sides and then walked forward again.

After walking another five steps,

Smoke began to rise from the floor.

The smoke was poison.

‘Judging by the root of gold-grass, it seems to be a paralysis-type poison.’

-Hiss hiss hiss hiss hiss!

The poisonous fog soon filled the entire passage, but Mok Gyeong-un walked forward unaffected.

In the first place, as he was the ultimate poison itself, this kind of poisonous fog had no effect on him.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had been walking slowly to deal with potential mechanism traps, opened his mouth and yawned.

‘Is this all?’

It was becoming more boring than he had expected.

Chapter 272 – Underground Prison (4)

Embroidered Uniform Guards Fourth Office Office.

The expression of Six-Office Commander Im Gyu-wol, who had been blankly staring at the hastily revised Prison Battlefield Map, hardened.

“This is.....”

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom, who had been watching him while elegantly drinking tea, asked with a puzzled look.

“What’s wrong?”

“D-Defender-in-Chief. We have a problem.”

“Problem?”

“In the rush to revise the map.....”

“Don’t beat around the bush and speak quickly.”

“If they move according to the twisted path, it leads to the special area of Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.”

“Special restricted area? Could it be..... Are you referring to the 120s section?”

Muk Seom had served as the head of the Fourth Office before becoming the Defender-in-Chief.

Thus, he knew more details about the underground prison than most of the Embroidered Uniform Guards in the Fourth Office.

Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield was already called the worst prison in itself, but among them, the cells numbered in the 120s and beyond were the ones that even experienced Embroidered Uniform Guards had to be cautious of.

The latter half of the 120s section was so difficult to manage that there were even rules that must be followed at all times, no exceptions.

“Bring me the map.”

“..... Yes.”

Upon this, Six-Office Commander Im Gyu-wol brought the map to him.

As Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom looked at the revised map, his gaze stopped at a certain point on the map.

“Oh no.....”

The same words Im Gyu-wol had uttered flowed out of his mouth as well.

Even though only a part of Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield was marked, the path on the map led to the latter half of the 120s section, which should never be entered under any circumstances.

If one were to follow this map.....

‘Cell No. 126.....’

If it was the Cell No. 126 he knew of,

“Are the remnants of the Nine Blood Cult still alive?”

“..... That’s right.”

“Oh my.”

At Im Gyu-wol’s answer, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom clicked his tongue.

“Such a tenacious life.”

“Yes..... I can’t understand it either.”

“That’s not within the realm of understanding.”

“..... You are right, Defender-in-Chief. I was informed that it has been nearly thirty years since the food supply was cut off, but whenever someone approaches that area, they can still hear scratching sounds. So we have taken measures to prevent anyone from going near there, but how a human can survive for decades without eating anything.....”

“If that mystery could be solved, our predecessors would have solved it long ago.”

The prisoner of Cell No. 126.

The exact name was unknown, but the identity was the Sixth Blood Saint of the extinct Nine Blood Cult.

No one knows when she was imprisoned.

However, she was known to be the longest-held prisoner in the underground prison and one of the three most dangerous individuals that needed to be guarded against.

This Cell No. 126 was classified as an extremely dangerous person, even though she was confined to the point where it was difficult to provide even a single meal, unlike ordinary prisoners.

This was due to the prisoner’s peculiar skill.

That skill was the ability to enchant people’s minds simply by stimulating their sight and hearing, which had caused many mishaps.

However, in addition to this skill, there was a strange nickname that identified this prisoner.

That nickname was none other than “Immortal.”

The higher-ups found the prisoner's incomprehensible tenacity of life intriguing and tried to investigate, but they couldn't uncover anything.

Unable to handle the stubbornness of Prisoner No. 126, who kept her mouth firmly shut despite torture and interrogation, the higher-ups issued an unofficial order to break her will.

That was none other than cutting off the food supply to prevent the prisoner from consuming anything.

One of the greatest desires of human beings is food.

If this desire for food was blocked, they believed it would break her obstinacy and will, but something no one expected happened.

Despite not consuming anything, she did not die of starvation.

She was still alive.

The higher-ups were astonished by this fact and blocked the information from spreading anywhere.

Only a very small number of people in the Imperial Palace knew about this amazing fact, and among the Embroidered Uniform Guards, only those who had served as the head of the Fourth Office were aware.

Even now, the ordinary Embroidered Uniform Guards of the Fourth Office still believed that Prisoner No. 126 was receiving a minimal food supply.

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom spoke with a grave voice while looking at the map.

"This has become troublesome. If it were just approaching Cell No. 129, it would be equivalent to bringing death upon oneself, so it wouldn't matter, but if they were to approach Cell No. 126....."

Before he could finish his sentence, Six-Office Commander Im Gyu-wol stood up and said,

“Defender-in-Chief. I will go down personally. If it’s not that bastard Bae Ji-seok, I can handle it at my level.”

“..... No. The trainee is not the problem. If the worst-case scenario occurs, even you won’t be able to handle it.”

With those words, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom rose from his seat.

Somewhere deep inside Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

Trainee Joo Woonhyang, who had been surveying his surroundings, tore a tiny piece of his sleeve and attached it to the torch.

As it burned, smoke rose.

‘Ah.....’

When he held his breath, the smoke drifted towards the right path among the four intersecting passages.

Joo Woonhyang looked at the right passage.

The direction the smoke flowed seemed to have the most possibility.

So he moved in that direction.

As he walked, his shoes became completely tattered, and he had to take off his other shoe as well.

If it weren't for his innate true energy, the soles of his feet would have been injured by the damp and cold cave floor.

As he aimlessly moved forward,

"Save me! Please save me."

Hearing a voice pleading for help from somewhere, Joo Woonhyang listened attentively.

Could someone have fallen into a mechanism trap like him?

The only person who could be in such a situation was Yeom Gyeong, who had been assigned to the inner part of Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield along with him.

With this in mind, Joo Woonhyang ran towards the direction of the voice.

There, he found a sunken area on the floor with a diameter of about 1 jang.

"Save me! Please! Please!"

The voice was coming from below.

Joo Woonhyang immediately held the torch towards that spot.

In the flickering torchlight, he saw a figure with firm-looking thighs pierced by a rope, hanging helplessly in the deep sunken floor.

Joo Woonhyang shouted towards that figure,

“Is that you, Yeom Gyeong?”

In response to Joo Woonhyang’s call, the figure gave no answer.

Joo Woonhyang frowned.

Could he not hear his voice?

As he was puzzled, a voice came from the bottom,

“Save me. Please!”

Is it really him?

Judging by the voice, it sounded almost like begging.

He thought he should save him first.

Pondering how to do it, Joo Woonhyang looked around while illuminating the bottom with the torch.

But when he shone the torch below, apart from the person hanging by the rope, there was a skeleton that appeared to be a corpse.

It seemed someone had fallen here and met their death.

‘Did they fail to dispose of the corpse?’

They had mentioned that the mechanism devices were being repaired in between, but it seems they hadn’t inspected everything.

However, on the opposite side above the person hanging by the rope, something protruding was visible.

It was obscured by the shadow cast by the torch, but,

‘A sword hilt?’

A sword with a unique shape was stuck in the wall.

It had a smooth blade with the hilt directly attached to it. There was also a rope-like object tied to the hilt.

It seemed possible to reach down and pull it out directly.

‘I can use that.’

Having made his decision, Joo Woonhyang moved to the opposite side and reached down.

It was just within reach, and he soon grasped the sword hilt stuck in the wall.

He tried to pull it out, but at that very moment,

-Thump!

His heart pounded violently, and his innate true energy fluctuated.

“Ugh.”

Along with it, convulsions spread throughout Joo Woonhyang’s body as he held the sword.

Unable to control the trembling, numerous noises filled his head, turning it upside down.

[Kill! Kill it!]

[Why, why are you doing this?]

[Please spare me. Please.....]

It wasn't just one or two voices.

The number of voices gradually increased, seeming to reach dozens or hundreds.

In the midst of this, Joo Woonhyang's eyes wavered.

He clearly saw someone hanging below, whom he thought was Yeom Gyeong, but there was no one there.

It was as if he had seen an illusion.

As he was perplexed by this,

[Give me your body!]

[Die! Die!]

'Ugh!'

The noises that sent chills down his spine further clouded his mind.

The noises were filled with murderous intent and resentment, and they tried to quickly erode Joo Woonhyang's mind and body.

'I need to..... let go..... of my hand.'

Joo Woonhyang tried to remove his hand from the sword hilt.

However, as if it was stuck, the sword hilt wouldn't leave his palm.

Rather, with the sword hilt in his grip, the blade smoothly slid out from the wall.

If the blade had been stuck there long enough for the corpse to become a skeleton, it should have been rusted, but surprisingly, it was intact and even emitting sword energy.

'Let go! Let it go.....'

Joo Woonhyang tried to remove the sword from his hand with all his strength.

But it was useless.

The innate true energy in his middle danjeon was generating intense heat, resisting this murderous energy, but the screams and vengeful spirits contained in this unknown sword were too strong.

Eventually, the trembling in Joo Woonhyang's hand that held the sword stopped.

Then, as Joo Woonhyang raised his head, a strange light flowed from his eyes.

-Swish!

With his eyes changed, Joo Woonhyang, holding the sword in one hand and picking up the torch, walked towards somewhere.

On the way there, a warning was written in red letters on both walls.

[No entry within thirty steps]

It meant not to approach within thirty steps.

However, Joo Woonhyang ignored this warning and walked forward.

The moment he stepped on the spot corresponding to thirty steps, an eerie wind began to blow from inside the prison cell.

-Whoosh!

The torch flickered violently.

The shadow touched by the light was rippling like waves.

Despite the strange phenomenon occurring, Joo Woonhyang didn't seem to care at all and approached further.

And he stood in front of the prison cell.

[One hundred and twenty-nine]

It was engraved on the thick bars of the cell.

It was the cell number that had a warning written in the prison register to never approach.

At that moment, Joo Woonhyang raised the sword and swung it towards the bars.

-Swish!

A sharp aura enveloped the blade, and with a clanging sound, the thick iron bars were sliced off.

Joo Woonhyang kicked the cut-off bars, and they fell into the cell.

-Thud!

Without hesitation, Joo Woonhyang entered.

In the flickering torchlight, a grotesque figure leaning against the wall could be seen.

The corners of Joo Woonhyang's mouth twisted bitterly as he looked at it.

“Hmm?”

Mok Gyeong-un, who had easily passed through the section with mechanism traps, tilted his head and looked somewhere.

Originally, he had intended to just pass by since it had nothing to do with his plan, but one prison cell was open.

Above the entrance of the open cell, it was engraved as follows:

[One hundred and twenty-six.]

Seeing this, the words of his subordinate Mong Mu-yak came to Mok Gyeong-un's mind.

[The cell where Holy Fire Priestess is located is No. 130. But just in case, I'd like to tell you something that you should keep in mind.]

[What is it?]

[It would be better to avoid the vicinity of Cell No. 126 and Cell No. 129 as much as possible.]

[Why?]

In response to his question, Mong Mu-yak had mentioned the warning he had seen.

Perhaps Cell No. 126 was where the Sixth Blood Saint of the Nine Blood Cult was imprisoned.

He said there was a warning that one should not approach within ten steps of that place, and even when approaching for the purpose of delivering meals, one must cover their eyes and ears without fail.

'Eyes and ears?'

Why did they give such a warning?

For a moment, a hint of curiosity arose, but since it was unrelated to his goal, he quickly dismissed it.

There was no need to enter Cell No. 126 anyway.

However,

‘Did that guy open it?’

The cell that should have been tightly closed was open.

And someone had entered that cell and was doing something inside.

That someone was none other than the trainee named Yeom Gyeong, a disciple of Huashan Sect.

Wondering what he was doing, Mok Gyeong-un saw that Yeom Gyeong was pulling something out of the body of someone who was fully restrained with a blindfold over their eyes and a gag in their mouth.

-Pluck!

The moment he pulled out each one,

-Roar!

The energy of the restrained person began to surge rapidly.

Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes gleamed as he watched this.

That was because, in the eyes of Mok Gyeong-un, who had opened the Ghost Eye, energy was visualized, and this energy possessed a nature he had never seen before.

-Crackle! Crackle!

It was generating blue lightning that spread like roots in a downpour.

Chapter 273 – Underground Prison (5)

-Crackle! Crackle!

Blue lightning spreading like the roots of a tree.

Mok Gyeong-un's eyes gleamed as he watched this.

Since opening the Ghost Eye and gaining the ability to see the substance of energy, he had seen numerous types of energy.

This included demonic energy and spiritual energy.

However, the energy he was seeing now was completely different from the others.

'..... Nature.'

The energy literally possessed a nature.

It had the power of lightning, or thunder, which he had never seen in ordinary humans or even those who had cultivated martial arts.

In the first place, could a human body handle such vast energy close to nature?

Suddenly, the words of his grandfather came to mind.

[Humans are born from nature and return to nature. Thus, the human body, like nature, maintains a balance of the Five Elements, even if only in a small way.]

Grandfather had said that if this balance was disrupted, the human body would not be able to endure it.

Yet, right before his eyes, there was a human being who was fine despite breaking that balance.

At that moment, the dazed Trainee Yeom Gyeong was grasping and pulling out something else from the back of the restrained prisoner.

-Swish!

In that instant, Mok Gyeong-un's figure blurred.

Then, he instantly appeared behind Yeom Gyeong, grabbed his neck, and threw him towards a corner of the cell.

-Thud!

“Ugh!”

Yeom Gyeong, who had hit the cell bars, rolled on the floor and then held his head, looking around with a bewildered expression.

‘What the hell?’

Why was he inside the cell?

He clearly remembered pulling the food distribution cart and entering the cave.

But suddenly, his memory was cut off.

“Ah. One more was pulled out.”

“What?”

‘Wait..... That guy?’

Isn’t that Trainee Ahn Jong-hu?

He knew Ahn Jong-hu was assigned to the 3rd floor of the underground prison, so why was he here?

And the person in front of him was clearly a prisoner.....

‘Huh?’

Suddenly, Yeom Gyeong noticed something grasped in his hand.

It was a pointed object with three prongs, but he couldn’t tell what it was.

Right then,

-Crackle!

In that instant, his vision flashed, and something blue popped out.

Along with it, the blue light spread throughout the entire cell, and Yeom Gyeong’s body once again collided with the iron bars of the cell.

-Crackle crackle crackle!

“Kkkkkkk.”

Convulsions spread throughout his body, and Yeom Gyeong let out a bizarre scream, then blood flowed from his eyes and nose, and he fainted on the spot.

Faint smoke rose from his unconscious body.

On the opposite side, Mok Gyeong-un had one hand extended forward.

-Crackle!

Blue streaks of lightning flashed in a root-like shape from his extended hand.

It was the power of thunder.

Mok Gyeong-un smirked while looking at his palm where the thunder power was sparking.

Suddenly, the power of thunder had spread from the body of the restrained prisoner, and the energy was no ordinary matter.

'Tingling.'

His own energy, which had blocked the thunder power, had momentarily stopped as if paralyzed.

However, it didn't last long.

'Does it suppress the energy that activates the thunder power?'

Mok Gyeong-un immediately grasped the characteristic of this thunder power.

The moment the energy is suppressed by the lightning, proper energy circulation doesn't occur.

This could be extremely effective against martial artists who manipulate internal energy.

However, the fortunate thing was that his own energy was on a different level from the ordinary.

The energy of the dead, or death energy, had the nature of dispersing energy, so it seemed to be temporarily affected by the lightning but quickly overcame it.

-Clang!

At that moment, the fully restrained prisoner rose from their position.

As they straightened their body, lightning continuously flowed from the shackles on their wrists and ankles, emitting blue sparks.

-Crackle crackle!

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un realized that the prisoner was trying to break free from the restraints.

Watching this, Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin.

‘Hmm.’

At first, he had intended to dispose of them, thinking they might interfere with his business.

But was there a need for that?

Come to think of it, if this prisoner caused a commotion trying to escape, it would actually be more helpful by diverting attention.

'A useful pawn.'

Mok Gyeong-un, with a smirk on his lips, grasped his sword fingers.

As he grasped the sword fingers, the surroundings rippled, and a sharp aura arose.

Mok Gyeong-un, generating the aura, then slashed the sword fingers towards the prisoner's restraints.

-Slash slash slash!

The moment the aura cut through the restraints,

-Crackle crackle crackle!

The sharp energy and lightning overlapped,

-Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

Eventually, the shackles on the wrists and ankles split and fell off.

As the restraints were removed, the prisoner, who had been forced to stand bent due to the weights attached, straightened their posture.

'..... Was it a woman?'

Due to the shaggy hair, blindfold, and gag, the gender was unclear, but the prisoner was a woman.

And her physique was more petite than expected.

-Crack!

As she moved her neck, the sound of muscles loosening could be heard, indicating her body was stiff.

The prisoner then removed the blindfold and spat out the gag that was in her mouth.

"Ptui."

After spitting out the gag, the prisoner brushed her long hair back, revealing her face.

She looked rather disheveled from being imprisoned for a long time, but she had a very mature and beautiful appearance.

Judging by her appearance alone, she looked no older than her mid-twenties.

'Young?'

Mok Gyeong-un's eyes gleamed with interest.

According to his subordinate Mong Mu-yak, if she was from the Nine Blood Cult, she should be a very old monster.

But no matter how he looked at her, she was young.

As he was puzzled by this, the woman frowned while looking at the torch that had fallen on the floor.

It seemed her eyes were sensitive from not seeing light for a long time.

However,

‘Oh ho.’

It didn’t take long for her to adapt to the torchlight.

It could be seen from the stabilization of her pupils’ movement.

Having adapted to the light, she then looked at her own palm that had been freed from the restraints.

Then, she suddenly burst into laughter.

“Hahahahahahaha!”

She laughed like a madwoman, but she seemed genuinely delighted.

After laughing for a while, she snapped off her extremely long fingernails.

-Snap! Snap!

Just looking at those long, curled nails gave a sense of how long she had been imprisoned here.

As she broke off her elongated fingernails and toenails, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“It seems you’ve been imprisoned for a long time. I hope you can safely escape from here.”

There was no need for him to engage in conversation with her anyway.

He just hoped she would cause as much commotion as possible.

That way, all the attention would be focused on this woman.

With that thought, Mok Gyeong-un tried to leave the cell.

However,

-Whoosh!

Feeling a sinister energy from behind, Mok Gyeong-un turned his body using his movement technique and tilted his head back.

At that instant, a red-stained hand brushed past his face.

But it didn't end there.

The red-stained hand unleashed a claw technique, aiming for Mok Gyeong-un's neck.

-Swish swish swish swish!

It was a swift movement that was hard to believe came from someone who had been restrained until just a moment ago.

Mok Gyeong-un tried to retreat using his movement technique to avoid it, but she used a variation and attempted to grab his left arm using the Capturing Arm Technique.

-Swish!

In response, Mok Gyeong-un utilized the Bright and Evident Water Crossing Steps of the Great Heir Na Yul-ryang and moved at an extremely high speed.

In an instant, the distance between him and her widened to more than ten steps.

Stopping at that distance, Mok Gyeong-un asked with a puzzled look,

“Why did you attack? We can just go our separate ways.”

“You’re a little Embroidered Uniform Guard. Do you dare try to deceive me with your nonsense?”

“Embroidered Uniform Guard? Ah.....”

Mok Gyeong-un scratched his head.

Come to think of it, the clothes he was wearing were the Embroidered Uniform Guard attire, even though he was just an apprentice.

From her perspective, someone in an Embroidered Uniform Guard uniform would be an enemy.

With this in mind, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“I understand the misunderstanding due to these clothes, but I have no connection to the Embroidered Uniform Guards. I’m just...”

-Whoosh!

Before he could finish his sentence,

She kicked the ground and launched her figure towards him.

Her speed was so fast that in the blink of an eye, she closed the distance to within three steps of Mok Gyeong-un.

As if seeing a blood-red jade, her two red-stained hands flickered with a blue light, and then claw energy burst forth.

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

The burst of claw energy instantly tore through the ground and pounced on Mok Gyeong-un.

Mok Gyeong-un let out a soft sigh at the tremendous power.

Judging by her momentum, it seemed she was determined to kill him on the spot.

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un widened the distance with high-speed movement, evading her charging claw energy.

-Boom boom boom boom!

The power was so strong that the floor where the claw energy had slashed was deeply gouged, leaving huge claw marks.

-Rumble rumble!

Even the cave passage trembled.

Being deep underground, it seemed vulnerable to impacts.

However, as if not caring about the trembling of the cave passage at all, she charged forward with a terrifying momentum, her red-stained hands infused with claw energy.

-Whoosh!

She instantly closed the distance, but this time, Mok Gyeong-un didn't widen the gap.

If he increased the distance, she might release her strong energy and impact the cave, potentially causing it to collapse.

To avoid this, close combat was the only answer.

Mok Gyeong-un closed the distance with her as she charged and blocked her claw technique with his bare hands.

-Swish swish swish swish!

The woman, who had thought he would choose to run away, was surprised to see Mok Gyeong-un directly engaging her.

That was because, even though her body was not fully loosened after being restrained for a long time, this young man was properly blocking her while exchanging blows with her.

On the surface, he looked like he wasn't even in his prime yet.

But when it came to martial prowess, that wasn't the case at all.

With this,

'He's too valuable to simply kill.'

She thought she should make use of this Mok Gyeong-un.

If such a strong fellow fought against her comrades and caused a commotion, it would help her escape from this damn prison.

-Whoosh!

With this in mind, she used a variation and momentarily grabbed Mok Gyeong-un's arm with the Capturing Arm Technique, then pulled him in.

Then, she precisely made eye contact with Mok Gyeong-un and flicked her opposite finger.

-Flick!

'From now on, go and kill your comrades.'

She chanted a mantra in her mind and issued a command.

While being imprisoned here, she had honed her illusion techniques for a long time.

Now, if she stimulated both sight and hearing in close proximity, she was confident she could make anyone fall under her illusion.

However,

"Are you suggesting a staring contest?"

'!?'

-Thud!

Mok Gyeong-un headbutted her face directly.

Being pushed back about two steps from the headbutt, she held her nose and made an incredulous expression.

‘What’s with this bastard?’

The illusion didn’t work.

Chapter 274 – Blood Saint (1)

[The foundation of illusion techniques is to deceive the five senses.]

[What are the five senses?]

[It’s literal. The five senses you possess. It can be sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch.]

[How does one deceive them?]

[Humans can unconsciously recall sensations they have experienced before.]

[What does that mean?]

[For example, when you think of sour food, your mouth automatically waters. What do you think is the reason for that?]

[Ah.....]

[That is the unconscious recollection of sensations.]

[Then, if illusion techniques deceive this?]

[It makes people unconsciously recall a situation and accept it as natural.]

She had learned everything about illusion techniques from her master.

Except for her master and the one who had taught them this secret art, she was confident that no one could surpass her in this field.

Holding her nose, she looked at Mok Gyeong-un with an incomprehensible gaze.

‘Why didn’t it work?’

Illusion techniques that drive one to extreme self-harm are very difficult because the body or mind unconsciously and strongly rejects them.

However, temporarily turning hostility like this was surprisingly easy.

It was because one only needed to unconsciously select the target of hostility.

But this guy, the illusion technique itself didn’t work on him.

‘That can’t be.’

Of course, illusion techniques were not absolute.

If the opponent had reached the peak of enlightenment and completely transcended, or if their mental strength was even stronger than hers, it might not work.

However, after exchanging blows, it didn't seem like the former, and the latter was even more impossible.

After being imprisoned in the underground prison, she had lost track of the years, but even before that, she had already surpassed a hundred and sixty years.

Not only her age but also her mental strength, which had not succumbed despite enduring torture and not consuming food for a long time, could not be surpassed by this young lad.

'Is it a mistake?'

Just in case, she stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un while inwardly chanting mantras and flicking her finger.

-Flick!

'From now on, go and kill your comrades.'

"..... What are you doing?"

"Huh?"

She was dumbfounded.

The illusion technique really didn't work.

For her, who could make someone fall under an illusion even with just a sound made by her hand while covering their eyes and mouth, this situation was beyond comprehension.

To her, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“I don’t know what you were trying to do, but how about ending it here? If I were really an Embroidered Uniform Guard, I would have tried to stop you somehow.”

“.....”

“Instead, I helped you get released, but attacking me like this doesn’t seem like proper etiquette towards a benefactor.”

“Nonsense!”

“It’s not nonsense.”

“Do you think I would believe your words?”

“There’s no reason not to believe me, is there?”

“No reason not to believe? There are more than enough reasons. You people have used all sorts of methods to get what you wanted from me. Interrogations, torture, all kinds of persuasion tactics. But when I refused to speak, you went even further and cut off my food supply, starving me for dozens of years.”

“Do..... dozens of years?”

Mok Gyeong-un frowned.

Did she just say with her own mouth that she had been starving for decades?

Was her mind wandering?

How could she have survived starving for decades, not just a few days?

If a human starved for even a few days, they would become haggard, and if it continued for a long time, they would lose weight and become emaciated.

However, there was none of that in her appearance.

As he was puzzled, she spoke,

“You deliberately released me as if it were a mistake, giving me hope and then trying to subdue me again to break my will. I’ll make you realize that this is your foolish mistake.”

-Roar!

As soon as those words ended, energy surged from her.

Her true energy was so strong that even wind pressure was generated.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un sighed.

He had thought she was a pawn he could use appropriately, but perhaps because she had been imprisoned for a long time, her mind seemed to be wandering, and she couldn’t trust anyone at all.

‘Does she consider this situation itself a trap?’

If that was the case, no matter what he said, it wouldn’t get through to her.

Mok Gyeong-un looked at her as if he was annoyed.

He needed to hurry, but he was being held back at an absurd point.

‘Ah.’

Mok Gyeong-un then looked at her with a sharp gaze.

Then, he muttered softly,

“There’s no other choice.”

It seemed better to just kill her as quickly as possible.

With this in mind, Mok Gyeong-un was about to assume a martial stance when he felt a presence behind him and turned his head.

Looking back, he saw an Embroidered Uniform Guard Chief Banner standing with a perplexed expression.

The impact from her claw energy had been so great that it shook the cave passage, so it would have been strange if he hadn’t come here.

“Oh damn it.....”

The Embroidered Uniform Guard Chief Banner was greatly startled by the sight of the escaped prisoner.

Right then,

-Flick!

The sound of a finger flicking was heard.

At that moment, the Embroidered Uniform Guard Chief Banner's eyes suddenly lost focus.

Then, he shouted at Mok Gyeong-un and charged at him.

"Die!"

'Huh?'

When the person who had been perplexed upon seeing the escaped prisoner suddenly displayed killing intent towards him, Mok Gyeong-un couldn't hide his confusion.

However, the martial prowess of the Embroidered Uniform Guard Chief Banner was only at the beginning of the peak realm.

Naturally, there was no way he could be a match for Mok Gyeong-un.

-Swish!

After easily dodging his saber that aimed to cut his neck,

-Thud!

He struck down on the Chief Banner's wrist, causing him to drop his saber.

As the saber fell, before it even touched the ground, he kicked the hilt towards her.

-Swish!

The saber rushed towards her forehead as if to pierce it.

“Hmph.”

As she swiftly turned her head to the side, the saber blade collided with her long hair infused with true energy and ended up stuck in the wall.

-Thud!

But it didn't end there,

“Ugh.”

The Embroidered Uniform Guard Chief Banner, who had fallen under her illusion, flew towards her.

‘Huh?’

In an instant, she frowned.

Then, she unleashed her claw energy towards the flying Embroidered Uniform Guard Chief Banner, tearing his entire body into pieces.

-Swish swish swish swish!

As his body was divided into dozens of pieces, blood splattered everywhere.

But in the midst of that, someone passed through and thrust their sword fingers towards her neck.

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

-Thud!

Caught off guard by the unexpected attack, her left shoulder was pierced by the aura infused in his sword fingers.

‘This bastard?’

Her eyes gleamed with interest.

He threw his own comrade to obscure her vision and then attacked through that gap?

What the hell was he doing?

-Swish swish!

The puzzled woman then dodged Mok Gyeong-un’s sword fingers aiming for her neck with an elegant footwork technique and widened the distance.

-Swish swish swish swish!

While widening the distance, the pierced area on her shoulder sizzled, and the blood stopped flowing.

Noticing this, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes narrowed.

‘The wound?’

The healing speed surpassed human limits.

He also had a fast recovery rate for injuries, but her speed far exceeded that.

If it could heal immediately after being pierced, it wasn't just recovery but the realm of super-regeneration.

'Does it heal even with death energy?'

Death energy disperses martial power.

However, it seemed unable to stop the regeneration of her body.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes caught sight of thunder power sparking from her wound.

It seemed that power was promoting the regeneration.

While he was marveling,

-Swish!

She counterattacked with her claw energy, and Mok Gyeong-un twisted his body to the side.

Then, he tried to strike her wrist, which was unleashing claw energy, with his elbow.

In response, she used a variation to avoid it and aimed for Mok Gyeong-un's neck.

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

In a flash, their hands clashed about six times, and they were both pushed back.

-Swish swish swish swish!

-Swish swish swish swish!

The woman who was pushed back raised an eyebrow and looked at her red-stained hand.

‘I’m using Blood Jade Hand and strong energy simultaneously, but he’s blocking it with a strange strong energy in an instant.’

Her martial art, which turned her hands into blood-red jade, was called Blood Jade Hand, a divine technique that combined claw and palm techniques. Its power was enough to crush rocks and tear iron with bare hands.

If strong energy was added to the Blood Jade Hand, it wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that it was difficult to find an equal match in close combat.

However, the fierce-feeling strong energy unleashed in an instant was blocking it.

The power was completely different from ordinary strong energy.

‘Who the hell is this bastard?’

On the surface, he didn’t even look to be in his prime.

Even if her body wasn’t fully loosened and she wasn’t exerting her full strength, it was unbelievable that a young lad who hadn’t even lived for twenty years could almost match her.

She thought she could easily subdue him, but it seemed difficult to do so without going all out.

Inwardly clicking her tongue, she opened her mouth.

“You’re no ordinary fellow.”

“That’s what I’d like to say to you.”

Mok Gyeong-un was also inwardly amazed by her martial prowess.

It was doubtful whether she had really been imprisoned in the underground prison for a long time, considering how agile and lively her movements were.

Moreover, her internal energy and martial power were beyond imagination.

It flowed endlessly like an inexhaustible spring, making him wonder how they had managed to confine such a monstrous woman.

According to Cheong-ryeong, in terms of martial power, he was infinitely close to the Profound Realm. Except for the Six Heavens, who were at the current peak, there were hardly any in the martial arts world who could match him, aside from the Eight Stars, who were called the greatest masters of the era.

However, it seemed he had encountered such a person quite quickly.

‘..... Was it the Nine Blood Cult?’

Come to think of it, both Mong Mu-yak and Cheong-ryeong had mentioned that during the era of the Old Martial Arts World, the level of martial prowess of the masters was even higher than now.

Looking at this woman, it certainly seemed that way.

‘I’ll have to go all out.’

Mok Gyeong-un had been controlling his martial power to the maximum extent possible due to the deep underground cave.

So he had only unleashed demonic energy in the instant of clashing.

However, that level seemed insufficient to deal with this woman.

With this, Mok Gyeong-un released the control he had been maintaining and circulated demonic energy throughout his entire body.

Then,

-Roar!

A sinister black energy flowed out from Mok Gyeong-un.

Seeing this, wariness appeared in her eyes.

‘Look at this bastard.’

She had thought he was quite skilled, but if he exerted his full strength, she believed she could kill him within about thirty moves.

However, when Mok Gyeong-un revealed his demonic energy, her thoughts changed.

Even if she went all out, it wasn’t a level where she could settle the match within thirty moves.

‘I’ll have to be a bit more serious.’

-Crackle crackle crackle crackle!

At that moment, blue sparks erupted from her entire body, and lightning enveloped her.

The moment she revealed the thunder power she had been concealing, Mok Gyeong-un made the first move.

He intended to settle the match before she could fully demonstrate her abilities.

-Tap tap!

Mok Gyeong-un tapped the ground twice, and with a gust of wind, his figure split into two and charged towards her.

This was the Wind God Steps he had stolen and learned from the Thousand-men Commander of the Embroidered Uniform Guards, Ma Ra-hyeon.

However, seeing Mok Gyeong-un's mysterious lightness skill that split his figure into two, her eyes widened.

'Th-this is?'

Chapter 275 – Blood Saint (2)

Tap tap tap tap tap!

Six-Office Commander Im Gyu-wol of the Embroidered Uniform Guards, which oversees all the Prison Battlefields in the Imperial Palace, was leading four One Hundred-men Commanders of the Embroidered Uniform Guards and someone wearing a bamboo hat down to Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

Just by looking at Im Gyu-wol's serious expression as he moved, it was clear that the situation was very urgent.

‘Damn it. Trying to catch a flea, we ended up burning down the whole house.’

Trainee Bae Ji-seok and Trainee Joo Woonhyang.

The Prison Battlefield Map was changed to catch those two, and that became the trigger.

Even if it was changed, it should have been designed to only lead them into the mechanism trap, but unintentionally, it led them to a place that should never be approached.

‘Cell No. 126.....’

Not just the cell itself, but even approaching the surrounding area was forbidden.

That was because that place was very dangerous.

The monster known as the remnant of the Nine Blood Cult had enchanted the Embroidered Uniform Guards with a mysterious illusion technique despite being fully restrained.

Therefore, without sufficient preparation, one should never approach within the designated radius.

-Tap!

Im Gyu-wol, who had descended to Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield, hastened due to his anxious heart.

If, by any chance, the prisoner of Cell No. 126 were to escape, it would be no different from the worst-case scenario.

Not only was resolving the issue a problem, but as the head of the Fourth Office, he might have to take full responsibility.

Thus, he had to prevent it before it happened.

‘We must hurry.’

While running ahead through the cave passage of Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield, Six-Office Commander Im Gyu-wol frowned.

-Clang clang clang clang!

That was because the sound of weapons clashing could be heard from one of the guard posts deep inside Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

Wondering what was happening, he ran towards that location.

‘What in the world?’

The guards who were supposed to be guarding the post were desperately fighting against someone.

However, that someone was not the dreaded Cell No. 126.

To be precise, it was multiple people, and they were none other than the prisoners who should have been locked up.

“Hahahahaha!”

“Die! Die!”

“How dare you bastards try to capture us?”

The prisoners, filled with murderous intent, were rampaging with a strange madness in their bloodshot eyes, and the guards who had trained in martial arts were desperately trying to subdue them.

-Clench!

Six-Office Commander Im Gyu-wol bit his lower lip hard.

He didn't know how they had managed to escape from the prison cells, but the situation had become even more twisted than he had feared.

'Damn it.'

Im Gyu-wol glanced back at the person wearing the bamboo hat.

The one who slightly lifted his bamboo hat and shook his head was none other than Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom.

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom muttered,

'Handle it. I'll go further in.'

At these words from Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom, Im Gyu-wol nodded his head as if he had no choice.

-Swish!

Then, he drew his sword and said,

"Subdue them."

"Yes, sir!"

With that, Im Gyu-wol and the four One Hundred-men Commanders of the Embroidered Uniform Guards launched their figures towards the rampaging prisoners.

Near the innermost part of Eternal Hell Prison Battlefield.

Her eyes trembled.

‘That’s right. Even at a young age, not falling for the illusion technique is certain.’

-Crackle crackle crackle crackle!

Enveloped in the blue sparks of lightning, she suddenly retracted her thunder power upon seeing Mok Gyeong-un’s figure splitting into two and charging at her, leaving afterimages.

Then,

-Whoosh!

She widened the distance and held out her hand, gesturing for him to stop.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had intended to properly fight her, raised an eyebrow and stood still.

“Why the sudden change?”

Just a moment ago, she had been desperate to kill him, unable to trust him.

But why was she suddenly withdrawing the energy she had unleashed?

As he was puzzled, she suddenly clasped her hands together, bowed respectfully, and spoke in a trembling voice,

“Sixth Blood Saint Dam Baek-ha pays her respects.”

‘!?’

What?

Moreover, unlike before, she was even using honorifics.

He couldn't understand why she was doing this.

As she kept her hands clasped, she raised her head, and with reddened eyes, she opened her mouth.

“Could it be that you are a member of the true lineage?”

“..... What are you talking about?”

He couldn't comprehend what she meant by ‘member of the true lineage’ out of nowhere.

At Mok Gyeong-un’s reaction, she waved her hands and spoke as if telling him to lower his guard.

“I am the direct disciple of the previous generation’s Sixth Blood Saint Dam Ye-hwa, who was personally taught by that person. Although I have unintentionally achieved longevity beyond my station and continue this wretched life, if you are a member of the true lineage, you are no different from my superior. Please, I beg you to lower your guard and speak to me.”

“.....”

At her polite words, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes narrowed.

It was still difficult to understand what she was saying.

Why was she showing this attitude?

'What could it be?'

In an instant, Mok Gyeong-un traced back the cause of this.

It was something that happened after he had unleashed his demonic energy to properly fight her.

However, demonic energy was purely his own unique power.

Thus, it couldn't be the reason for this.

Then,

'..... Wind God Steps?'

To confuse her, he had performed the Wind God Steps that he had stolen and learned from the masked Thousand-men Commander of the Embroidered Uniform Guards, Ma Ra-hyeon.

Come to think of it, when he performed this, she withdrew her thunder power and changed her attitude.

Her arrogant attitude from before had vanished without a trace.

At that moment, something flashed through Mok Gyeong-un's mind.

It was,

[Do you perhaps have the surname Jin?]

[Surname Jin?]

[Yes.]

[No.]

[Then, it would be the surname So.....]

[All sorts of surnames are coming up. I am from the Mok family.]

[Mok family?]

The conversation he had with the masked Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon.

When he said he was from the Mok family, Ma Ra-hyeon showed a strange reaction and then said,

[You really did steal and learn the lightness skill.]

Recalling this, Mok Gyeong-un was convinced that the change in her attitude was due to the Wind God Steps he had stolen and learned.

Ma Ra-hyeon had also abruptly asked him if he had the surname Jin.

What was the surname Jin or the true lineage that a single lightness skill could change her attitude?

Although he didn't know the reason, based on her words introducing herself as the Sixth Blood Saint Dam Baek-ha, if he pieced it together to some extent, it seemed that her master, the previous generation's Sixth Blood Saint Dam Ye-hwa, had received teachings from the person with the surname Jin.

'Does she consider me his descendant and treat me respectfully like this?'

That was all he could speculate at the moment.

How great must the prestige of the person with the surname Jin be for the attitude of this monstrous woman to become so polite?

At this, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes became strange.

In any case, since he didn't know who the true lineage was, he had no relation to this woman.

And if they continued to talk, she would surely realize this before long.

'Hmm.'

However, Mok Gyeong-un's thinking went beyond ordinary people's and was quite bold.

Mok Gyeong-un judged that he could take advantage of this situation.

When she showed killing intent towards him, he had no choice but to kill her, but if he persuaded her appropriately, she could be useful in diverting attention, just like before.

Before that, there was one thing he needed to confirm.

With this, Mok Gyeong-un clasped his hands together, bowed respectfully like her, and said,

“Did you say you’re Dam Baek-ha? Did you perhaps recognize me because of my lightness skill?”

“Ah. So you are indeed from the true lineage?”

Dam Baek-ha asked with sparkling eyes.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un reconfirmed that it was because of the lightness skill.

The reason he confirmed this was simple.

It was to determine if this lightness skill belonged to the person with the surname Jin, whom she and the masked Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon had mentioned.

‘I see.’

With this, Mok Gyeong-un shook his head and replied,

“I apologize. You may have had expectations because of the lightness skill, but I am not from the true lineage.”

‘!?’

At these words, Dam Baek-ha, who had been looking at him with hopeful eyes, frowned.

“What do you mean you’re not from the true lineage.....”

“It’s exactly as I said.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Dam Baek-ha spoke in a disbelieving tone,

“That can’t be. You are definitely from the true lineage. Just the fact that you can easily withstand the Illusion Scripture, which that person passed down to me.....”

“It’s true. How could I deceive you about this?”

“..... Could it be that you don’t trust me?”

“That’s not it.....”

“If it’s because I said I’m the direct disciple of Dam Ye-hwa, I can also explain the secret of my longevity. Please don’t push me away with suspicion. After the cult fell, I spent a long time searching for the bloodlines of the Hundred Families and the Jin Family. So please.....”

“I am truly not from the true lineage.”

“Sir!”

“However, my master who taught me the lightness skill might know that person from the true lineage.”

“.....”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Dam Baek-ha’s eyes became complicated.

Based on the circumstances so far, she had been convinced that he was undoubtedly from the true lineage.

But even when he kept insisting he wasn't, she felt disappointed and wondered if he couldn't trust her.

'Huh?'

At that moment, a doubt arose in her mind.

With this, she asked in a somewhat heavy voice,

"You said the person who taught you the lightness skill knows the person from the true lineage. Then, does that mean that person is also not from the true lineage?"

"Yes, that's right. That person has a different surname. Do you perhaps know anyone with the surname Ma?"

Mok Gyeong-un asked, just in case.

It was certain that the masked Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon had a connection with the person with the surname Jin.

So when he imitated the lightness skill, he must have asked about that surname.

-Crackle!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes, which had opened the Ghost Eye, saw Dam Baek-ha drawing upon her thunder power.

When he said that he had learned the lightness skill from someone with the surname Ma, her expression turned cold, and she was about to change her attitude once again.

With this, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“My master with the surname Ma, who taught me the lightness skill, also told me to treat those with the surnames Jin and So with the utmost respect.”

Of course, he had never said such a thing.

He had only asked if he had the surname Jin and then asked if he had the surname So.

So, just in case, he improvised and said this, wondering if the surname So might also be related.

However,

-Whoosh!

As soon as he finished speaking, the thunder power within her body subsided again.

Then, Dam Baek-ha approached Mok Gyeong-un, grasped the front of his robe with both hands, and spoke in an agitated voice,

“Your master! Where is your master? Take me to that person right now.”

She was convinced that the person with the surname Ma, whom Mok Gyeong-un mentioned, was related to the bloodline of that person.

Otherwise, there was no way he would have mentioned both the surnames Jin and So simultaneously.

Mok Gyeong-un, looking down at her emotionally agitated state, smirked with a shadowed face.

‘Ah.’

This was enough.

She had been well-prepared to be appropriately used.

Chapter 276 – Blood Saint (3)

Before long, Mok Gyeong-un and Dam Baek-ha, known as the Blood Saint of the Nine Blood Cult, were walking side by side through the cave passage.

The agitated appearance from earlier had disappeared, and Dam Baek-ha, having regained her composure, spoke to Mok Gyeong-un.

“You said you only need to abduct one person, right?”

“Yes.”

“Make sure to keep your promise.”

“Of course. If I only abduct that person, I will arrange for you to meet the master who taught me the lightness skill.”

“Hmph.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Dam Baek-ha snorted as if she didn’t trust him, folding her arms.

That was understandable because although she had shown a vulnerable side earlier when her emotions were highly agitated, she still couldn’t fully trust this guy.

For some reason, none of his words felt sincere.

She couldn't even tell if his smile was genuine or not.

Despite having lived for a long time, this was the first time she encountered someone like him.

As they walked through the passage, Dam Baek-ha frowned and said,

“You..... the skin around your chin is...?”

It looked densely crowded.

Mok Gyeong-un touched that area and let out a soft sigh.

He wasn't sure if it was because of the fight or if he ran out of the medicine he was carrying, but the human skin around his chin was peeling.

With this, Mok Gyeong-un,

-Stretch!

He pulled his skin to show her.

Ordinary skin would have elasticity, but the way it stretched was different.

Seeing this, Dam Baek-ha spoke with narrowed eyes,

“Human skin mask?”

“Yes. It was the most straightforward way to sneak in here.”

“So it’s not your real face.”

“Yes.”

At this, Dam Baek-ha clicked her tongue, thinking that made sense.

No wonder his martial arts were too outstanding, and his mental strength was exceptionally remarkable for someone who wasn’t even in his prime.

Perhaps a face of an older age was hidden underneath.

As they continued, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“May I ask you something as well?”

“What is it?”

“I heard that if you’re from the Blood Cult, you’re from the Old Martial Arts World. How many years have you been imprisoned?”

“Old Martial Arts World?”

Dam Baek-ha slightly tilted her head.

It was an expression she was hearing for the first time.

So she asked,

“What do you mean by the Old Martial Arts World?”

“It’s literal. Should I say the martial arts world of the past? I heard that the level of the martial arts world in the past was much higher than it is now.”

“The past? Ah.....”

At these words, Dam Baek-ha’s eyes became strangely bitter.

Did she recall some unpleasant memories from the past?

While he was inwardly puzzled, she said,

“I have been imprisoned here for so long that I have lost all sense of time. I don’t even know if it has been decades or centuries. However, if what you refer to as the Old Martial Arts World is the golden age of martial arts, then that would be correct. But everything changed after ‘that person’ ascended and several generations passed.”

“Ascended?”

“..... You don’t know the term ‘ascension through enlightenment’?”

“Ascension through enlightenment?”

Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes narrowed.

Ascension through enlightenment.

Literally translated, it means a person attains the Dao, becomes an immortal, and ascends to the heavens.

This could be interpreted in various ways.

It is said that an outstanding Taoist ascends when they pass away, or it refers to truly attaining the Dao and entering the realm of immortals.

The ascension that Cheong-ryeong taught Mok Gyeong-un also meant martial artists gaining enlightenment through martial arts and entering the immortal realm.

‘Ascension....’

There was someone who had spoken about a deeper principle regarding ascension.

To be precise, it was a being called Sam-an, who was more of a strange entity than a human.

Suddenly, the words he had said before his annihilation came to mind.

[Divine beasts? In the first place, they cannot exist in the mortal world. When demonic energy reaches that level, it transcends the natural order.]

[Natural order?]

[You don't know what the natural order is?]

[What is it?]

[The natural order is what sustains this world. It's difficult for humans to understand.]

[You're being ambiguous.]

[The natural order is the natural order. If you transcend that realm, you have no choice but to cross the boundary to the other side due to the natural order.]

[The other side of the boundary?]

[Yes. The same principle applies to ascension. Humans believed that through repeated enlightenment and detachment, they crossed the boundary due to the natural order, and that was considered ascension.]

Recalling this, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes gleamed with interest.

'Actually ascended?'

Both this person and Cheong-ryeong had spoken of it as if it were almost legendary.

As if it was difficult to actually achieve.

But how outstanding must 'that person' mentioned by Dam Baek-ha have been to cross over to the other side of the boundary due to the natural order?

What was certain was that for the strange entities like the Demon Kings, it was said that one had to reach the level of a divine beast to cross over to the other side of the boundary. This meant that 'that person' surpassed even the spiritual beasts called the Six Demons, who were infinitely close to divine beasts.

With curiosity piqued, Mok Gyeong-un asked,

"Who exactly is that person you mentioned who ascended?"

"That person?"

At this question, she looked at Mok Gyeong-un with a strange gaze.

Then, she firmly said,

“I don’t think you’re ready to hear about that yet.”

“Pardon?”

“I haven’t met your master yet. You know what that means, right?”

“Ah.”

It meant she didn’t trust him.

Although he wasn’t usually interested in anything other than revenge, he was inwardly curious about who that person was, so it was quite disappointing.

Then, she said to Mok Gyeong-un,

“If your master truly knows about the true lineage as you said, you will surely find out in due time, so there’s no need to be impatient.”

“..... I see. Then, may I ask one more thing?”

“One more thing?”

“Yes.”

“Do you think I’ll answer?”

“Well, that’s up to you. Actually, I’m just asking out of curiosity.”

“Just curious?”

“Yes. Earlier, you mentioned that they made you starve for decades to make you talk. Is that true?”

The woman Mok Gyeong-un had encountered didn’t seem like someone who would lie.

Such a person said she had endured for decades without eating anything, but her physical condition was not like that at all.

Moreover, she even had the face of someone in her twenties just by appearance.

Furthermore, if he combined what she had mentioned in between, it seemed as if she was not an ordinary person but a being close to immortality.

At this, she looked at Mok Gyeong-un with disapproval and opened her mouth.

“Why? Are you also interested in longevity or immortality?”

To this question, Mok Gyeong-un answered without a moment’s hesitation.

“Not really.”

“What?”

“Is there any great benefit in being interested in such things?”

“Benefit? Isn’t being able to continue life eternally a benefit?”

“Is that really a benefit?”

“.....”

“If it’s a life that continues endlessly and eternally, wouldn’t it be closer to a curse?”

!!!!!

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, Dam Baek-ha’s eyes trembled.

Along with it, a very distant memory from the past flashed through her mind.

A city in Liadong Province, reduced to ruins with countless corpses.

Dam Baek-ha, covered in blood, couldn’t hide her shock as she saw her severed arm regenerate.

[What..... what is this?]

She had thought that once her arm was cut off, it would never recover again.

No, in the first place, it was impossible for an arm to regrow.

As she was marveling at this, an old man with a scholar-like appearance and a face so pale it was almost white approached her, clicking his tongue.

[You drank that, didn’t you?]

[Elder?..... If you're talking about that, then what is it?]

[It's the blood of a spirit creature.]

[Blood..... Are you referring to the blood of that monster?]

[That's right.]

[Ah!]

At those words, her eyes trembled.

Come to think of it, when she cut off one of the heads of that monster spewing lightning, she seemed to have unintentionally swallowed the blood that spurted out.

After that, she had lost consciousness due to the burning pain throughout her entire body.

So she said,

[..... I think that's what happened. Is that why my arm healed?]

[It seems so.]

[Then, for the other injured people as well.....]

[Don't do that.]

[Wh-why? If they drink the blood of that monster, their bodies.....]

[Nine out of ten, no, ninety-nine out of a hundred won't be able to endure it and will die.]

[What? Die, what do you mean by that?]

[Apart from you, most of those who drank the blood of the spirit creature, whether by mistake or coincidence, couldn't endure it and died.]

With those words, the old man pointed to the people who had died, charred black around the spirit creature.

They all had a form of death where their blood vessels had exploded.

'!?'

[It seems that the blood of a spirit creature is not something ordinary humans can endure.]

[Then..... why am I?]

[It appears that you have been blessed with heavenly luck.]

[Heavenly luck.....]

Was she really lucky?

To the dazed Dam Baek-ha, the old man patted her shoulder and said,

[Whether this will truly become heavenly luck or poison is unknown, but if this is also your fate, then accept it.]

[What do you mean by it becoming poison?]

At her question, the old man stroked his beard and spoke as if he felt sorry.

[In the ancient secret book of the lost Classic of Mountains and Seas, it is said that those who consume the blood or essence of a spirit creature possessing the spiritual power of the Five Elements will achieve immortality.]

[Immortality?]

[That's right. You also have a very high probability of becoming immortal.]

[But why do you say it's poison? Isn't it a blessing instead?]

[A blessing? Hohoho.]

At these words, the old man let out a chuckle with an incomprehensible expression.

As she was puzzled, the old man stopped laughing and said,

[Living a long life is not a blessing. It's closer to a curse.]

[A curse?]

[Yes, it's a curse. Why do you think that guy, who was no different from an immortal being, left you and the bloodline descendants behind and ascended?]

[..... Why?]

[Because he couldn't endure it every time his loved ones left his side one by one.]

[.....]

[In a way, his choice might have been wise.]

At that time, she somewhat understood the old man's words, but they didn't really resonate with her.

It was because she only considered immortality as a blessing.

However, as she lived through a long time, she now fully realized the meaning of those words the old man had said to her.

'..... This guy.'

Dam Baek-ha, looking at Mok Gyeong-un, inwardly clicked her tongue.

He had never experienced longevity and the things that happen because of it, yet he was saying the exact same words that the old senior had said to her.

If it weren't for her given mission, she might have also ended this wretched life in some way.

So she said to Mok Gyeong-un,

"You..... Do you know what you're talking about?"

"Who knows? It just doesn't seem nice to live long while everyone around you dies."

"....."

At Mok Gyeong-un's answer, she let out a sigh of admiration.

She felt truly foolish.

Seeing him take it for granted without even experiencing it.

Sighing deeply, she then said to Mok Gyeong-un,

"You are truly wise. You are right. This is not a blessing but literally a curse. If I hadn't become immortal, I wouldn't have had to suffer like this....."

-Flinch!

At that moment, Dam Baek-ha stopped speaking and looked somewhere.

It was the right side of the forked path in the cave.

Coincidentally, Mok Gyeong-un was already looking there even before she did.

'This is?'

-Roar!

From the darkness, an immense murderous intent and a deep, evil energy were emanating.

Along with it, someone was approaching them.

-Thud, thud!

At the sound of footsteps, Dam Baek-ha said to Mok Gyeong-un,

“..... It’s not an ordinary person. Can you feel it?”

“Yes, I can.”

As they looked there with eyes filled with vigilance, the figure finally showed itself within the range illuminated by the torch.

It was none other than,

“Joo Woonhyang?”

Trainee Joo Woonhyang.

However, Joo Woonhyang’s condition was not normal.

Not only were his eyes emitting a strange light, but the evil energy emanating from his entire body had completely erased his originally pure and righteous innate true energy.

Wondering what had happened, Dam Baek-ha couldn’t hide her astonishment when she saw the peculiar-shaped sword in Joo Woonhyang’s hand.

“How did that sword...?”

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un’s gaze also turned there.

Although obscured by the evil energy, a tremendous demonic nature could be felt from the sword.

“Do you know about that?”

To the puzzled Mok Gyeong-un, she spoke in a lowered tone as if warning him.

“It’s the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword made by Ou Yezi.”

‘!!!!!!’

Chapter 277 – Blood Saint (4)

Ou Ye-zi, the great swordsmith.

Legendary swords such as the Great Destroyer (Juque, 巨闕, Black (Zhànlú, 漢盧), Purity (Chúnjūn, 純鈎), Victory over Evil (Shengxie, 勝邪), Fish-belly (Yuchang, 魚腸), Dragon Gulf (Longyuan, 龍淵), Great Riverbank (Tai'e, 泰阿), and Artisanal Display (Gongbu, 工布) were all born from his hands.

There was an unofficial record that such a great swordsmith had melted the legendary Gwanya Black Iron, which could not be melted through human sacrifices, to create demonic swords.

Those demonic swords were none other than the three demonic swords known to have been discovered in a royal tomb.

Evil Commandment Sword, Howl-hacking Blade, Plundering-killing Sword.

These three swords were discovered by a local official and a merchant in a collapsed royal tomb.

As a result, it brought a bloody storm to the martial arts world at that time.

“Is that one of those three demonic swords, the Plundering-killing Sword?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the Sixth Blood Saint Dam Baek-ha snorted and replied,

“Three swords..... Right. That’s how the rumor went.”

“Pardon?”

“No, that’s not important. More importantly, I don’t know why that thing is here, but this has become quite troublesome.”

Dam Baek-ha glanced at the Plundering-killing Sword and then looked at Joo Woonhyang’s eyes, which were emitting a strange light.

It seemed he was properly possessed by the sword’s demonic energy.

She clicked her tongue and said,

“Of all things, he had to be captured by the demonic sword known as the worst.”

“The worst? Is it to that extent?”

“You may not know, but after that sword revealed itself to the world again, it passed through three owners, and the number of people they killed combined exceeds nearly a thousand.”

‘A thousand? Oh ho.’

Interest arose in Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes.

How strong must the sword’s demonic energy be to cause such a massacre?

No, in the first place, is it possible to cause a bloody calamity just because the sword’s demonic energy is strong?

Right at that moment,

“You two.... Your bodies.... Look good....”

-Whoosh!

Joo Woonhyang, who was captured by the demonic sword, launched his figure towards them.

Instantly closing the distance, Joo Woonhyang swung the Plundering-killing Sword, and along with tremendous wind pressure, an aura filled with demonic energy swept in all directions.

“Hmph!”

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

Of course, Dam Baek-ha wouldn't just take it.

“Get out of the way.”

Pushing Mok Gyeong-un to the side, she stepped forward.

Stepping forward like that, she unleashed the Blood Jade Hand technique, a pinnacle skill, and quickly unleashed claw techniques with her red-stained hands, then split apart all the aura.

Not stopping there, she penetrated right in front of Joo Woonhyang with an elegant footwork technique and unleashed the killing move of the Blood Jade Hand.

‘Blood Jade Hand 3rd Stance, Unchanging Blood Claw!’

-Swish!

The power of the killing move, with blue-colored strong energy imbued in her blood-stained hands, was utterly tyrannical.

The power was so strong that it seemed like it would tear apart the opponent in an instant.

However, Joo Woonhyang drew a circle with his sword towards her claw technique.

Then,

-Boom!

The air inside the circle rippled like waves,

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

The killing move of the Blood Jade Hand she unleashed was bounced back.

Moreover, the power was also fully bounced back, causing Dam Baek-ha to hurriedly block it and be pushed back.

-Swish swish swish swish!

Pushed back about five steps, she muttered with an annoyed expression,

“Scripture of Transferring True Qi.....”

Was this one of the abilities of the Plundering-killing Sword that she had only heard about?

She never expected it to bounce back her killing move like that.

Actually experiencing it, it was indeed a surprising and wicked technique, just as she had been warned.

-Swish!

She raised her head and looked at Joo Woonhyang.

Her lips turned slightly pale.

Although it was difficult to accurately gauge the level due to the evil energy, the demonic energy was so strong that it was drawing out power far beyond her original limits.

To this extent,

‘I don’t know how long that child’s original true energy, who is captured by the demonic sword, will last, but to this extent, he may exhaust it all and die within a few hours.’

In that sense, if she bought time, he would continue to weaken.

Of course, there was another way to deal with him besides that.

‘Overwhelming martial power.’

The stronger the opponent’s power, the more the demonic sword had no choice but to draw out the host’s original true energy.

If that happens, the host will eventually lose his life due to the rapid consumption of original true energy.

‘That should do it.’

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Dam Baek-ha’s hands, having decided how to deal with the opponent, exuded even more luster.

The Blood Jade Hand, when its power is raised to the 7th level or higher, makes the hands smooth and lustrous like jade.

She, who had drawn upon her martial power, said to Mok Gyeong-un,

“Go ahead first. I will deal with that child.”

“You’re going to deal with him alone?”

“What do you take me for? No matter how much he is captured by the demonic energy, I don’t need to borrow someone else’s hands to that extent. And the longer we delay the escape, the more disadvantageous it is for us.”

“You’re right.”

Mok Gyeong-un slightly raised the corners of his mouth.

Even though he didn’t particularly request it, she was moving according to his intentions.

If she buys time and draws the attention of the Embroidered Uniform Guards, what could be better than that?

“Then, thank you.....”

Mok Gyeong-un, who was about to say he would go, looked at Joo Woonhyang, who was captured by the demonic sword.

He was a guy he quite liked.

Although he didn't know how he got captured by the demonic sword like that.

Mok Gyeong-un shrugged his shoulders.

Although he liked him, that was all there was to it.

He had no intention of spending his time to save him or do such a thing just for that one reason.

However,

“If it's not too much trouble, could you try to take away the sword without killing that friend?”

“It's not just any demonic sword, it's the Plundering-killing Sword. It seems he is completely captured by the demonic energy, do you think that's possible?”

“If it's difficult, don't push yourself.”

“Are you close friends?”

“Not to that extent, just consider him a friend I like.”

“..... Don't have high expectations.”

-Whoosh!

With those words, Dam Baek-ha launched her figure towards Joo Woonhyang, who was captured by the demonic sword.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un smirked and laughed.

It seemed that if he had heavenly luck, he would survive, and if not, it was his fate to die here.

Like that, Mok Gyeong-un, who had entrusted Joo Woonhyang, who was captured by the demonic sword, to the Nine Blood Cult's Blood Saint Dam Baek-ha, headed towards the deepest part of Eternal Hell Prison.

There was someone he had to abduct in Cell No. 270.

Since he had memorized the entire map, Mok Gyeong-un was able to reach there without falling into the mechanism traps.

The prison cell made of thick iron bars.

Mok Gyeong-un's eyes gleamed with interest as he stood in front of it.

That was because there was a human figure sitting cross-legged with eyes closed in the dark cell, and when he shone the torch, it was an old woman with a haggard but graceful appearance.

He had heard that she held a quite high position in the Fire Faith Order, but it was different from what he had expected.

-Ting!

Mok Gyeong-un flicked his finger and rang the iron bars of the cell.

Then, the old woman who had her eyes closed slowly opened them and turned her head.

The old woman stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un and said,

“Is it mealtime?”

“Yes, it’s mealtime.”

“But you come empty-handed.”

“Yes, I came in a hurry.”

“Came in a hurry?”

Hearing these words, the old woman soon raised the corners of her mouth, uncrossed her legs, and got up from her seat.

-Clank!

However, due to the iron shackles, chains, and weights restraining her legs, she staggered and barely found balance, straightening her body.

Having struggled to stand up like that, she said to Mok Gyeong-un,

“The wait was worth it. Right?”

“Worth..... the wait?”

“Aren’t you the person who came to take me?”

“.....”

At these words, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes narrowed.

She spoke as if she knew he would come here.

With this, he recalled the words of the Embroidered Uniform Guard Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo, who had the female of the Gu poison, Command Gu.

[That Fire Faith Order believer received a revelation from the Holy Fire or something, and she was able to foresee the future.]

The reason she had been imprisoned in Eternal Hell Prison until now.

It was precisely because she was able to foresee this.

However, according to Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo, he had heard that although she could do it before, she couldn’t do it at all after being imprisoned in Eternal Hell Prison.

They had tested her unexpectedly several times, but she couldn’t do it at all.

Regarding this, both the higher-ups of the Imperial Palace and the organization with the mark speculated that the Holy Fire Priestess was hiding something called the sacred orb, causing her to lose her ability to foresee.

But apart from that, could she foresee?

With this, Mok Gyeong-un asked,

“Did you foresee that I would come?”

“I knew someone would come to save me.”

“Did you foresee it?”

“Didn’t I say? I already knew that someone would come to save me..... Wait, are you not the one who came to save me?”

The old woman’s eyes changed to suspicion.

Because of Mok Gyeong-un’s question, she wondered if it was a trick of the Embroidered Uniform Guards to deceive her.

With this, Mok Gyeong-un shook his head and said,

“I did come to save you. But you said you could foresee, so I just wanted to ask if that was really possible.”

“..... How can I believe that?”

“If you ask how to believe, does that mean you have no intention of leaving here?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the old woman frowned.

“It’s true that it’s my fate to leave here at this point, but it’s better to be careful. The one who will save me is someone with a strong tie to me. Show me the proof of that.”

“If you can foresee the future, do you really need that proof?”

“Foreseeing is ultimately like finding a way through smoke-filled gray. Just because you can read that path doesn’t mean you can know everything in detail.”

“Do you need something called the sacred orb to know?”

-Clang!

As soon as those words ended, the old woman took a step back with a stiff expression.

“…….. You tested me again.”

“I didn’t test you. I just asked because I was curious whether the real reason many people are looking for you is because of the foresight or for another reason.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the old woman frowned.

Then, she soon said,

“I can’t distinguish right now whether you are truly the one who came to save me or a trick of the Embroidered Uniform Guards to deceive me. But even if you are the former, if you make me waste time like this to satisfy your curiosity, we may not be able to leave here.”

“If you knew through foresight that I would come to take you, shouldn’t you also be certain about leaving?”

“Just as one can read the celestial energies but not know everything that will happen in the future, receiving the revelation of the Holy Fire doesn’t mean one can know everything. I merely interpret the revelation with these eyes and find the right path.”

“You’re only saying things that can’t be understood. Then, let me ask directly.”

“Why are you.....”

“It’s natural for the Fire Faith Order to rescue you since you are the Holy Fire Priestess, but even the leader of the Heaven and Earth Society.....”

-Screech! Screech!

Mok Gyeong-un drew something on the iron bars with his aura.

It was a mark with a vertical line passing through the center of the number two.

Seeing this, the old woman’s eyes widened.

“I’m curious about the reason why the organization with this mark is after you..... No, the sacred orb.”

At these words, the old woman asked in a trembling voice,

“..... Who are you? Who are you that you even know that mark.....”

Before she could finish her sentence,

“Please be quiet for a moment.”

“What?”

Mok Gyeong-un slightly turned his head and looked at the rightmost among the three passages.

Then, someone wearing a bamboo hat walked out from there.

The person who walked out soon took off the bamboo hat he was wearing as if it was cumbersome, and he was none other than Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom.

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom opened his mouth with a cold expression.

“I headed here first, wondering if other prisoners in the Prison had been released, and my prediction was correct.”

“Who are you?”

“That’s what I should be asking. How did an apprentice trainee of the Embroidered Uniform Guards come here? I don’t even need to ask if the Fire Faith Order sent you.”

-Swish!

With those words, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom slowly drew his sword.

The moment he drew it, the surrounding air became so heavy that it was suffocating due to the tremendous energy.

The old woman was panting, enough to plop down on the floor.

-Thud, thud!

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom approached and said,

“If you don’t want your neck to be sliced by this sword, it’s best to open your mouth right now.”

“Are you a second-tier executive?”

‘!?’

At the unexpected question that came out of Mok Gyeong-un’s mouth, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom suddenly hesitated.

Who the hell is this guy?

He naturally thought he would be from the Fire Faith Order since he was where the Holy Fire Priestess was.

But how does he know his position?

“You.....”

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un put his hands behind his back and exuded a strong pressure with his energy, saying,

-Roar!

“What should a second-tier executive do when seeing a first-tier executive?”

‘What?’

At that instant, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un with a stiff expression.

Those who knew that he was a second-tier executive were Gyeom-chang, the second-tier executive who had been assigned a mission in the Imperial Palace, and the first-tier executives of the higher-ups in the organization.

Coincidentally, he had never seen the face of a first-tier executive.

Moreover, the only known figure among the first-tier executives was the Ghost Blade.

So he couldn't be sure whether the person in front of him was really from the first tier or not.

With this, he tried to say the code phrase that the members of the organization used to identify each other.

“Three....”

Before he could say anything,

Mok Gyeong-un cut him off and said,

“There’s no other way. You keep your head held high without paying respects, so later, when you meet him, no, the third.....”

-Thud!

Before he could even finish his sentence,

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom knelt on one knee on the floor, bowed his head, and clasped his hands together in a respectful gesture.

“Muk Seom of the second tier pays his respects to the executive of the first tier.”

Muk Seom's eyes trembled as he bowed his head.

Seeing that he was about to mention the title used to address that person, it was undoubtedly a high-ranking executive of the first tier.

Mok Gyeong-un approached him.

“Now you’re paying respects.”

“……. I apologize. Until I could confirm the code phrase or the mark, I couldn’t be certain, so I hesitated for a moment. Please forgive me with a generous heart.”

“Is there a need for forgiveness? I played along like this.”

“Played along.....”

-Swish!

At that instant, Muk Seom, who had his head bowed, could see his arms, which were clasped together in a salute, falling to the floor with a burning pain.

‘!!!!!!’

Chapter 278 – Holy Fire Priestess (1)

The old woman's eyes inside the prison cell widened.

From the moment Mok Gyeong-un suddenly drew the symbol and started mentioning the first tier, she thought he was on their side.

However, that was her misjudgment.

-Swish!

-Thud!

‘What?’

She couldn’t hide her astonishment as she watched him suddenly sever Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom’s arms with his bare hands while Muk Seom was clasping his hands together in a salute.

Muk Seom’s severed hands, fallen on the floor, still twitched as if the nerves were alive.

Eventually, startled by his severed arms, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom was about to let out a scream.

“Aaaaa.....”

-Thud!

-Crack!

Before the scream could escape,

Mok Gyeong-un kicked his chin upwards.

With the force of the kick, not only did his head jerk upwards, but his upper body also involuntarily lifted, causing his jaw to forcibly close and his teeth to shatter.

“Ugh.”

-Thud!

Not stopping there, Mok Gyeong-un struck a palm strike at his lifted abdomen.

-Boom!

“Kuh-huk!”

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom’s body, hit in the abdomen, collided with the cave wall.

-Crash!

Muk Seom, half-buried in the cave wall, vomited blood profusely.

“Kuuuh. Blegh.”

Because he was hit in the location of his danjeon, his true energy was completely disrupted, making him miserable.

Muk Seom’s eyes, writhing in pain, shook crazily.

It seemed his danjeon had been shattered.

His true energy was rapidly dispersing from his abdomen.

-Whoosh!

For a martial artist, the true death could be said to be the destruction of the danjeon.

This was because it meant losing the martial arts and internal energy accumulated over a lifetime.

Blood vessels bulged in Muk Seom's eyes as his internal energy dispersed.

In the moment when not only nausea but also countless complex emotions surged in, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his neck and lifted him up.

-Grip!

“Kuuuh.”

“Ah. The bleeding is quite severe. I should show some consideration for this.”

-Tap tap tap tap!

Mok Gyeong-un pressed the acupuncture points near his severed arms to stop the bleeding.

Then, he opened his mouth with a smile.

“I thought the second-tier executive was the adjutant next to the Associate Military Commissioner, but it seems the Imperial Palace is quite important. Seeing that there's one more person.”

‘Wh-what the hell is this bastard?’

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom looked at Mok Gyeong-un with trembling eyes.

He considered himself to have excellent judgment, enough to be considered at the level of the first tier.

However, he was deceived in a way that was so absurdly futile.

No, he had no choice but to be deceived.

In the first place, it was more strange not to be deceived when he listed things that only those at the second tier or higher of the organization would know so confidently.

“You..... Who..... are you? Are you..... really from the Fire Faith Order?”

Normally, he would have smirked and said, “Who knows?”

However, since the Holy Fire Priestess of the Fire Faith Order was watching inside the prison cell, Mok Gyeong-un smiled and answered casually,

“So you really thought I was one of them?”

“Kuuuh.”

-Drip drip!

Blood flowed back from his stomach, and blood continuously dripped from Muk Seom’s mouth.

As if not caring about this at all, Mok Gyeong-un stared at him intently and then suddenly smeared a drop of his blood on his index finger with the opposite hand.

Muk Seom was puzzled, wondering what he was doing,

-Swish! Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un then began to carve something on his forehead, throat, and,

-Rip!

He tore open his chest and started carving near his heart.

It was the character for “protection.”

He was forming a talisman using his own blood, imbuing it with curse power.

After writing this, Mok Gyeong-un sealed the hand seal and muttered,

‘The Art of Protecting the Body from Evil Curses.’

“The Great Powerful God of the Northern Dipper, the Heavenly Dog, the Earthly Dog, the Six Ding, the Six Jia, the Commanding Gods, the Great Power of the Morning Sun, the True Qian and Kun.....”

As he chanted the incantation for the protective technique, Muk Seom, feeling an ominous sensation, tried to shake off Mok Gyeong-un’s hand.

However, as his danjeon was destroyed and his true energy was rapidly weakening, it was impossible for him to do so.

-Grip!

“Kuh!”

Rather, Mok Gyeong-un tightened his grip on his neck, making it hard for him to breathe.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had been chanting the incantation while sealing the hand seal, stopped.

Then, this time,

-Swish!

‘!?’

He suddenly brought his finger to Muk Seom’s mouth.

Then,

-Pluck!

“Ugh!”

He pulled out one of Muk Seom’s upper front teeth.

Muk Seom, who had one tooth pulled out, couldn’t understand what this man was doing.

However, Mok Gyeong-un didn’t stop there after pulling out the tooth,

-Pluck!

He pulled out another of Muk Seom’s teeth.

He kept pulling out not just one, but eventually pulled out six teeth.

As a result, with all his front teeth pulled out, Muk Seom’s appearance, bleeding profusely from the empty spots, became pitiful to look at.

-Swish swish swish!

Mok Gyeong-un carved letters on the pulled-out teeth.

They were the names of the Six Jia Gods.

After carving the names of the Six Jia Gods,

“The Six Jia Gods, the Yin Gods, the Guardian Gods, the Successful Completion, the Golden Prohibition of the Three Purities, the Imperial Decree of the Jade Emperor, the Swift Response.”

He chanted the Corpse Untying Mantra seven times, inhaled seven breaths, and scattered it to the east.

Then, he took off Muk Seom’s shoes and threw one three steps to the east and the other three steps to the west.

‘What the hell is he doing?’

Even the old woman inside the prison cell couldn’t understand Mok Gyeong-un’s actions.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un smiled as if he had finished and said to Muk Seom,

“Now the preparations are done.”

“What..... are you..... doing?”

“Ah. Nothing much. I’m just taking some precautions against the restriction placed on you.”

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Muk Seom showed an expression of incomprehension.

What does he mean by restriction?

Restrictions were originally imposed on those belonging to the fifth tier in the three realms.

Even though they were middle-level executives, those who received the title of executive at the second tier had no memory of receiving such restrictions or being forced to do so.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“It seems you don't even know that you've been restricted.”

“What are you talking about.....”

“Even the adjutant you mentioned died from..... here.”

-Tap tap!

Mok Gyeong-un tapped his head with his finger and said,

“His head exploded when he mentioned the one you serve.”

“..... Don't say nonsense. We have never been subjected to such restrictions.”

“Then, as a test, try talking about the one you serve.”

“What?”

“You said you’ve never been restricted. So tell me what you call the one you serve.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Muk Seom closed his mouth.

That was because everything related to that person and everything associated with him must not be divulged.

It was an absolute rule that must be followed in the organization.

However, as Mok Gyeong-un kept making disturbing remarks about restrictions, it became even more difficult for him to open his mouth.

“What are you talking about.....”

-Stab!

Before he could finish his sentence, Mok Gyeong-un’s finger dug into his eye socket.

As a result, Muk Seom turned pale and couldn’t move.

‘This..... crazy..... bastard.....’

To him, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“I don’t have time, so if you don’t answer, I’ll pull out one of your eyeballs like this. You’ve never seen your own eyeball before, right?”

With those words, he smiled brightly,

-Shiver!

At that sight, Muk Seom felt a chill run down his spine.

By looking into a person's eyes, one could determine whether they would really do something or not.

Mok Gyeong-un's eyes showed a gaze that would carry out that action without a moment's hesitation.

So, Muk Seom spoke in a trembling voice,

“If-if what you say is true, and I'll die from the restriction the moment I divulge it, do you think I can speak?”

“Don't worry. That's why I placed a talisman on your body to block the curse power and created a corpse to substitute you using the corpse untying technique.”

“Corpse?”

“Yes. So feel free to talk. Of course, if you don't want to talk, you can just keep your mouth shut.”

“.....”

“But after I count to three, I'll pull out this eyeball of yours. And after counting to three again, the other eye. And next, I'll twist and tear off your nose..... Well, I'm too lazy to mention what's next, so imagine it yourself.”

“.....”

Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom couldn't say a word with a stiff face.

In this situation, anyone who wasn't prepared to die would have no choice but to open their mouth.

That's how terrifying Mok Gyeong-un's every word and action was.

Under this pressure, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom finally opened his mouth.

“If-if I just tell you what we call him, will that be enough?”

“If you answer a few more questions, I'll guarantee your life at least.”

“.....”

Muk Seom fell into a momentary dilemma.

Even if he was worse than dog shit, would it be better to at least save his life since this world was better than the afterlife?

-Swish!

Then, his eyes fell on his severed arms and destroyed danjeon.

Even if he survived, he would be no different from being dead.

‘Sigh.’

Moreover, the organization would surely kill him to silence him anyway, as he had become useless as a martial artist.

In the end, Muk Seom decided to keep his loyalty to the organization.

“Just kill.....”

“I'll restore your severed arms and danjeon as well.”

“What? How can that be.....”

“If you can't believe it, I can't help it, but I'm just letting you know it's possible. However, the longer you delay, the less likely it will be restored, so it's better to hurry.”

“.....”

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Muk Seom, who had been determined to keep his loyalty, changed his mind.

“I'll talk.”

“That's a good choice.”

Mok Gyeong-un had instantly read what kind of mindset he had by looking at how he stared at his arms and his determined eyes.

“Now, speak.”

“..... Alright. We call him the third.....”

-Splat!

Right at that moment,

The shoe placed three steps to the east exploded with a splat.

“Wh-what is this?”

Muk Seom couldn't hide his surprise.

On the other hand, the corners of Mok Gyeong-un's mouth slightly rose as he watched this.

As expected, his prediction was correct.

In sorcery, a curse could only be lifted if the target paid a price.

So, Mok Gyeong-un had created a fake corpse of Muk Seom using the corpse untying technique to deceive the curse.

Of course, it looked like a simple shoe, but magically, it was his corpse.

Just because it was a corpse didn't mean it could escape the curse.

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un held out his hand, gesturing for Muk Seom to continue speaking.

Then, Muk Seom, who had flinched at the exploded shoe, swallowed dry saliva and continued,

“We call him Mok-gan (目艮, The Third Eye).”

-Splat!

As soon as he finished speaking, the shoe placed three steps to the west exploded.

Seeing this, Muk Seom let out a sigh of relief with trembling eyes.

“Phew.....”

Was there really a restriction or something in place?

He didn't know if it was this man's ploy, but the moment he spoke the name of that person, he felt his whole body tremble and the blood in his head surge in reverse, so it seemed to have been really dangerous.....

-Splat!

At that moment, Muk Seom's head exploded.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had been holding his exploded head, wiped the bloody flesh with his sleeve and muttered,

“..... It failed.”

He thought he had succeeded in deceiving and diverting the curse power.

However, the curse was so strong that this man's head couldn't endure it and eventually exploded.

He had considered it a clever trick, but the curse power of the one who placed the restriction was much higher than his own.

Seeing that even the corpse untying technique, which deceived death, couldn't ultimately avoid the curse, it seemed the sorcery had reached a truly high level.

‘How annoying.’

Mok Gyeong-un clicked his tongue inwardly.

If he could overcome the curse, he thought he could extract more information, but it turned out to be regrettable.

Of course, even so, he had clearly found out one thing.

It was that their leader was called the “Third Mok-gan (目艮).”

‘The Third Mok-gan.....’

Why did they call him that?

Literally translated, it meant “opposing the third sight.”

It was difficult to understand what this meant.

However, it seemed there was no time to speculate on this meaning now.

-Thud, thud!

Mok Gyeong-un turned his steps and approached the prison cell, saying,

“You’ve waited a long time.”

“.....”

“I wanted to find out more, but as you can see, they are in no condition to answer. So I hope you, the Holy Fire Priestess, can tell me. Why are these people after you and that treasure you mentioned?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the old woman, no, the Holy Fire Priestess opened her mouth.

“You..... I’m not sure if you’re really a follower of our order.”

“Why do you say that?”

“The doctrine of our order is to revere the holy fire, practice good, and eliminate evil.”

“And?”

At that question, the Holy Fire Priestess pointed at Mok Gyeong-un with her finger and spoke in a cold voice,

“But no matter how I look at you, you are evil itself.”

Chapter 279 – Holy Fire Priestess (2)

“The doctrine of our order is to revere the sacred fire, practice good, and eliminate evil.”

“And?”

“But no matter how I look at you, you are evil itself.”

Along with those words, the Holy Fire Priestess inside the prison cell looked at him coldly.

To the old woman, Mok Gyeong-un smirked and said,

“I can be evil, I guess.”

“You guess? For the followers of our sect, constantly practicing good and staying away from evil is a trial and something that sustains oneself.....”

“Put aside those old-fashioned words and tell me who determines the standards of good and evil.”

“What?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the Holy Fire Priestess’s eyes narrowed.

Who determines the standards of good and evil?

It was an absurd question.

“Why are you asking a question that is moral and taken for granted? Can’t you even distinguish between right and wrong?”

“Who defines what is right and wrong?”

“Hah..... Are you trying to have a word battle with me now?”

“It’s more that I find it amusing how you take things for granted.”

“Finding it amusing to take things for granted?”

“Yes.”

“After all, aren’t the standards of right and wrong, good and evil, set by someone?”

“What?”

“In the end, it’s people who set those so-called standards, isn’t it?”

“.....”

The Holy Fire Priestess couldn’t deny this.

In the first place, the standards were ultimately set by the people of the past, and they were passed down and became customs and morality.

The same goes for the doctrine of the Fire Faith Order.

They follow what was passed down from the Parsa Kingdom.

However, if one argues about the fundamentals like this, there will be no end to it.

“What are you trying to say? Are you denying that someone set the standards? But do you think you can deny them?”

“Why do you say that?”

“There are things that the majority considers right and things that the minority considers right.”

“And?”

“The world ultimately moves towards what the majority considers right, and even what is considered wrong in terms of morality will eventually lean towards the will of the majority.”

“So you’re saying that good and evil, right and wrong, are opinions set by the majority, and those belonging to the minority should follow them?”

“.....”

“That answer cannot be given by me. In the end, it’s a matter that you have to accept for yourself. However, until the majority makes that decision, there must have been a lot of contemplation, conflicts, and trial and error.”

“Ah, I see.”

The Holy Fire Priestess believed that even in teachings, enlightenment ultimately comes from accepting it for oneself.

There was no point in discussing fundamentals all day long and trying to instill this and that if one didn’t accept it for oneself.

To her, Mok Gyeong-un said with a smile,

“Then, the Fire Faith Order is an absolute evil and an absolutely wrong thing that shouldn’t exist in the world.”

“What? What are you.....”

“You said it yourself. The reason why the minority should follow the opinion of the majority.”

“That’s.....”

“The Fire Faith Order and its doctrine, which are rejected by the majority of the people in the Central Plains, belong to the minority, so they should naturally be denied, shouldn’t they?”

“.....”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the Holy Fire Priestess couldn’t give any answer.

Rather, she had been countered.

She had tried to educate him by teaching him the doctrine due to the evil she felt from him, but instead, she had only exposed the weakness in her own words.

‘..... A cunning fellow.’

If she raised a counter argument for the sake of her order here, it would only lead to a repetitive debate where she would have to contradict her own words.

The Holy Fire Priestess clicked her tongue and said,

“It’s been a while since I’ve been entangled in words like this.”

“Is that so?”

“But thanks to that, it has become clearer.”

“Clearer? What is it?”

“I can no longer be certain that you, who have doubts about the teachings of our sect, are truly one of us.”

The Holy Fire Priestess's eyes were filled with suspicion.

Seeing her like that, Mok Gyeong-un thought he should stimulate her appropriately.

He had many things he wanted to find out from her, but there wasn't enough time now, and if he made her more suspicious, it might become troublesome to help her escape.

“Ah. It seems I haven't been able to gain your trust, Holy Fire Priestess. Then how about this?”

Mok Gyeong-un took something out from his bosom.

It was none other than,

“That is?”

What Mok Gyeong-un took out was the ring given to him by Shadow Clan Master Hwan Ya-seon.

He had said that this was a token that proved one's identity as a follower of the sect.

After showing the token, Mok Gyeong-un clasped his hands together in a respectful manner, bowed his waist, and paid his respects.

“A follower of the Fire Faith Order pays his respects to the Holy Fire Priestess.”

At Mok Gyeong-un's greeting, the Holy Fire Priestess, whose mind had been filled with suspicion just a moment ago, became confused.

‘How did he get this?’

That was because the ring Mok Gyeong-un showed was a token that only the high-ranking position of bishops in the Fire Faith Order could possess.

Even within the Fire Faith Order, there weren't many bishops.

So she asked,

“Who did you receive this from?”

Judging by his appearance, he couldn't be older than his prime, so it couldn't be his own.

Therefore, she was convinced that Mok Gyeong-un must have received this token from someone.

“I received it from my master.”

“Your master? Tell me his esteemed name or sect name.”

Shadow Clan Master Hwan Ya-seon had told him to omit his surname when introducing himself to a fellow sect member.

He said that this surname was inherited from the previous generation's Shadow Clan Master.

So Mok Gyeong-un said,

“It's Ya-seon.”

“Bishop Ya-seon!”

At those words, the Holy Fire Priestess's voice became excited for the first time.

Mok Gyeong-un observed this intently.

He had predicted that Shadow Clan Master Hwan Ya-seon would be a quite high-ranking figure in the Fire Faith Order, but seeing the Holy Fire Priestess, who was second only to the Society Leader, show this reaction, it seemed he was indeed a very important person.

“Sent by Bishop Ya-seon? Where is he now?”

“Do you know an organization called the Heaven and Earth Society?”

“The Heaven and Earth Society? Isn’t it one of the largest organizations in the martial arts world? How could I not know about it? Then, are you saying that Bishop Ya-seon was still there?”

Thanks to her reaction, Mok Gyeong-un learned that Shadow Clan Master Hwan Ya-seon had been in the Heaven and Earth Society for much longer than he had expected.

Then, she said,

“I can’t believe Bishop Ya-seon is still alive and using his power to help us like this. It’s truly a blessing for our order.”

‘.....’

At these words, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes became strange.

Was it really true that the Holy Fire Priestess could foresee the future?

If she had such an ability, she would have predicted the information she was curious about, such as the life and death of the Shadow Clan Master, but it was incomprehensible.

Just as this doubt was about to intensify,

-Rumble rumble rumble!

Suddenly, a tremor was felt from the ground, and the entire cave suddenly shook.

The scale of the shaking was incomparable to when Mok Gyeong-un and the Nine Blood Cult's Blood Saint Dam Baek-ha were fighting.

“Whoa?”

It was so severe that the Holy Fire Priestess staggered and grasped the iron bars.

‘What is this?’

Mok Gyeong-un placed his hand on the ground, puzzled.

Then, the intense shaking of the entire cave quickly subsided.

He couldn't understand what this phenomenon was.

As he was puzzled, the Holy Fire Priestess said,

“For now, let's get out of here. If we don't leave quickly, we'll be in trouble.”

“Do you know why?”

“Not exactly. It's just that this is the first time the entire cave has shaken so violently.”

“You said it’s the first time, but does that mean it has shaken before, even if not severely?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, the Holy Fire Priestess recalled something.

“Although not to this extent, whenever it shook even a little as if an earthquake had occurred, the Embroidered Uniform Guards who came here would hurry out..... Ah! Not all of them. Come to think of it, among those who interrogated me, only the one who said he was the overall head of the underground prison didn’t leave and closed the door inside the cell.”

“Even when this place shook?”

“That’s right.”

“Pointing to this tremor, that person told me to remember. He said it was absolutely impossible for me to escape the Eternal Hell Prison alive.”

“Impossible?”

Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin at those words.

From his experience, escaping Eternal Hell Prison didn’t seem impossible to that extent.

Well, it felt meaningless to say that anyone who entered here couldn’t escape.

Then, could there be something else hidden?

Mok Gyeong-un removed his hand from the ground and said,

“For now, let’s go out. Let’s see if it’s really impossible or not, as you said.”

“…… Bishop Ya-seon is always cautious, but you seem to have more confidence than you appear.”

“I prefer to face things head-on rather than worry. More importantly, would you mind stepping back a little?”

“Step back?”

“It’s hard to cut the iron bars if you’re leaning against them.”

“Ah!”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the Holy Fire Priestess took about five steps back.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un grasped his sword fingers and lightly slashed at the iron bars.

-Swish!

The Holy Fire Priestess couldn’t hide her puzzlement when he slashed the iron bars with his bare hands instead of using that dead man’s sword.

Could the iron bars really be cut just by slashing with fingers.....

-Clang!

At that moment, the iron bars that Mok Gyeong-un’s sword fingers had brushed past were cut and fell over.

Seeing this, the Holy Fire Priestess swallowed dry saliva and licked her lips.

Although he seemed to be not even in his prime, she was inwardly amazed that he was a master skilled enough to cut iron bars with his bare hands.

‘Bishop Ya-seon’s disciple is indeed outstanding in martial prowess.’

She wondered if Bishop Ya-seon was also this skilled.

After removing all the restraints on her arms and legs, the Holy Fire Priestess was able to come out of the prison cell.

“…… I’m not completely out yet, but thank you.”

She expressed her gratitude to Mok Gyeong-un.

In response, Mok Gyeong-un lightly shrugged his shoulders.

Right at that moment,

-Rumble rumble rumble!

Once again, the entire cave shook violently as if an earthquake had occurred in the underground prison.

But this time, it was even more severe than before.

To what extent? The cave walls cracked, and a strange pressure was felt along with the shaking.

With this, Mok Gyeong-un, who had his hand on the ground, frowned.

‘Is this why?’

-Rumble rumble rumble!

The Holy Fire Priestess staggered and grasped the cave wall, asking,

“Wh-what is happening?”

In response to her question, Mok Gyeong-un answered in a dumbfounded tone,

“It seems the ground below has completely collapsed, and the ground we are on is also falling.”

‘!?’

This shaking and pressure, which made it difficult to stand properly, were caused by that.

Mok Gyeong-un clicked his tongue at the situation he was experiencing for the first time.

Although it was called Eternal Hell Prison, he never expected that it would make the ground of one floor collapse and fall.

-Rumble rumble rumble!

“Oh no.....”

At the passage leading from Eternal Hell Prison to the 3rd floor of the underground prison.

Six Offices Commander Im Gyu-wol, the head of the Fourth Office, couldn't hide his despair as he looked at the collapsed area.

He didn't expect that the final mechanism trap would actually be triggered.

“Damn it!”

Six Offices Commander Im Gyu-wol couldn't hold back and shouted loudly in anger.

So many prisoners had escaped from their cells that he had hurried here in case the final mechanism trap would be triggered, but it was already over.

-Rumble rumble rumble!

The pressure that made it difficult to even stand up was a phenomenon where the ground below had collapsed, and the entire level of Eternal Hell Prison was falling.

As far as he knew, it would fall for about 1 ri (approx. 0.5 km).

As this place fell, the collapsed and emptied ground would be immediately filled, making it absolutely impossible to go back up.

-Crunch!

He should have just not come down at all.

If it weren't for the pressure from Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom, this situation wouldn't have happened in the first place.

Grinding his teeth in frustration, Im Gyu-wol finally came to his senses.

‘There’s no time for this.’

If he stayed still, he would eventually die.

Now that the final mechanism trap had been triggered, the only way to survive, even a little, was for everyone to join forces.

Prisoners, Embroidered Uniform Guards, it didn’t matter who, as long as one person lent a hand to dig upwards, that was the only answer.

Moreover, the final mechanism trap wasn’t the end of it.

According to the information he had received about the underground prison, once they fell to the bottom, hidden prison cells would open, and 36 bronze humanoid entities inside would be released to indiscriminately attack those who had escaped.

-Tap tap tap tap!

With this, Im Gyu-wol hurriedly ran towards the inner part of Eternal Hell Prison.

‘If they want to live, they’ll cooperate obediently.’

Mok Gyeong-un said to the Nine Blood Cult’s Sixth Blood Saint Dam Baek-ha with a surprised tone,

“Oh ho. You’re able to subdue him alive?”

Mok Gyeong-un had inwardly expected that Joo Woonhyang, who was entranced by the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword, would lose his life while fighting against Dam Baek-ha.

But perhaps he had heavenly luck?

Although his complexion was somewhat haggard, Joo Woonhyang was lying in front of Dam Baek-ha, who was leaning against the wall, peacefully asleep after fainting.

And on the floor beside him, the Plundering-killing Sword was half-buried.

True to its nature as a demonic sword, even though it was stuck in the ground, it faintly trembled and exuded a demonic aura.

“Aside from saving this brat or not, what are you going to do now?”

“What do you mean?”

“Don’t tell me you’re asking because you don’t know. If we had just left with only you and me earlier, this wouldn’t have happened, right?”

The reason Dam Baek-ha was angry was simple.

It was because she had also sensed that the ground had fallen below.

“We’re trapped here and about to dig our graves just to save that young old woman.”

“Young old woman?”

At Dam Baek-ha’s words, the Holy Fire Priestess frowned.

Who was this woman to call her a young old woman?

In the first place, attaching the word “young” to “old woman” was an oxymoron.

However, since the situation was so dire, she thought the words had slipped out in anger.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un approached the Plundering-killing Sword that was stuck in the ground.

Dam Baek-ha tried to stop him.

“Hey. Stop right there.”

“Yes?”

“I finally got that thing off this brat, and now you’re going to grab it and do what?”

It was quite annoying to subdue even a relatively weak fellow.

If a guy who had exceeded the limits were to be captured by the demonic nature of the sword, even if only by chance, something terrible would happen.

Out of this concern, she was warning him not to grab it.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un shrugged his shoulders and said,

“It’s a waste to just leave it behind.”

“A waste to leave it behind? Are you saying that now? In a situation where we don’t even know if we can dig our way up, even if our nails break..... What are you doing now?”

Dam Baek-ha looked at Mok Gyeong-un with an incomprehensible gaze.

That was because Mok Gyeong-un suddenly took something out of his bosom, placed it between his index and middle fingers, and abruptly rotated his hand in a circular motion.

She wondered what he was doing in this situation,

-Swish swish swish swish!

At that moment, smoke flowed out from the air, and space rippled, creating an entrance.

Seeing this, everyone couldn't hide their astonishment.

What kind of sorcery was this?

‘!!!!’

Chapter 280 – Holy Fire Priestess (3)

Embroidered Uniform Guard Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo looked at someone with a slightly tense expression.

In front of him stood a middle-aged man with a strong impression and only a mustache, paying his respects.

Although he was clearly in a higher position, the pressure he exuded as one of the top five masters in the Imperial Palace was no ordinary matter.

He was none other than Hyun Soon, the Northern Pacification Commissioner, one of the two Pacification Commissioners who could be considered the pinnacle among the Embroidered Uniform Guard's field officers.

‘He seems to be getting stronger.’

Sang Ik-seo had watched his growth since he joined the Embroidered Uniform Guards.

He had already surpassed him in strength long ago, but now he was incomparable.

It wasn't for nothing that he had become one of the top masters in the Imperial Palace.

-Murmur murmur!

The area behind Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon was chaotic.

A crowd of people wearing Embroidered Uniform Guard attire kept gathering, including Lesser Banners of junior 7th rank, Chief Banners of senior 7th rank, Probationary One Hundred-men Commanders of junior 6th rank, One Hundred-men Commanders of senior 6th rank, Deputy Thousand-men Commanders of junior 5th rank, Thousand-men Commanders of senior 5th rank, Six Offices Commanders of junior 4th rank, and Pacification Commissioners of senior 4th rank.

The reason they had gathered here was singular.

It was an emergency summons.

From the Associate Military Commissioner and above, they gained the authority to mobilize the Embroidered Uniform Guards in an emergency summons.

Here, mobilization didn't mean the complete entirety of the force.

Even if it was called mobilization, it excluded the Southern Pacification Commissioner who closely guarded His Majesty the Emperor, the First Office that guarded the Inner Palace and the Imperial Family, and the Fourth Office that was in charge of the Prisons.

However,

‘…… These Sixth Office bastards.’

Most of the Embroidered Uniform Guards had gathered, but only those from the Deputy Thousand-men Commander and below had come from the Sixth Office.

The Six Offices Commander of the Sixth Office, So Yerin, and the Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon did not come.

-Crunch!

‘Now that this guy has escaped from the poison, is he refusing the emergency summons..... No, wait. Is he planning to stab me in the back along with Six Offices Commander So Yerin?’

If that was the case, it would become very troublesome.

Although he had escaped the poison thanks to Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom, who was from the same organization as the deceased Embroidered Uniform Guard One Hundred-men Commander Gyeom-chang, he still had the weakness of the human skin mask.

If an investigation were to be conducted with that, his position would be in jeopardy.

‘Damn it.’

So he informed Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom about being caught with this weakness.

Then, Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom said,

[I will take care of the human skin mask. So, Associate Military Commissioner, pretend to be the Chief Eunuch Ho of the Western Depot and catch that person.]

[Catch that person, you say? But even Gyeom-chang was no match for him, so how.....]

[I'm not telling you to catch him alone.]

[Don't tell me...]

[Issue an emergency summons for the Embroidered Uniform Guards. If we can deploy at least half of the Embroidered Uniform Guard's forces, we can catch him without difficulty.]

[That.... That may be true, but.....]

[We have sufficient justification. Since there is suspicion that the person close to Prince Gyeong is an imposter, no one will question or object to the emergency summons.]

For this reason, Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo had issued the emergency summons.

However, now that the masked Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon, who held his weakness, did not come, he hesitated on what to do.

It had to be one of two things.

Either they had read his moves and were trying to backstab him, or Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom was in the process of taking away his weakness from them, as he had boldly claimed.

If that was the case,

‘We must hurry.’

In any case, both they and he had no choice but to make diversionary moves.

Trusting Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom and catching that fake Chief Eunuch Ho was the only way to resolve everything.

Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo looked at the gathered Embroidered Uniform Guards.

Nearly 60% of those in the Imperial Palace had gathered.

In terms of military strength, this was sufficient.

If they pressured that person with Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon at the forefront, they could sufficiently subdue him, no, kill him.

-Thud!

Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo raised his hand and spoke in a loud voice,

“It seems we don’t have the luxury to wait for the leaders of the Sixth Offices. From now on, we will go to Prince Gyeong’s Icy Palace to save His Highness!”

Like that, the Embroidered Uniform Guard forces led by Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo were heading towards Prince Gyeong’s palace.

Originally, it was forbidden for a military group exceeding the designated number to enter the palace of the Imperial Family, but if it served the purpose of rescuing the Imperial Family, it was exceptionally allowed.

That was also why Defender-in-Chief Muk Seom had proposed this.

Before long, they had almost reached the vicinity of Icy Palace.

They just needed to pass the palace hall.

‘We must kill him without fail.’

There was no need for subduing him.

Since they couldn't let him speak, as it would be dangerous, he had to issue an order to execute him.

Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo was about to give the order.

But right at that moment,

-Rumble rumble rumble!

“Wh-what?”

“The ground?”

The ground shook, and an earthquake occurred.

Startled by this, the Embroidered Uniform Guard forces stopped moving towards Icy Palace.

The sudden earthquake occurred throughout the entire Imperial Palace, causing roof tiles to fall, and it was utter chaos everywhere.

‘What the hell is this?’

It was already frustrating that they had to hurry, but the earthquake made it even more difficult.

While wondering what was going on, red smoke was seen rising from somewhere.

The red smoke made the Embroidered Uniform Guards more agitated than the earthquake.

That was because the red smoke signified that a major incident had occurred in the underground Prison, and it was a red signal requesting assistance accordingly.

With this, the Six Offices Commanders approached and said,

“Elder Associate Commissioner. What should we do about this? Shouldn’t we also send forces to the underground Prison by dividing the personnel?”

“That’s right. The red signal means there was an escape attempt in the underground Prison.”

At the opinions of these Six Offices Commanders, Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo’s stomach churned.

‘No, this is driving me crazy. The goal is right in front of us.’

To catch that guy, he needed all the current forces.

With only half, it was extremely unsettling.

However, he couldn't ignore the red signal from the underground Prison either.

Just as he was agonizing over what to do,

“Elder Associate Military Commissioner! Pacification Commissioner! Look over there!”

At that moment, a Thousand-men Commander from the Third Office raised his hand and pointed towards Icy Palace.

Wondering what was going on, he turned his head and saw Prince Gyeong standing on the roof of Icy Palace.

“It’s His Highness Prince Gyeong.”

“Why is His Highness on the roof?”

The Embroidered Uniform Guards couldn’t hide their perplexity at Prince Gyeong’s sudden action.

Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo was no exception.

His head was already messed up, and now that Prince Gyeong was on the roof in a precarious state, it felt like his head was about to explode.

“We must save His Highness.”

At that moment, Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon tried to step forward.

They were right in front of the Icy Palace hall, so they couldn’t ignore the danger to the Imperial Family member.

However, just as Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon was about to take a step forward,

“The Embroidered Uniform Guards are driving this king to his death!”

-Swish!

Prince Gyeong suddenly shouted those words and jumped off the roof.

“Oh no!”

-Thud!

In an instant, Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon used his lightness skill to the fullest to catch him somehow.

However, no matter how skilled he was and how outstanding his lightness skill was, there was a distance to catch him.

-Thud!

‘!!!!!!’

He missed him by just five steps.

Prince Gyeong, who had fallen head-first, had his neck twisted grotesquely and collapsed.

Blood flowed from Prince Gyeong’s twisted body, dyeing the surrounding ground red.

Shocked by the sudden action followed by a sudden, no, the worst situation, Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon and the Embroidered Uniform Guards were at a loss for words.

The one who was most speechless among them was Associate Military Commissioner Sang Ik-seo of the Embroidered Uniform Guards.

‘Da-damn it.....’

He had come to catch the fake supervisor of the Western Depot, but the situation had spiraled out of control.

The justification for issuing the emergency summons was to save Prince Gyeong, a member of the Imperial Family.

But he had died.

Moreover, as he jumped, he said that the Embroidered Uniform Guards had driven him to his death.

Sang Ik-seo sat down on the ground as if he had fallen into despair.

-Flinch! Swish!

At that moment, Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon, who had been examining the body of the deceased Prince Gyeong, half-drew the sword from the scabbard at his waist and looked around.

Northern Pacification Commissioner Hyun Soon, surveying the surroundings like that, couldn't understand.

Just a moment ago, he had felt something eerie from Prince Gyeong.

But it had disappeared in an instant.

‘…… What was that just now?’

There was a spirit body in the air watching him, who was puzzled like this.

She was none other than Cheong-ryeong, clicking her tongue while holding a long pipe.

-Not bad.

After absorbing the demonic energy of the Golden Nine-Tailed Fox, one of the Six Demons Kings, her spiritual energy had become almost Indigo-level spirit.

So even if it was someone who had surpassed the limits, she thought they wouldn't easily detect her spiritual energy, but he noticed it in an instant.

If her spiritual energy hadn't evolved further, she might have been discovered.

Cheong-ryeong flew upward.

-I did as that mortal brat told me to, but I wonder if this alone will be enough to divert attention.

Around the same time.

In one of the Imperial Palace's food storage warehouses, about fifty jang away from the entrance to the underground Prison.

This place, which stored dried seafood and such, had a particularly strong smell, so it had unusually low traffic unless one came to get food ingredients.

-Rumble rumble rumble rumble!

Due to the earthquake shaking the entire warehouse, someone got up from their spot and slightly opened the warehouse door.

-Creak!

And through the gap, they couldn't hide their astonishment at the red smoke they saw.

That was the red signal indicating that a major incident had occurred in the underground Prison.

When that smoke signal appeared, regardless of the reason, all the Embroidered Uniform Guards, except for the First Office, had to be dispatched, just like in an emergency summons.

-Thud!

Someone hurriedly closed the warehouse door.

He was none other than the masked Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon.

Ma Ra-hyeon was dumbfounded.

‘Didn’t they say they would quietly help them escape?’

The situation had become extremely complicated.

If the red signal had been raised, it was as good as confirming the fact that there was an escape from the underground Prison.

Ma Ra-hyeon walked to one side of the warehouse, frowning deeply at the seriousness of the situation.

It was no exaggeration to say that escape had become nearly impossible.

‘How the hell are they going to come here?’

He had urgently searched and found a safe base for the escape because he was told to prepare one.

But it seemed that everything was about to be ruined.

The situation had become difficult.

In this case, should he go to the underground Prison for now, in response to the red signal?

Just as he was contemplating what to do,

-Thud!

At that moment, without sensing any presence, the warehouse door suddenly opened.

The startled Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon hurriedly hid his body between the stacked wooden crates in the warehouse.

Then, the opened warehouse door closed again.

‘Who is it?’

Ma Ra-hyeon suppressed his presence to the maximum.

Judging from the fact that he couldn't feel the presence of the person who entered, they were clearly a tremendous master.

But then, he heard a sound as if something was being dragged.

-Ha..... Ha.....

The breathing was uneven.

It was the breathing of someone who had been injured.

At that moment, a voice was heard.

“Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon.”

‘!?’

At that voice, Ma Ra-hyeon couldn't hide his inner perplexity.

The owner of the voice was none other than his master, no, his superior, the leader of the Sixth Office, Six Offices Commander So Yerin.

Ma Ra-hyeon's eyes slightly trembled.

Why did she come to this place where he was?

While he was puzzled, Six Offices Commander So Yerin said,

“What the hell were you doing to be tracked by someone like this?”

‘Tracked?’

What does that mean?

Wondering about it, he had no choice but to come out from between the dried seafood crates.

In front of So Yerin, who had her arms crossed, a person who seemed to be injured, with bruises on his face, was lying face down.

Judging by his attire, he was a low-ranking eunuch of the Eastern Depot.

‘!?’

Was she saying that person had secretly followed him?

If he could hide his presence to that extent, he had to be either a trained person or a master one level above him.

However, based on his breathing and energy, he wasn’t a master one level above him.

At that moment, Six Offices Commander So Yerin, who had her arms crossed, spoke.

“Thousand-men Commander Ma. What the hell are you doing?”

“.....”

“An emergency summons was issued by the Associate Military Commissioner of the Embroidered Uniform Guards. So I went to get you and accidentally discovered this person following you. What are you hiding from me?”

At her words filled with suspicion, Ma Ra-hyeon was at a loss.

The reason he had come here was to help a prisoner from the underground Prison escape.

Therefore, he couldn't reveal this fact.

-Tap tap tap!

Six Offices Commander So Yerin approached him with a cold expression.

Although she trusted Ma Ra-hyeon, who was her deputy and almost like her disciple, taking such secretive actions without informing her of anything was an act of betraying that trust.

Feeling the disappointment from her, Ma Ra-hyeon hesitated on what to do.

“If you don't tell the truth.....”

Before she could finish her sentence,

-Swish swish swish!

At that moment, the space right next to them rippled, and suddenly, smoke rose, creating a round entrance.

‘!!!!!!’

At the sudden bizarre phenomenon, the heads of Six Offices Commander So Yerin and Thousand-men Commander Ma Ra-hyeon simultaneously turned towards it.

The eyes of the two people who turned widened.

What the hell was this?

Why did such an entrance suddenly appear in the warehouse?

As Six Offices Commander So Yerin was puzzled by this incomprehensible phenomenon, her expression hardened.

It was because of the people she saw beyond the entrance.

‘Prisoners?’

Although she had never been assigned to the Fourth Office and had never entered the underground Prison, as an Embroidered Uniform Guard, she was familiar with the prisoners’ attire.

Two of them were wearing prisoners’ uniforms, and the one unconscious over there was.....

“Joo Woonhyang?”

Trainee Joo Woonhyang.

And the one holding something strange between his index and middle fingers at the entrance was Trainee Ahn Jong-hu.

Seeing these two, she could instinctively be certain.

Although it was hard to believe, this mysterious entrance made of smoke seemed to be connected to the Imperial Palace’s underground Prison.

Because she knew that both of them had entered as apprentices of the Fourth Office, which was in charge of the Prison this time.

At that moment, Trainee Ahn Jong-hu, who was standing in front of the entrance, alternately looked at Ma Ra-hyeon and So Yerin and spoke,

-Did Thousand-men Commander Ma bring that person?

‘!?’

The moment he heard the transmitted sound ringing in his ears, Ma Ra-hyeon realized that Trainee Ahn Jong-hu was Mok Gyeong-un.

Because of this, Ma Ra-hyeon’s mind became complicated for a moment.

Not only did he change his face again, but was this what he meant when he said he could escape from the underground Prison?

Right then,

-Swish!

Six Offices Commander So Yerin drew her sword from the scabbard at her waist, aimed it at Mok Gyeong-un, who had the face of Trainee Ahn Jong-hu, and said,

“What the hell are you doing right now?”

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un looked at Ma Ra-hyeon’s reaction and let out a soft sigh.

Judging by his vigilant appearance, it seemed he hadn’t intentionally brought her.

Having this woman involved was somewhat annoying, but there was no choice.

They had to cross the entrance first.

This treasure he was holding between his fingers was something he had received from Yeo Su-rin, the disciple of Scarlet-Tailed Old Immortal, the master of Harmonious Immortal Pavilion, one of the two most mysterious pavilions among the Sixty-Four Pavilions of Diviners.

This treasure, which he had won in a bet, was a useful item that created a door to a desired location within a radius of about two hundred jang, but only once.

However, while it was very useful, it was a one-time use.

So they had to quickly cross to the other side before it closed.

-Swish swish swish!

Seeing the entrance gradually becoming unstable, it seemed they had to hurry.

With this, Mok Gyeong-un pulled out the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword, which was stuck in front of the entrance, and gestured towards the Holy Fire Priestess and the Nine Blood Cult's Sixth Blood Saint Dam Baek-ha behind him, saying,

“For now, let’s hurry and cross before the door closes.”

Of course, he altered his voice.

Six Offices Commander So Yerin thought he had died after being ambushed while injured at the medicine house.

There was no point in letting her know he was alive.

However,

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!

At that moment, the demonic energy of the Plundering-killing Sword surged, trying to erode Mok Gyeong-un.

Mok Gyeong-un's eyebrows raised at the demonic energy, which was much stronger than expected.

To this extent, it was far more severe than the Evil Commandment Sword.

Because of this, Mok Gyeong-un had no choice but to draw upon his demonic energy to avoid being eroded by the sword's demonic energy and suppress it.

However, the moment he drew upon his demonic energy,

-Clang!

A sword flew at him like lightning, and Mok Gyeong-un hurriedly pulled out the Plundering-killing Sword to block it.

The one who had swung the sword was none other than Six Offices Commander So Yerin.

So Yerin spoke with a stiffened face,

“..... You were alive?”

Her energy perception was very sensitive, so she accurately remembered the energy she had experienced before.

For her, revealing a unique energy like demonic energy was no different from revealing his own identity.

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un scratched his head as if he was in a predicament.

“Ah, I unintentionally got caught.”

“How did you.....”

“More importantly, I don’t have time, so I think you should step aside.”

-Boom!

With those words, Mok Gyeong-un infused demonic energy into the Plundering-killing Sword, creating a repulsive force, and flung Six Offices Commander So Yerin away along with her sword.

-Swish swish swish swish!

Pushed back about six steps by the sudden strong repulsive force, her eyes wavered.

‘This guy..... His martial power has increased.’

It wasn’t just a matter of increasing.

It had been enhanced to an incomparable extent compared to when she had fought him.

Not only was the person she thought had died actually alive, but what the hell had happened in just a few days?