

Mayhem 311

Chapter 311 – Reunion (4)

Killing intent.

It is an energy that becomes stronger the more one's desire to kill something becomes uncontrollably intense.

Emotions belong to the realm of the mind.

Among the many emotions, the desire to kill possesses the most intense and volatile will.

Therefore, it stimulates not only the five senses of others but also their sixth sense, making them vigilant.

Just like now.

-Whoosh!

‘What killing intent is this strong.....’

‘.....My Lord?’

This killing intent was so intense that it made not only the masked enemies but also allies like Seop Chun, Mong Mu-yak, and Ma Ra-hyeon shudder for a moment.

The killing intent was so strong that their hair stood on end, and their true energy in the danjeon boiled up on its own due to vigilance.

‘Who the hell is this bastard?’

The head of the Guyang family, Guyang Sa-oh, who had assumed the stance of his unique technique, the Toad Poison Skill, stared at Mok Gyeong-un with startled eyes.

At first, he thought he was a master who had reached the peak of the Transcendent Realm with a tolerance to poison.

However, to intimidate the crowd and instill unease with just killing intent, one had to surpass the wall.

But surpassing the wall was the same for both sides.

Even he, who had surpassed the wall, couldn't take his eyes off the fellow's killing intent and was in a state of tension.

What the hell is that fellow's identity?

It definitely couldn't be considered the realm of the late-stage warriors.

If it was to this extent, it could rather be the Eight Stars, the top masters of the martial arts world.....

-Swish!

'No way?'

Guyang Sa-oh's eyes widened.

He had not taken his eyes off the fellow at all, but at some point, Mok Gyeong-un appeared right in front of him.

At this, he was momentarily startled, but since he had already finished circulating his energy, he didn't hesitate and immediately tried to launch the double palm strike of the Toad Poison Skill.

-Thud!

“Ugh!”

However, in that instant, Mok Gyeong-un's knee kicked up Guyang Sa-oh's chin.

Guyang Sa-oh's body floated upwards after being hit on the chin.

In that state, Mok Gyeong-un consecutively kicked his chest.

-Thud! Bang!

Along with it, the falling raindrops spread out, creating wave-like ripples, and Guyang Sa-oh's body was sent flying backward.

-Crash!

Guyang Sa-oh's flying body crashed through the wall of the branch building.

At this sight, the masked individuals couldn't hide their perplexity.

The Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh was a master of poison techniques on par with the Thousand Poison Hand Tang In-hae, one of the Eight Stars.

A top master ranked among the best in the martial arts world was subdued in just two exchanges by an unknown late-stage warriors whose name was not even known. What the hell was going on?

-Smack!

Then, the bamboo hat-wearing man took off the bamboo raincoat he was wearing.

At his waist, beneath the removed bamboo raincoat, was a black sword that appeared to be charred black.

The bamboo hat-wearing man even took off the bamboo hat he was wearing.

Then, the face that was hidden was revealed, and it was a middle-aged man with a scar above his left eyebrow.

-Swish!

His face was wet from the pouring rain, but how could one forget that face?

The corners of Mok Gyeong-un's mouth rose.

It was indeed that bastard.

Before learning martial arts, he was called the Sickle-slaying Demon and had tracked their traces.

At that time, he had encountered that bastard.

[You should have lived quietly. Why did you go around making a fuss and hasten your fate?]

-Sting!

The left side of his chest, where he had been stabbed by that bastard, throbbed.

Meanwhile, someone shouted,

“Left Guardian?”

It was none other than Seop Chun.

At Seop Chun’s exclamation, Mong Mu-yak also recognized him and spoke with a perplexed expression.

“Why is the Society Leader’s Left Guardian here?”

Seop Chun was the Third Guardian Commander of the headquarters.

Since he was stationed at the headquarters at all times, he couldn’t help but know the faces of the guardians who were close to the Society Leader.

That person was the Left Guardian named Lee Gwang.

“Left Guardian! What are you doing?”

At Seop Chun’s shout, the middle-aged man with the scar, no, the one named Lee Gwang, drew the charred-looking black sword from his waist with an annoyed expression.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had not taken his eyes off him, opened his mouth.

“You said he was the Society Leader’s Left Guardian?”

“Y-Yes. But why is the Left Guardian to us.....”

Seop Chun couldn't finish his words.

Upon learning that the identity of the one who seemed to be the leader of the masked individuals was the Left Guardian, the thought that the mastermind who ordered their deaths could be the Society Leader himself came to mind.

Mong Mu-yak seemed to have a similar suspicion as Seop Chun, and he was equally perplexed.

'The Society Leader sent him? Then, since we have completed the secret mission, is he trying to discard us? Why?'

It was incomprehensible.

He was the son of the Vice-Leader, and wasn't Mok Gyeong-un raised as the disciple of the Shadow Clan Master and even a candidate for the fourth disciple?

But even if it was a mission that he didn't want others to know about, something seemed strange.

Is this really the Society Leader's order?

As he was puzzled, the middle-aged man with the scar, Lee Gwang, looked at Mok Gyeong-un and opened his mouth.

"Your killing intent is directed solely at me. Do you know me?"

At his question, Mok Gyeong-un twitched his lips and spoke.

"Of course. How could I not know? I've been eagerly waiting to meet you."

"You've been waiting to meet me? You bastard....."

The middle-aged man with the scar, Lee Gwang, frowned.

Because of what the fellow said, he was reminded of someone, but he heard that bastard had definitely lost his life in an accident during the selection process for the Embroidered Uniform Guards.

Then, it couldn't be 'that bastard', so who the hell is he?

'No. It can't be that bastard.'

In the first place, it couldn't be that bastard because no matter how much one's martial arts improved in such a short time, there was a limit.

He had seen it firsthand when the Society Leader tested him.

It hadn't even been a month since then.

No matter how outstanding one's natural talent was, no, even if one encountered a fortuitous encounter, there was a limit to how strong one could become.

Therefore, he was really curious about the identity of this person, but,

"I've always wanted to ask."

-Step step!

Mok Gyeong-un walked towards him and spoke meaningfully.

"Are you Ghost Blade?"

'!?'

As soon as Mok Gyeong-un's question was asked, the surroundings stirred.

Even though only the words "Ghost Blade" were mentioned, the reaction of the masked individuals was as astonished as when they saw the mark.

Meanwhile, the middle-aged man with the scar, Lee Gwang, who had raised his eyebrows at Mok Gyeong-un's question, opened his mouth.

"Who are you? Why are you looking for Ghost Blade?"

"Just answer whether you are or not. If you are indeed Ghost Blade, I think I can reduce a lot of the hardships I've had so far....."

-Crack! Swoosh!

Before he could even finish his words,

A tremendous poisonous energy surged, and everyone's gaze turned towards it.

Looking in that direction, a green haze was spreading in all directions, enough to oxidize even the falling raindrops, and it was melting even the intact building.

-Sizzle!

Through the building melting away due to the poisonous energy, a figure could be seen.

It was none other than the Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh.

“Elder!”

“Elder is safe!”

At this sight, the masked individuals cheered.

However, it didn’t last long.

That’s because the poisonous energy he was emitting was on a different level compared to before, and the green haze was spreading rapidly in all directions.

As the potent poisonous energy that oxidized the rain and melted the buildings without a trace spread, the startled masked individuals had no choice but to distance themselves from him.

“Gasp! The poison is rushing towards us!”

“Get back!”

“Don’t go near the elder!”

-Swoosh swoosh!

Regardless, Guyang Sa-oh paid no heed and walked towards someone, exuding anger.

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

‘I admit it. I let my guard down.’

Guyang Sa-oh had drawn up to the Eight Poisons, the highest realm of poison techniques.

Although he had let his guard down, despite drawing up to the Seven Poisons, he felt his mind going blank for a moment from the unexpected strike he received from Mok Gyeong-un.

At this, Guyang Sa-oh acknowledged it clearly.

This person was not a late-stage warriors but a master whom he had to face with his full power.

Then, he needed to go all out in a manner befitting him.

-Swoosh!

At some point, his hair had completely turned green.

He could confidently say that the Eight Poisons realm was nearly on par with the legendary Myriad Poisons Embodiment, the Myriad Poisons Pool Body, which embodied ten thousand poisons.

‘You are the first one to make me use all Eight Poisons since the Thousand Poison Hand Tang In-hae and that person.’

-Swish!

Guyang Sa-oh, whose form could only be seen in green due to the green poisonous energy, launched himself towards Mok Gyeong-un.

It was one of the unique techniques of the Toad Poison Skill, the Eight Poison Melting Village.

The trajectory of the barrier created by the green poisonous energy targeted the vital acupuncture points on Mok Gyeong-un’s upper body with a tyrannical momentum.

-Sizzle!

The force was so strong that the surroundings were melting away due to the aftereffects of the poisonous energy.

This was the danger of poison techniques.

No matter how strong a master was, if they directly confronted poison techniques, they could be poisoned by the aftereffects of the poison or have their body melt away by the extreme poison.

However, Mok Gyeong-un was extending his hand towards Guyang Sa-oh's poison technique without dodging at all.

"My Lord, you need to keep your distance!"

Seop Chun shouted in alarm at Mok Gyeong-un's response.

With that level of poison technique, even the Repelling Strong Energy might not work.

However, an unexpected event occurred.

-Swoosh swoosh!

Mok Gyeong-un blocked Guyang Sa-oh's unique technique with one hand while standing still.

The trajectory of the brilliant green barrier surrounded by potent poisonous energy tried to penetrate Mok Gyeong-un's hand and inflict damage in any way possible, but,

-Swoosh swoosh!

Mok Gyeong-un blocked it with one hand without moving an inch.

At this, Guyang Sa-oh's eyes wavered.

Unlike before, he was using his full power to unleash his unique technique.

Not only did he draw up to the Eight Poisons realm, but he was also attacking with the power of the Ten Stars realm, so judging by the surroundings melting away due to the poisonous energy, its power was at its peak.

'This fellow..... What?'

Guyang Sa-oh was utterly perplexed.

He thought that if they continued to exchange blows, no matter how profound one's internal energy was, they would be poisoned by the poisonous energy.

However, he hadn't noticed before, but every time his hand clashed with Mok Gyeong-un's, the latter's hand was flickering with a purple light.

'This can't be..... Poison?'

He thought it couldn't be, but it was definitely poison.

It wasn't just a level of tolerance to poison, but this fellow had properly mastered poison techniques.

Moreover, the poison technique he was using was not a shoddy one, but,

"Wave Demon Poison Scripture?"

"For a master of poison techniques, you recognize it."

"You? What is your relationship with that old man, the Island Poison King?"

Flickering Poison King Baek Sa-ha.

Although he had not reached the realm of the Poison Man, the Wave Demon Poison Scripture of the Baek family could be considered a peerless poison technique that was not inferior to the Guyang family or the Sichuan Tang family.

'Is this fellow Baek Sa-ha?'

It was nearly impossible to possess this level of poison technique mastery unless one was Baek Sa-ha.

No, it's questionable whether he is really Baek Sa-ha.

As far as he knew, Baek Sa-ha himself had not reached the realm of the Poison Man, but unlike himself, this fellow was so skilled in poison techniques that he could generate poisonous energy only when clashing in an instant.

-Swoosh swoosh!

-Grind!

'Damn it!'

Guyang Sa-oh gritted his teeth.

He had already unleashed five techniques, yet this fellow was blocking his techniques with just one hand without moving a single step.

But at that moment, someone charged towards Mok Gyeong-un with lightning-fast momentum.

It was none other than the middle-aged man with the scar, Lee Gwang.

The black sword wielded by Lee Gwang aimed at the space between Mok Gyeong-un's eyebrows in a surprise attack.

It was an exquisite single strike that even Guyang Sa-oh had not anticipated.

However,

-Smack!

In an instant, Mok Gyeong-un caught it precariously with his index and middle fingers.

-Clang!

'He caught it?'

Lee Gwang was dumbfounded.

Meanwhile, Guyang Sa-oh, who was unleashing his unique technique towards Mok Gyeong-un, shouted in an angry voice.

"Are you trying to interfere with me?"

No matter how superior the opponent was, he had his pride as a martial artist.

How dare he launch a sneak attack and interfere while they were still in the midst of a confrontation?

However, the middle-aged man with the scar, Lee Gwang, drew up more inner strength into the hand holding the sword and said,

“Now is not the time for that.”

“Regardless of the situation, right now.....”

“Look around before you speak.”

“Around?”

At those words, Guyang Sa-oh suddenly moved his eyes and surveyed his surroundings.

He had been solely focused on Mok Gyeong-un, so he had no room to pay attention to his surroundings.

However, an unbelievable sight was unfolding before his eyes.

-Swish swish! Stab stab!

“Argh!”

“Ugh!”

Around them, two swords dyed in black light were flying around as if they were alive, indiscriminately stabbing and penetrating the masked individuals.

‘!!!!!!’

At this tremendous sight, Guyang Sa-oh couldn't hide his shock, his eyes widening.

'Th-This is the Demonic Sword Force?'

Chapter 312 – Reunion (5)

level gain a high understanding of energy by peeking at the wall of the wall, allowing them to manipulate weapons with true energy.

This is called Sword Control Technique or Energy Sword Control Technique.

Since the Sword Control Technique does not directly grasp the sword, it gains freedom of movement and can unleash more effective sword techniques, enabling attacks over a wider range.

However, there is a realm that maximizes this Sword Control Technique, which is the Energy Sword Force.

Masters who have surpassed the wall of the wall and reached the Profound Realm have true energy that has reached its pinnacle and has a smooth flow, allowing them to maximize the Sword Control Technique and even generate Sword Force.

'Th-This is unbelievable.'

Guyang Sa-oh, the head of the Guyang family and the Eight Poison Snake Staff, couldn't hide his perplexity.

-Swish swish! Stab stab!

"Ugh!"

“Argh!”

The two swords flying around like fish in the air, indiscriminately attacking the masked individuals, were engulfed in a black light.

It was unknown why they were dark, but that intensity was undoubtedly Sword Force.

Guyang Sa-oh stared at Mok Gyeong-un with trembling eyes.

‘How can this be.....’

Only the sword sheaths remained at the fellow’s waist.

He didn’t even realize that while confronting him, Mok Gyeong-un was operating the Energy Sword Force to attack his subordinates.

-Swoosh swoosh!

‘A monster..... How can such a monstrous fellow?’

While using the Energy Sword Force like this, he was not only confronting him but also the Second Realm Lee Gwang, who had launched a surprise attack, with just one hand without moving a single step.

It was as if this fellow alone was simultaneously doing four things, and it was no exaggeration to say that he had reached mastery, not just having surpassed the wall of the wall.

At this,

-Swoosh!

Guyang Sa-oh stopped his attack and created a distance of about six steps.

Then, Guyang Sa-oh shouted at Mok Gyeong-un,

“Reveal your identity. Are you perhaps one of the Six Heavens?”

Six Heavens.

They were the transcendent masters of the True Grandmaster level who were considered the pinnacle of the current martial arts world.

Having surpassed the wall of the wall and reached the Profound Realm, it was known that no one could confront them one-on-one unless they were the Eight Stars right below them or another member of the Six Heavens.

Guyang Sa-oh was convinced that Mok Gyeong-un was one of the Six Heavens wearing a human skin mask.

He thought that without being one of them, it was impossible to display such miraculous martial prowess.

“Six Heavens?”

Mok Gyeong-un chuckled.

Is a top master who has surpassed the wall mistaking him for the current pinnacle of the martial arts world?

He seemed to understand the meaning of those words.

It meant that the martial prowess he had attained had reached a level that could instill vigilance and fear in others.

At that moment,

-Clench!

The middle-aged man with the scar, Lee Gwang, drew up his inner strength and tried to pull out the black sword blade caught between Mok Gyeong-un's index and middle fingers.

However,

-Tremble tremble!

The sword blade only trembled more but didn't budge at all.

'What kind of inner strength does this fellow have?'

Realizing that he couldn't pull out the sword, Lee Gwang released the sword he was holding and directly generated Sword Force with his Sword Finger Skill.

-Swish!

The Sword Force he generated tried to pierce through Mok Gyeong-un's face, but,

-Thud!

"Ugh!"

Before he could do so, Mok Gyeong-un's kick struck Lee Gwang's abdomen, and his body was pushed back nearly ten steps.

-Swoosh!

Lee Gwang quickly dissipated the true energy penetrating his internal organs through his feet.

-Sizzle!

As Mok Gyeong-un's true energy, that is, the energy of death, flowed out through the soles of his feet and came into contact with the rainwater, it oxidized and turned into steam.

Lee Gwang's expression twisted.

It was only for a brief moment, but it was a bizarre true energy that dispersed his original true energy.

He thought he should avoid direct clashes as much as possible.

Meanwhile, Guyang Sa-oh said to him,

“Lee Gwang. Stop for a moment. That person is definitely a True Grandmaster of the Six Heavens.”

“Six Heavens?”

Lee Gwang frowned.

Indeed, if one could simultaneously confront them for a moment while wielding the Energy Sword Force, it was impossible unless they were a True Grandmaster-level master who had been given the title of the Six Heavens.

At this, Lee Gwang also clasped his hands together in a salute towards Mok Gyeong-un and said,

“Are you really a senior of the Six Heavens?”

If he was truly one of the Six Heavens, even if they fought with the determination to perish together, their chances of victory were slim.

Therefore, their attitude couldn't help but become cautious.

And if he was really one of the Six Heavens, the organization would also want to recruit him, so it was better to persuade him rather than fight.

-Stab stab!

“Ugh!”

“Dodge! Dodge it!”

However, the two Energy Sword Forces did not stop and continued to kill the masked individuals.

Even Mok Gyeong-un's subordinates, Seop Chun, Mong Mu-yak, the masked Ma Ra-hyeon, and the expelled monk Ja Geum-jeong, were guarding the inn where the Holy Fire Priestess was and killing the masked individuals, so their numbers were rapidly decreasing.

At this, the middle-aged man with the scar, Lee Gwang, hurriedly shouted,

“Senior, please stop for a moment. We will also stop attacking. So.....”

“Why me?”

“We’re saying let’s talk for a moment.”

At his words, Mok Gyeong-un chuckled.

Then,

-Swish!

With a light gesture of his Sword Finger Skill, the black sword that had fallen to the ground rose and flew towards Lee Gwang’s heart.

‘Oh no!’

Lee Gwang hurriedly used his footwork to dodge the sword and caught the flying sword hilt.

-Smack! Clench!

‘Huh?’

-Swoosh!

The true energy infused in the Sword Control Technique was so strong that even though he caught the sword hilt, he was dragged nearly five steps by the sword.

Lee Gwang, who had barely grabbed the sword, calmly said to Mok Gyeong-un,

“We understand that you are angry because of what we did. However, this is a misunderstanding. If you hear our proposal.....”

“First, tell me whether you are Ghost Blade or not.”

“.....”

At Mok Gyeong-un's question, Lee Gwang's expression darkened.

The individual before him had been speculating since earlier that he was Ghost Blade, but was it because of the rumor that had spread throughout the martial arts world?

‘How much does he know about the organization?’

Their organization had existed for a long time, but it was thoroughly organized into cells, and when there were people who knew of their existence, they had responded in two ways.

One was to recruit them into their organization, and the other was to silence them through murder.

The dead cannot speak, after all.

-Stab stab!

“Lee Gwang!”

Guyang Sa-oh shouted at him.

It was because if they didn't hurry, all the masked individuals would end up dead.

At this, Lee Gwang hurriedly said,

“I don't know what you know, senior, but I am not Ghost Blade.”

"A Ghost Blade..... You're not?"

"That's right. If there is some misunderstanding, please stop for a moment. During the time I explain, the meaningless slaughter....."

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un moved his Sword Finger Skill.

Then, one of the two swords that were indiscriminately attacking the masked individuals while unleashing the Energy Sword Force flew over.

It was none other than the Evil Commandment Sword.

As the flying Evil Commandment Sword approached, Lee Gwang hurriedly raised his black sword infused with Sword Force to block it.

-Clang clang clang!

In an instant, the swords clashed about five times.

Lee Gwang's expression as he blocked the sword became strange.

The sword was obscured by a ferocious black energy, making it difficult to see clearly, but this sword seemed familiar.

'I feel like I've seen this sword somewhere.'

Meanwhile,

-Clang!

As Lee Gwang deflected the sword, the sword that was confronting him was sucked into Mok Gyeong-un's hand.

-Click!

As the sword was sucked in, the black light of the Sword Force disappeared.

With the disappearance of the Sword Force, the sword blade was clearly revealed.

Seeing this, Lee Gwang's eyes narrowed.

'!?'

That's because the moment he saw the unique pattern engraved on the sword blade, he realized the identity of that sword.

"Evil..... Commandement?"

It was definitely one of the Demonic Night Swords, the Evil Commandment Sword.

He couldn't fail to recognize it as he had seen it in the training hall of the Heaven and Earth Society's headquarters.

The owner of that sword was definitely,

'He should be dead?'

Something is strange.

He heard that the owner of that sword had lost his life during the selection process for the Embroidered Uniform Guards.

This was information that had come through the organization's intelligence network in the imperial palace, so there couldn't be any errors.

Moreover, that bastard was estimated to be at the pinnacle-stage of the Transcendent Realm.

No matter how outstanding one's natural talent was, there was a limit to the development of martial prowess.

At this, Lee Gwang reached a different conclusion.

'Could it be..... Is this person the Northern Sect Blade King?'

The Six Heavens Northern Sect Blade King Gu Seong-baek.

Come to think of it, he had obtained one piece of incomprehensible information.

In the process of abducting the Holy Fire Priestess from the underground prison in the imperial palace, the situation had escalated, and even the Northern Sect Blade King Gu Seong-baek had intervened.

However, apart from them escaping in an unexpected way, it was said that the Northern Sect Blade King Gu Seong-baek suddenly stopped blocking them and returned to the Emperor.

Upon hearing this, Lee Gwang had found it puzzling.

For a True Grandmaster-level master like the Northern Sect Blade King Gu Seong-baek, no matter how outstanding they were, there shouldn't have been much difficulty in capturing the late-stage warriors of the Heaven and Earth Society.

But why did he suddenly give up and return?

The answer to that seemed to have come out now.

‘The Northern Sect Blade King Gu Seong-baek is a Southern Pacification Commissioner of the Embroidered Uniform Guards. If a cadet died during the selection process for the Embroidered Uniform Guards, there is a high probability that he obtained that demonic sword through the reporting channel.’

Then, is this a trap set by the Embroidered Uniform Guards of the imperial palace?

Even if they had planted members of the organization, the capabilities of the imperial palace should not be taken lightly.

It was said that two executives at the Second Realm level had lost their lives, and they were investigating who was responsible for it, but was it all the work of the Embroidered Uniform Guards?

-Clench!

Lee Gwang tightly grasped the sword hilt, stared at Mok Gyeong-un, and spoke in a confident voice,

“Are you senior Northern Sect Blade King Gu Seong-baek?”

“Why do you think so?”

“The owner of that sword died in the medicine hall due to an unfortunate incident during the selection process for the Embroidered Uniform Guards.”

“Oh. I thought I had killed them all, but it seems there were remaining organization members in the imperial palace.”

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Lee Gwang let out a light sigh.

It seemed his prediction was correct.

When he heard that executives at the Second Realm level had suddenly lost their lives, he thought it was strange because there were only a few in the imperial palace who could kill them.

"It was indeed the Embroidered Uniform Guards."

At his words, Mok Gyeong-un chuckled.

'!?'

What's with that reaction?

It was a reaction closer to a sneer.

His reasoning shouldn't be wrong, so why was he showing such a reaction?

As he was puzzled, Mok Gyeong-un said to him,

"It's disappointing. Even your side doesn't know everything."

-Step step!

With those words, Mok Gyeong-un walked towards him.

At this, Lee Gwang shouted,

“Thirty-two Strategies!”

-Tap tap tap!

As soon as that shout ended, the surrounding masked individuals suddenly stabbed their own bodies.

Then, their energy began to surge rapidly.

Lee Gwang exchanged glances with Guyang Sa-oh.

‘We have to go.’

The Thirty-two Strategies was a method where organization members below the Third Realm would overload their original true energy and launch a joint attack to perish together.

If that person was the Northern Sect Blade King, he was not someone they could persuade, so they had to buy time like this and escape.

But it was at that very moment.

-Boom!

Mok Gyeong-un stomped his foot strongly on the ground.

At that moment, the ground shook, and the raindrops scattered in all directions, creating wave-like ripples that spread over ten zhang.

Then, the masked individuals who were overloading their original true energy trembled and collapsed.

-Splash! Splash! Splash!

‘What?’

‘What is this?’

They couldn’t hide their perplexity at the sudden strange phenomenon.

They had planned to sacrifice them and escape, but what the hell was going on?

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un’s figure suddenly disappeared.

It seemed like he was moving at an extremely high speed, but it was so fast that they lost track of his footsteps for a moment.

Lee Gwang heightened his energy sensation and rapidly moved his eyes.

It was at that very moment.

-Swish!

A blurry shadow appeared in front of him and aimed at his forehead.

He tried to block it by tilting his head back, but,

-Swish!

It was a feint.

The real attack was,

-Bang!

“Ugh!”

A palm strike that flew towards his abdomen.

Lee Gwang’s body was sent flying backward, rolling several times on the muddy ground filled with rainwater.

“Ugh!”

Lee Gwang, who had rolled for a while before stopping, hurriedly tried to regain his posture and get up.

However,

“Bleh!”

He couldn’t hold back the urge to vomit due to the energy that had penetrated his internal organs and was scattering.

Lee Gwang, who had vomited everything inside, staggered and finally managed to lift his head, searching for Mok Gyeong-un’s footsteps.

But right in front of him, Mok Gyeong-un was standing with his hands behind his back.

Seeing his arrogant stance looking down on him, Lee Gwang gritted his teeth and spoke,

“Haa..... Haa..... Northern Sect Bla.....”

“I recognized you at a glance, but you couldn’t recognize me at all.”

‘!?’

At that moment, Lee Gwang’s eyes wavered.

Regardless, Mok Gyeong-un continued speaking,

“I even repaid the debt from back then with the same Three Stars inner strength.”

As soon as those words ended, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his chin and took off the human skin mask he was wearing.

-Rip!

‘!!!!!!!!!!’

As the human skin mask was removed, revealing his real face, Lee Gwang’s slightly wavering eyes widened as if they would pop out.

To him, Mok Gyeong-un smiled eerily and said,

“It’s been a long time, hasn’t it?”

Chapter 313 – Reunion (6)

The memory of that moment vividly resurfaced.

An order came down to deal with someone digging into the organization's traces.

They said he might be a troublesome expert, having earned the notorious name "Sickle-slaying Demon" for cruelly killing people with a sickle.

So I made full preparations, but when I actually met him, it was beyond my expectations.

[I wondered who was snooping around, but to think it was a teenage brat who hasn't even been weaned.]

He was young.

Not even of age.

Moreover, contrary to the order from the organization,

[You bastard... You haven't even learned martial arts.]

[M-martial arts?]

[You don't even know what martial arts are? Ha!]

The brat hadn't even learned martial arts.

It was truly fascinating.

Assuming he had learned martial arts, I struck his abdomen with the power of three stars.

This level of attack could make even a supreme expert suffer internal injuries and possibly die, yet this brat without any internal energy endured this pain.

[Interesting. A brat who hasn't even learned martial arts is still alive after taking a strike from me...]

[Kuk, what the hell are you...]

-Stab!

[Ugh!]

So I stabbed a sword into his belly.

Even if one hasn't learned martial arts, there are those born with innate divine strength.

This brat might have been that type of person.

In that case, there was no need to keep him alive.

[Killing you now would save me from future troubles.]

-Skewer! Stab!

[Kuh!]

Not satisfied with stabbing his abdomen, to make sure, I pulled out the sword and stabbed it into his left chest as well.

[You should've just lived quietly. Why did you have to act up and hasten your doom?]

[Haa... haak...]

I tossed the bastard aside like that.

There were many eyes watching, and I figured this was enough for him to lose his life, so I left.

But how could something like this happen?

The moment he took off his human skin mask and smiled, the memory of when I first saw the bastard resurfaced.

The sight of him grotesquely laughing while killing people in front of the burning village overlapped.

'...Sickle-slaying Demon!'

Lee Gwang's pupils trembled violently.

It was unbelievable, but I had the thought that the bastard might be alive by heavenly luck ever since seeing him at the Heaven and Earth Society.

It was because the face was identical.

As I tracked his traces, the conviction that the bastard might be alive grew stronger.

Among those who had contact with the bastard, no one suspected him based on appearance.

But they all said something about him seemed different.

Especially those who had contact with the Wooden Eyes Swordsman.

However, since the bastard lost his life at the Forbidden Guards selection tournament, I thought it was no longer an issue to worry about.

No, until just moments ago, I absolutely couldn't connect him to that bastard.

'...This doesn't make sense.'

This was something that couldn't happen according to common sense. No, it was completely impossible.

The bastard hadn't learned martial arts at all.

Unlike others, I directly confirmed this myself.

But what is going on?

'It hasn't even been half a year.'

It was astounding.

If he had reached the level of a third-rate or second-rate martial artist, I would have said he had talent despite starting late.

This wasn't an issue that could be dismissed with mere talent.

-Tremble tremble tremble!

The trembling of his hands intensified.

I prided myself on being a senior member in the organization and had faced quite a few monsters.

But this existence before my eyes was lacking even to be called a monster.

Is it possible to reach the sixth heaven, known as the peak of the martial world, from nothing in less than half a year?

Anyone who heard this would find it absurd.

‘This is a dream.’

For a moment, Lee Gwang wondered if he was dreaming.

Then Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“We finally meet, but the reaction is different from what I expected.”

“What?”

“Are you not happy to see me?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Gwang was momentarily at a loss.

With such an incomprehensible pace of advancement, he was on the verge of doubting if this bastard was really that bastard. How could he be happy to see him?

Putting everything else aside, he was the very person who stabbed a sword into the bastard’s heart.

In a situation where it was obvious the bastard would see him as an enemy, welcoming him was nonsensical.

At that moment,

“How can this be...”

Guyang Sa-oh, the Eight Poison Sect Leader and patriarch of the Guyang Clan, also couldn’t hide his astonishment.

He naturally assumed it would be the Six Heavens’ top figure, but when the human skin mask was removed, a face even younger than now—no, not even of age—was revealed.

No matter how he looked, he appeared to be only 17 or 18 years old. What was going on?

Could it be that this extraordinary person had undergone rebirth or returned to a youthful state?

The puzzled Guyang Sa-oh soon asked,

“Who are you?”

“Who knows? Who could I be? This person seems to know me best.”

Mok Gyeong-un smiled and looked at Lee Gwang.

Then Lee Gwang spoke with a trembling voice,

“You bastard... What the hell are you? This is something that absolutely cannot happen. Don’t tell me you deliberately pretended to be dead back then?”

Unable to comprehend Mok Gyeong-un's tremendous pace of advancement, Lee Gwang shifted his thoughts to the idea that he had been practicing martial arts from the beginning.

Otherwise, it was hard to accept this.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un shrugged.

"How could that be? I really almost died back then. Thanks to you."

-Swish!

With that, he slightly raised his hand.

Then the black sword that Lee Gwang had dropped, looking as if it had been charred, floated up and flew towards his abdomen.

-Slash!

Lee Gwang tried to take a step back from the rushing sword.

But his feet wouldn't move.

No matter how unusual the sword was, at this speed, it wasn't impossible to dodge it.

However, he was so shocked that his body wouldn't move.

As his belly was about to be pierced,

-Whoosh!

At that moment, a powerful energy infused with green poison flew in and blocked the black sword.

The one who unleashed the poison was, of course, Guyang Sa-oh.

“Since I owe you, I was going to give you at least one hole in your belly, but you’re interfering.”

Mok Gyeong-un clicked his tongue and smacked his lips.

At this, Guyang Sa-oh hurriedly shouted,

“Come to your senses! Are you going to keep being like this?”

No matter how strong the opponent was, what difference was there between being in a daze and baring one’s neck waiting for death?

At his shout, Lee Gwang snapped out of it.

‘Kuk!’

He had lost his fighting spirit for a moment due to the incomprehensible sense of relative deprivation.

Coming to his senses, Lee Gwang circulated his internal energy and instantly raised his martial power to ten stars.

Since he had reached the transformation realm, having surpassed the wall, the speed of his energy circulation was extremely fast.

-Woooong!

Using sword fingers to create a sword energy, he assumed a sword-pointing stance and shouted,

“Elder. We must attack together!”

“I had the same thought.”

-Swooooosh!

Judging from Lee Gwang’s reaction that persuasion through words was impossible, although his identity was unknown, Guyang Sa-oh also reawakened his eight poisons and steeled his resolve.

The opponent was a peerless master on par with the sixth heaven realm.

Only by attacking together with the determination to fight to the death did they have a sliver of a chance to survive.

They exchanged glances, about to seize the initiative, when Mok Gyeong-un lightly waved his hand.

-Woooong!

Then the surrounding true energy surged, and the air felt different.

Wondering what he had done, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“I’ve blocked the sound within a radius of five jang using qi.”

Block the sound?

Why would he do that?

Waiting for an opportunity to launch a joint attack, they couldn't hide their puzzlement.

To them, Mok Gyeong-un said,

"I'll give you just one chance."

"Chance? What the hell are you talking about?"

"A chance for you two to survive."

"What?"

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Lee Gwang furrowed his brows.

What kind of scheme was this?

This bastard would consider him, who had stabbed a sword into his abdomen and chest, as an enemy.

Moreover, he had revealed his identity as if he had been waiting.

Lee Gwang glanced at the true energy filling the surroundings and the masked individuals fighting outside with Mok Gyeong-un's subordinates.

'...Is this something even his subordinates mustn't hear?'

Otherwise, there would be no reason to block the sound.

Lee Gwang discreetly glanced at Guyang Sa-oh.

Meeting his eyes, Guyang Sa-oh nodded as if to say they should listen for now.

No matter how skilled they were in the transformation realm and poison arts, their chances of winning against an expert of the profound realm were extremely low.

If there was even a slight room for negotiation, there was no reason to refuse.

However, to make it clear, Lee Gwang said,

“I pushed you to the brink of death. And you’re giving me a chance?”

‘!?’

At these words, Guyang Sa-oh looked at Lee Gwang with surprised eyes.

How did Lee Gwang push an expert comparable to the sixth heaven to the brink of death?

It was incomprehensible.

What on earth happened between the two of them?

While he was puzzled, Mok Gyeong-un chuckled and said,

“If I wanted to kill with that, I would have killed you earlier instead of having this conversation.”

“...”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Gwang bit his lip hard.

This bastard had become incomparably stronger than before and was looking down on him.

However, he couldn't strongly deny it.

If Mok Gyeong-un had properly raised his martial power when he struck his abdomen earlier, it might not have ended with just vomiting.

"You seem quite upset."

"..."

"You should have definitely cut off my head back then instead of stabbing my chest."

"..."

Those words truly made him regret.

He was angry at his complacency in thinking the bastard couldn't possibly survive after stabbing his abdomen and heart because he hadn't learned martial arts.

However, Lee Gwang barely suppressed this and said,

"You mentioned giving us a chance. What is it?"

"It's nothing much. Just answer my questions kindly."

"Answer your questions?"

At these words, Lee Gwang and Guyang Sa-oh's expressions darkened.

The chance he mentioned seemed to be extracting information from them.

Come to think of it, the brat not only knew their organization's emblem but also seemed to know information related to their hierarchy.

Handing over information to someone like him meant betrayal.

At this, Guyang Sa-oh spoke with a heavy voice,

"Are you telling us to betray the organization and hand over information?"

"Yes. You understand well. Think of it as betrayal or whatever you want. I just need you to give me the answers I want."

"...With such a demand, did you not consider that we would fight you to the death?"

As soon as those words ended,

-Shudder!

Guyang Sa-oh's expression froze.

Mok Gyeong-un was smiling eerily while looking at him, and the overwhelming pressure of his murderous intent made it difficult to breathe for a moment.

Is this the difference between being separated by a single wall?

As his breathing trembled, Mok Gyeong-un said with a smiling face,

“You seem to be discarding the chance too easily.”

“What?”

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un’s figure disappeared.

Unable to grasp Mok Gyeong-un’s traces with just his senses, Guyang Sa-oh urgently bent his knees and leaped, spinning his poisonous palm strike towards the back with the momentum.

‘Toad Poison Art. Seventh stance, Resisting Tail Clam Palm!’

The momentum was like a leaping poisonous toad, enough to make an ordinary person retreat.

-Smack!

However, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his right arm, into which his powerful poison energy and momentum were poured, as if snatching it.

Then he twisted his wrist in the opposite direction.

-Crack!

The broken bone protruded from the elbow of his twisted arm.

“Aargh!”

A scream burst from Guyang Sa-oh's mouth.

Regardless, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his shoulder.

At the same time, he tried to pull his broken wrist while twisting it further.

"Stop!"

At that moment, a blue sword energy stabbed towards Mok Gyeong-un's face.

It was Lee Gwang's strike.

It was a strong thrust with domineering momentum, but Mok Gyeong-un didn't dodge at all and lightly extended his left palm.

-Woooong! Clang!

'No way?'

Ripples formed, and the stabbing sword energy was deflected by the elastic force.

This was the profound principle of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi.

The moment his sword energy was deflected, Mok Gyeong-un tried to pull Guyang Sa-oh's broken wrist again.

In an instant, Guyang Sa-oh hurriedly struck Mok Gyeong-un's chest with his left poisonous palm.

-Bang!

It was a poisonous palm strike with the power of ten stars, infused with the poison of the Eight Poisons.

His poisonous palm strike hit squarely, but Mok Gyeong-un's upper body slightly leaned back, then he straightened his waist again.

At that sight, Guyang Sa-oh's face turned pale.

Despite being hit by the extremely poisonous Eight Poisons palm strike, he acted as if nothing happened. No matter how profound his realm was, wasn't this too monstrous?

-Crack!

At that moment, as if Mok Gyeong-un was determined to pull out his wrist, he tried to yank it again.

Guyang Sa-oh cried out in shock,

“I-I’ll talk! I’ll say anything, so please stop!”

Chapter 314 – Half-Human, Half-Monster (1)

“I-I’ll talk! I’ll say anything, so please stop!”

Guyang Sa-oh, the patriarch of the Guyang Clan, begged in shock as his arm was on the verge of being ripped off.

Seeing him like this, the scarred middle-aged man, Lee Gwang, urged,

“Elder!”

Guyang Sa-oh's current behavior was no different from yielding to the enemy.

Unlike Guyang Sa-oh, who was brought in by the organization's invitation, Lee Gwang had been a member of the organization for a long time, so this was unacceptable to him.

"We mustn't submit!"

At his shout, Guyang Sa-oh, holding his dislocated shoulder, cried out,

"Would you say the same if it were your arm, not mine?"

To a martial artist, not only the danjeon but also the arms and legs are all precious.

Losing even one of them would disrupt the balance and significantly lower one's martial prowess.

That's why Guyang Sa-oh was trying to avoid his arm getting ripped off, even if it meant using his energy.

'I haven't settled my match with Tang In-hae yet, nor have I reached the realm of the Ten Thousand Poisons Body. I can't afford to lose an arm.'

He had yet to fulfill his ambition of settling the match with Tang In-hae and reaching the end through poison.

With many aspirations, Guyang Sa-oh had a strong attachment to himself, so he had no choice but to cherish himself over the organization.

"I'll tell you everything I know, so please stop."

"If you had been this obedient from the start, you wouldn't have gotten hurt."

“I won’t be arrogant. So...”

Guyang Sa-oh trailed off and looked at Mok Gyeong-un’s hand.

He was pleading pathetically, as if begging him to let go.

‘That old man, Guyang Sa-oh!’

Lee Gwang thought it wouldn’t do.

Given his age and outstanding experience, he thought Guyang Sa-oh wouldn’t yield to the enemy.

But since he wasn’t originally a member of the organization and was invited, Lee Gwang didn’t expect his self-attachment to be this strong.

So Lee Gwang had to make an extreme choice.

‘Explosive Three Swords!’

Lee Gwang used his sword fingers to perform a triangular thrust.

Then, three strands of exploding sword energy extended from his sword fingers and rushed towards Mok Gyeong-un.

-Swoosh swoosh swish!

Two strands of the rushing exploding sword energy aimed at Mok Gyeong-un’s head and heart.

And the trajectory of the remaining strand was aimed at Guyang Sa-oh's head.

'What?'

Guyang Sa-oh's expression contorted as he turned his head towards the rushing sword energy.

Was Lee Gwang really targeting his life to silence him?

Although it was the right choice for Lee Gwang, it was absurd that he aimed for his life without any hesitation.

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un reached out his hand towards the approaching strands of sword energy.

Then, ripples formed in the void.

It was the profound principle of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi, deflecting the opponent's power.

-Clang clang bang!

The exploding sword energy collided with the ripples and bent, deflecting in different directions.

-Crash crash boom!

As a result, only the innocent surrounding buildings were destroyed.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had too easily blocked the exploding sword technique, looked at Lee Gwang and said,

“As expected, it seems I need to put a hole in your belly before having a conversation with you.”

‘Damn it!’

Lee Gwang’s complexion darkened rapidly.

It was indeed impossible to face a supreme master who had reached the sixth heaven realm with pure individual strength.

What the hell was that bastard?

What did he do to become this absurdly strong in less than half a year?

Had such a thing ever happened in the history of the martial world?

It made all the years he had spent cultivating martial arts feel futile.

-Grip!

Lee Gwang bit his lip hard and glanced at his sword lying on the ground.

That black sword, looking as if it had been charred, was given to him by that person.

Suddenly, the memory of when he bowed to that person for the first and last time resurfaced.

A place shrouded in darkness.

Except for where he was prostrating, there wasn't a single point of light, making it impossible to even see faces.

A voice reached his ears.

[The son of the deceased Lee Saek, you say?]

It was a sort of scratchy voice.

But without minding it, he replied,

[Yes, that's correct.]

[Your father, who was merely in the second realm, never bowed to me until the moment of his death.]

[I am aware of that.]

[Then why do you think I called for you?]

[I don't know.]

[Did you swear to inherit your father's mission and devote your life to me?]

[Yes.]

[Loyalty passed down through generations. Even though humans can't live for even a hundred years, I like this aspect of them.]

[Pardon?]

[Enough. It was just a monologue.]

-Stab!

As soon as those words ended, something fell and stuck into the ground in front of Lee Gwang.

It was a black sword that looked as if it had been charred.

It was a sword with a crude shape, lacking even luster, but Lee Gwang was captivated by the strange energy emanating from it.

[What... is this?]

[It's a special gift for you.]

[A special gift?]

[Yes. Very special indeed. What do you think it's made of?]

[...I don't know.]

[You said you learned swordsmanship from your father, but your insight is lower than I thought.]

Slightly provoked by those words, he answered,

[Is it made of black iron?]

[It's not made of black iron, perennial steel, or anything like that. If it were, it would have been easy to refine.]

[Then what is it?]

[Didn't I tell you to guess?]

At those words, the young Lee Gwang hesitated before touching the blade with his hand.

His father greatly valued the resonance with the sword.

That's why he wanted to feel the sword directly and sense what was contained within it.

As Lee Gwang touched the blade,

-Slice!

His hand was cut.

Apart from the charred-looking tip, the blade itself looked crude, but unexpectedly, it was sharp enough to cut without even slicing.

But the moment the blood touched the sword,

-Tremble tremble tremble!

The blade trembled violently as if it were alive.

Along with it, a strange energy was felt through the part in contact with his palm.

It was an immense ferocity.

-Roar!

At that moment, Lee Gwang was startled, removed his palm from the sword, and even fell on his bottom.

‘W-what the hell?’

What was that just now?

It was too vivid to be called an illusion.

He saw something roaring, but it wasn't a ferocious beast like a tiger or a bear.

It was as if,

[A dragon?]

As soon as those words left his mouth, the sound of clapping was heard.

-Clap clap clap!

Along with it, that person's voice was heard.

[Not bad. I didn't have high expectations, but for a young brat like you to resonate with that remnant.]

[What... what is this?]

[Rejoice. You have obtained a black sword made from the scales of a Spiritual Beast close to a Divine Beast.]

[Spiritual beast?]

[Yes. It is the Dragon Demon King. Ah, saying it like this might not resonate with you. Alright. It is made from the scales of a millennium-old Imoogi.]

At those words, Lee Gwang's expression became half-believing, half-doubting.

He had heard from his father that there were those who dealt with demons and spirits in the organization, but he didn't know it would be that person.

But do Imoogis actually exist?

He had seen some demons and spirits, but weren't dragons creatures that only existed in legends and imagination?

Seeing his puzzlement, that person said,

[Cherish it dearly. In your most desperate moment, it will become a great source of strength for you.]

'The most desperate moment...'

Lee Gwang, who had been staring intently at the black sword, reached out his hand towards it.

Then, the sword floated and flew towards him due to his true energy.

-Grab!

Lee Gwang grabbed the hilt of the black sword and looked at Mok Gyeong-un with slightly tense eyes.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un removed his hand from Guyang Sa-oh's twisted wrist and pushed him aside.

"Kuk."

Then, walking towards him, he said,

"Fortunately."

"..."

"I was hoping you wouldn't just submit. No matter how much I offered you a chance to live, I wanted to pay back the debt appropriately."

"Indeed, my judgment back then was correct."

"What was?"

"You are a bastard who must be killed."

In less than half a year, the young brat who hadn't learned martial arts had appeared as a supreme master on par with the great sages.

This bastard was too dangerous.

More so than the sixth heaven, or even the prophecy that person was seeking.

Mok Gyeong-un chuckled and said,

“You should have killed me back then.”

-Swish!

As soon as those words ended, Mok Gyeong-un’s figure blurred and disappeared.

Although Lee Gwang realized that he was moving at an extremely high speed, he didn’t bother trying to locate Mok Gyeong-un.

Instead, he abruptly grasped the hilt of the black sword in reverse and then,

-Stab!

‘!?’

Suddenly, Mok Gyeong-un stopped in front of him.

Then, as if unable to understand, he tilted his head and said,

“What a dull conclusion. Are you trying to silence yourself through suicide?”

“Ugh...”

Lee Gwang let out a painful groan.

He had made an unexpected, impulsive move.

He had stabbed his own black sword into his heart in his chest.

Anyone could see that this was an act of suicide.

“Ah...”

Mok Gyeong-un couldn't hide his disappointment at his extremity.

He had intended to make him talk after making him feel an appropriate amount of pain.

But who would have thought he would choose suicide instead of yielding to force and opening his mouth?

-Grab!

Mok Gyeong-un grabbed the head of Lee Gwang, who was staggering and about to fall backward.

Then he said,

“But I can't let you die peacefully. I need to hear at least these two things from you, no matter what.”

“Ugh...”

“If you tell me just two things, I'll send you off comfortably. The Demon Sword, who is...”

-Shudder!

Suddenly, Mok Gyeong-un furrowed his brows.

That was because Lee Gwang's eyes had turned white, becoming demon eyes.

But the change didn't end there.

-Bulge! Bulge!

Bumpy scales were already appearing on his neck and facial skin.

They resembled the scales of a snake.

'!?'

What was this? This bizarre transformation?

As he was puzzled, Lee Gwang's teeth became sharply pointed, and his energy also changed.

This energy wasn't internal energy.

His true energy was transforming into demonic energy.

'Could it be?'

Mok Gyeong-un glanced at the black sword stabbed into Lee Gwang's chest.

With a hunch, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed the hilt of the sword.

At that moment, a violent evil aura explosively surged up, strongly rejecting Mok Gyeong-un and pushing him away.

-Bang!

Mok Gyeong-un's body, slightly lifted into the air, landed eight steps away.

Pushed back, Mok Gyeong-un looked at Lee Gwang with narrowed eyes.

In the eyes of Mok Gyeong-un, who had opened his ghostly eyes, the demonic energy explosively increasing behind Lee Gwang was taking shape.

Just how high-level was this demonic energy that even its aura was taking form?

-Roar!

Black horns protruding like a deer's, a fiery red dorsal fin.

A giant body with scales extending like a snake.

It was the legendary creature he had only seen in books, an Imoogi.

At that sight, the corners of Mok Gyeong-un's mouth twitched and rose.

"Well, well... You had a hidden trump card."

Chapter 315 – Half-Human, Half-Monster (2)

-Roar!

It wasn't visible only to Mok Gyeong-un's eyes.

The energy was so prominently taking shape that even Cheong-ryeong, who was inside the wooden puppet, could see it.

White demon eyes.

Black horns protruding like a deer's, a fiery red dorsal fin fluttering as if it would burn.

A giant body with scales extending like a snake.

-...Imoogi.

Cheong-ryeong spoke as if it was absurd.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un asked in puzzlement,

-Can you see it?

-I can see it. This is the first time the energy has been so prominently felt despite being inside here.

Cheong-ryeong couldn't hide his astonishment.

-So Imoogis actually exist.

-I have only heard about Imoogis, but this is the first time seeing one. Among spiritual creatures, dragons can be considered the rarest.

-Indeed. But that is...

-It looks more like a remnant obsession rather than the Imoogi itself.

-Yes.

Mok Gyeong-un nodded in agreement.

Although the energy itself was strong enough to take shape, it was a remnant obsession left in the demonic energy.

How strong must one's will have been in life for the obsession to materialize to such an extent?

Anyway, judging from the remnant obsession and the surging demonic energy, Lee Gwang's transformation seemed ominous.

-It doesn't seem like we should just leave him be.

At Cheong-ryeong's opinion, Mok Gyeong-un smacked his lips.

'If I kill him right now, it'll be done.'

The ominous energy spreading out gave a sense of pressure and wariness, but now, while he was transforming, was the perfect timing to deal with him.

If there was nothing, in particular, to ask, he would have immediately beheaded him.

Right at that moment,

'The trembling has stopped.'

Lee Gwang, whose entire body was covered in scales, seemed to have completed the transformation as the trembling disappeared.

The explosively surging demonic energy was also gradually stabilizing.

One peculiar thing was that the black sword stabbed into his abdomen was sticking to him as if it had become one with his body.

Then, someone's voice was heard.

"What in the world is this..."

It was Guyang Sa-oh, the patriarch of the Guyang Clan and the Eight Poison Sect Leader.

He seemed perplexed by the sight of Lee Gwang, who had stabbed a sword into his own abdomen as if committing suicide, transforming into a half-demon form.

Right at that moment,

-Swish!

The transformed Lee Gwang, now half-human and half-monster, raised his head and glared at Guyang Sa-oh with eerie white eyes.

-Shudder!

As his eyes met the white eyes without pupils, Guyang Sa-oh felt a strong sense of threat.

No matter how he looked at it, that was not the Lee Gwang he knew.

At that instant,

-Swish!

‘Huh?’

The half-human, half-monster Lee Gwang disappeared from Guyang Sa-oh’s sight.

Instinctively certain that he was moving at an extremely high speed using lightness skill, Guyang Sa-oh urgently released the Eight Poisons’ toxic energy in all directions.

Poison was like his limbs.

If someone approached and came into contact with the spreading poison, he could immediately grasp their location.

-Swish!

Someone had approached from the right, three steps away.

‘As expected.’

Since his right arm was broken, he naturally guessed that the attacker would target his right side or back.

So Guyang Sa-oh used his left hand to perform one of the absolute techniques of the Toad Poison Art, the Nine Formations Benefitting Formation.

Although the power of the technique was reduced when performed with one hand, befitting his realm as a transformation expert and a poison master, he added swiftness to somehow make up for it.

-Swish swish swish swish!

The trajectory of the Nine Formations Benefitting Formation palm strikes drawn by Guyang Sa-oh rushed towards the vital points on the upper body of the detected presence.

However, that someone,

Lee Gwang, who had become half-human and half-monster, lightly leaned his upper body back and avoided the trajectory of the palm strikes.

'!?'

Guyang Sa-oh couldn't help but be inwardly surprised that he easily dodged the technique by moving only his upper body.

Strictly speaking, he had considered Lee Gwang's martial prowess to be similar to or slightly below his own.

But what was going on?

'Ah ah ah.'

Unlike the bewildered Guyang Sa-oh, Lee Gwang's white eyes were filled with ecstasy.

Guyang Sa-oh's absolute technique, which had surpassed the wall, felt slow to him.

Even without using the Scripture of Light Body, he could avoid it just by moving his upper body slightly, and he could perceive every single trajectory.

-Swish! Slash!

Since the flow of the technique was visible, he naturally knew where to attack.

Lee Gwang, who had leaned his head back, thrust his fist into Guyang Sa-oh's left shoulder with a lightning-fast strike.

-Thud!

“Kuk!”

Guyang Sa-oh's body twisted in an instant as he was hit in the shoulder.

Not missing that moment, Lee Gwang tried to stab his sharpened nails into his chest.

In response, Guyang Sa-oh spewed out green poison from his mouth, even with his body twisted.

“Puu!”

-Splat!

Lee Gwang hurriedly waved his hand and distanced himself from the spewed green poison.

However, due to the close proximity, the poison touched his arm and some parts of his body.

-Sizzle sizzle sizzle!

The parts of his clothing touched by the poison were directly corroded.

Moreover, not only the touched parts but also the poison spread, causing most of his upper garment to melt away in an instant, showing how virulent the poison was.

With such virulent poison, it was expected to penetrate his body, but,

-Sizzle sizzle sizzle!

The poison gave the feeling of the scales on his skin being burned, but they quickly recovered, and instead, the ominous energy surging from within his body pushed it out.

The rising green haze was proof of that.

“Hahaha!”

Lee Gwang burst into mad laughter, unable to hide his joy.

Although he didn't know what it was, this energy different from internal energy and his transformed body made even poison ineffective, causing his confidence to rise sharply.

‘It's the best.’

-Grip!

The ominous energy filling his body was overwhelming his existing internal energy.

No, it was incomparable.

With this power, it felt like he could do anything.

Even if it was the sixth heaven, known as the great sage realm, he felt that he could sufficiently challenge it now.

‘But foolish acts are forbidden.’

Lee Gwang quickly regained his composure.

Although this explosively surging power was tremendous, untrained power was hard to consider completely his own.

Therefore, rather than recklessly charging at Mok Gyeong-un with false bravado just because he gained power, it was better to kill that old man Guyang Sa-oh and bide his time for the future.

-Whoosh!

Lee Gwang, who had made his decision, launched his body to kill Guyang Sa-oh.

If he killed him, he could prevent the information from leaking out.

In an instant, Lee Gwang’s figure reached right in front of Guyang Sa-oh, who was using lightness skill to distance himself.

Lee Gwang tried to slash at Guyang Sa-oh with a strike infused with ominous energy.

‘Die, old...’

Right at that moment,

-Swish!

A blurry shadow blocked the way,

-Smack!

It kicked his arm that was about to strike upward.

Along with it, it spun its body and unleashed consecutive kicks,

-Bam bam!

They flew accurately towards his face.

However, in a split second, Lee Gwang hurriedly raised his left wrist to block them.

-Whoosh!

Even though he blocked them accurately, Lee Gwang's body was pushed back nearly ten steps.

The wrist that blocked the kicks ached and throbbed.

However, it wasn't to the extent that he couldn't endure it.

-Swish!

Lee Gwang lowered his hand and sarcastically raised the corners of his mouth, saying to Mok Gyeong-un,

"It's not as threatening as before."

“What is? That kick just now?”

“Yeah. Strangely, I no longer fear you. It means the power gap isn’t as wide as before.”

“Is that so? You’re adapting to the demonic energy faster than I thought.”

“Demonic energy?”

“I’m referring to that power of yours.”

“...”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Gwang couldn’t hide his puzzlement.

Despite his power increasing sharply, Mok Gyeong-un still remained composed.

He even seemed to know what this power given by that person was.

Who the hell was this bastard?

“Phew.”

Lee Gwang let out a small sigh.

Let’s discard useless worries.

Even if the power has become similar, unlike the bastard, he was still in the adaptation stage.

There was nothing more foolish than being drunk on power and recklessly charging at the bastard, thinking he had gained the qualifications to compete with him.

Right now, there was only one goal.

‘Guyang Sa-oh.’

He just needed to kill that old man.

Even if he couldn’t target the Holy Fire Priestess immediately, that old man could become quite troublesome if he blurted out everything he knew about the organization.

So Lee Gwang wracked his brain.

‘Let’s pretend to target his comrades and the Holy Fire Priestess, and then kill that old man Guyang Sa-oh.’

Unlike when he saw them before, they seemed to have a pretty strong bond.

Then, no matter how cold-hearted the bastard was, if his comrades were in danger, he would have no choice but to take his attention off the old man Guyang Sa-oh, even for a moment, to save them.

‘First...’

-Whoosh!

Lee Gwang extended his sword fingers towards Mok Gyeong-un.

Then, a gray exploding sword energy formed from his hand, made of demonic energy, and rushed towards Guyang Sa-oh with a fierce momentum.

-Swoosh!

"You're being a nuisance."

-Clang!

In response, Mok Gyeong-un quickly blocked it and deflected it using the profound principle of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi.

Of course, even before that, Lee Gwang had twisted his body and launched himself towards Mok Gyeong-un's companions who were fighting against some of the remaining masked individuals.

They were quite skilled, but with his current self, it seemed possible to take care of one or two of them and take a hostage before Mok Gyeong-un could catch up to him.

-Swish swish swish!

In the eyes of Lee Gwang, who was moving at an extremely high speed, the sight of the masked individuals and Mok Gyeong-un's subordinates fighting slowed down significantly.

It was as if the flow of time was different for each of them.

But right at that moment,

-Swish!

A black line appeared in the void in front of him, and something blurrily landed ten steps ahead.

It was none other than,

‘Sickle-slaying Demon?’

The bastard.

Lee Gwang’s eyes trembled.

Thanks to this ominous power, the speed at which he was moving had doubled compared to before.

But how did the bastard get ahead of him?

Moreover, he could see that the bastard’s right hand was holding the Evil Commandment Sword, but in his left hand...

‘!?’

Lee Gwang’s eyes gradually widened.

If his eyes weren’t deceiving him, that was clearly a severed arm.

Due to the intense vibration of the severed arm held in Mok Gyeong-un’s left hand while he was in the flow of high-speed movement, it was difficult to discern whose arm it was.

Right at that moment,

-Slice!

With a feeling of something leaving his body, a burning pain struck his right wrist.

Along with it, as Lee Gwang, who had been running with lightness skill, lost his balance,

-Swoosh!

His body soared into the air due to the airflow formed by the sharp sword energy.

“Ugh!”

-Swish swish swish swish swish swish!

As his soaring body rose into the air, the sharp sword energy shredded his entire body.

He had been convinced that his body had become close to indestructible, with scales appearing and even poison being ineffective.

Yet, he could clearly feel the scales being sliced.

And he could also tell that his entire body was drenched in blood in an instant.

-Thud! Splash!

Eventually, Lee Gwang fell to the ground.

Lying on the ground, Lee Gwang's expression became dazed.

‘This... What in the world...’

Judging from the lack of sensation in his right arm, it seemed that it was indeed his arm.

The searing pain from the sword energy slicing his entire body made his mind hazy.

-Swish swish swish!

-Splash! Splash!

Then, the sound of footsteps crossing the rainwater-soaked ground could be heard.

Lee Gwang struggled to raise his head.

Mok Gyeong-un's appearance, emitting a ferocious black haze from his entire body as if he had become one with the darkness, truly resembled a demon.

Lee Gwang couldn't understand at all.

He was certain that there was no longer a significant difference in martial power after exchanging a couple of moves with him.

But what was this now?

"H-how?"

To the perplexed Lee Gwang, Mok Gyeong-un spoke,

"Why are you surprised? I clearly told you earlier that I had used only 3-star power."

'!?'

3-star power?

Lee Gwang was momentarily dumbfounded.

So did that mean he had only faced him with about 30% of his full power during their earlier exchange?

Chapter 316 – Half-Human, Half-Monster (3)

3-star power.

The power Mok Gyeong-un had used was a mere 30% of his full strength.

Of course, this was when he only used the energy of death. If he were enveloped in demonic energy like now, it could be said to be doubled instead.

Lee Gwang spoke with difficulty, his expression perplexed.

“Y-you... deceived me?”

At that question, the corners of Mok Gyeong-un’s mouth reached his ears.

“You’re very perceptive.”

-Shudder!

Lee Gwang shuddered at the answer that didn’t deny it.

Mok Gyeong-un facing him with only 3-star power wasn’t to conserve his strength or for exploration.

It was simply to pay him back for what had happened in the past.

[You endured my 3-star power.]

He still remembered those words clearly.

Of course, he wanted to continue this petty retribution, but it became difficult after Lee Gwang became one with that black sword filled with the Imoogi's demonic energy.

So, without wasting unnecessary time, he decisively used his full power to subdue him in one fell swoop.

-Splash!

Mok Gyeong-un tossed Lee Gwang's severed arm as if it were a nuisance.

Then, approaching closer, he said,

"It must have been your secret weapon, but it's a pity it didn't work. For you, of course. You must have wanted to surprise me with your rapidly increasing power, right?"

-Gnash!

Was this bastard mocking him now?

Lee Gwang was enraged, but he had nothing to say in the face of such overwhelming power.

What was this bastard's true identity?

The strike that exploded earlier when his power was concentrated into one could be said to have reached the pinnacle of swordsmanship without exaggeration.

Was this really the same bastard who didn't even know the 'M' of martial arts half a year ago?

-Flinch flinch!

He wanted to move his body, but he couldn't.

All the muscles and tendons in his body had been cut, making it impossible to move.

'Strange.'

When he was touched by the virulent poison energy of Guyang Sa-oh, the patriarch of the Guyang Clan and the Eight Poison Sect Leader, he felt his body push it out and recover.

However, that ferocious and dark energy emanating from the bastard was scattering the energy within his body.

Was that why the severed muscles and tendons weren't recovering?

'Is this the end?'

With his right arm severed and all his muscles and tendons cut, leaving him unable to move, there was no difference from a martial artist meeting his death.

Lee Gwang was dazed with a sense of futility.

Mok Gyeong-un approached him and said,

"Are you ready to answer my questions now?"

At that question, Lee Gwang snorted and said,

"You've made me almost a cripple, and you expect something to come out of my mouth? Just kill me."

Now that his life as a martial artist had ended, he had no attachment to life.

And he had his pride.

That old man Guyang Sa-oh might have begged for his life, wanting to live until he became senile, but Lee Gwang was different.

"You seem to have quite a bit of integrity."

"Stop spouting nonsense and kill me. Old man Guyang Sa-oh, you will soon face punishment from that person. Look forward to it."

"..."

At Lee Gwang's warning, which sounded like a curse, Guyang Sa-oh's complexion darkened.

Although he had submitted to that monster-like bastard to avoid the immediate crisis, he couldn't help but fear the aftermath from the organization.

'Should I run away?'

Guyang Sa-oh was inwardly conflicted.

However, after witnessing Mok Gyeong-un's tremendous sword strike earlier, he lacked the confidence to escape.

This bastard was a monster who could kill him at any time if he wanted to.

As Guyang Sa-oh's mind became complicated, Mok Gyeong-un spoke up.

"Let me make a proposal."

"Stop the bullsh*t and kill..."

"Although the regeneration from the demonic energy won't work due to the demonic energy, if you answer my questions, I'll dispel the demonic energy for you."

"What?"

"Right now, your body has become closer to a demon or spirit than human. If the demonic energy is dispelled, it seems like it will recover on its own."

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Lee Gwang's eyes trembled faintly.

His body could recover?

He had thought he was no different from a vegetable, lying there with all his muscles and tendons severed.

To the wavering Lee Gwang, Mok Gyeong-un pointed to the severed arm with his eyes and said,

"The arm might reattach too, you know?"

"My arm can be reattached?"

"It seems possible with your regenerative ability, but if it doesn't work, I can personally attach it for you. I've done it a few times, so it's not that difficult. Of course, the longer the delay, the harder it becomes."

“...”

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Lee Gwang's tongue became parched.

If there was an opportunity to recover his severed arm and severed muscles and tendons, it naturally meant he could make a comeback.

However, accepting this proposal meant submitting to the bastard and betraying the organization.

That old man Guyang Sa-oh didn't realize it.

The extent of the organization's power.

If that person wanted to, the Guyang Clan could be exterminated overnight.

Even if Guyang Sa-oh was an expert comparable to the eight stars, it wouldn't matter.

-Tremble tremble tremble!

Lee Gwang's body trembled.

After countless contemplations in an instant, he finally reached a difficult conclusion.

“Kill me.”

He chose to maintain his integrity.

Even if he could save his life at the moment, it was better to keep his oath of loyalty to the end than to be chased by the organization and meet his death.

To him, Mok Gyeong-un smiled and said,

“It seems that no matter what proposal I make, you won’t answer my questions.”

“Stop spouting nonsense and kill me. If you don’t want to repeat the mistake I made, it’s best to slice this neck cleanly.”

“Yes, of course, I should. But on second thought, it seems I need to be more flexible.”

“No matter what you say, it’s useless. Kill...”

“How about I join your side?”

“...What?”

Lee Gwang’s expression froze for a moment.

What was this bastard talking about now?

“Earlier, I noticed you were trying to persuade me, right? Seeing that, it seems you need some manpower.”

“You... Are you serious?”

What was his ulterior motive?

Lee Gwang showed a disbelieving expression.

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

-Mortal. What are you trying to do?

-What do you mean, what am I trying to do?

-Saying you'll join their side, what nonsense is that?

At her question, Mok Gyeong-un smiled without answering.

Then, he reached out his hand and sucked in Lee Gwang's severed right arm, which he had dropped on the ground, using void absorption.

-Grab!

Holding the severed arm, Mok Gyeong-un approached Lee Gwang.

Unable to move, Lee Gwang could only flinch and show wariness.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un brought Lee Gwang's arm to the severed part.

“Hmm.”

Mok Gyeong-un placed his palm on the severed part.

Then, the residual demonic energy remaining at the severed part was sucked into Mok Gyeong-un's hand.

As soon as that happened, the blood vessels at the severed part wriggled and squirmed.

-Whoosh!

Eventually, the severed surfaces of the arm began to reattach to each other.

Even the eyes of Lee Gwang, the person involved, couldn't help but be filled with amazement at this astonishing sight.

As the arm was being reattached, Mok Gyeong-un placed his palm on Lee Gwang's chest.

-Ssshhh!

Through his palm, the demonic energy that had penetrated Lee Gwang's shredded upper body like poison gradually dissipated and disappeared.

Then, breathing became more comfortable, and the wounds rapidly healed.

At this, Guyang Sa-oh looked at him with an uncomprehending gaze.

'What the hell is he doing?'

From Guyang Sa-oh's perspective, it was very perplexing.

He had submitted, even risking betraying the organization, out of fear of losing his arm and his life.

But if Lee Gwang maintained his integrity, why wasn't Mok Gyeong-un even considering torturing him to extract the information he wanted and instead restoring his body?

'Sigh.'

He was in a proper dilemma.

What was he supposed to do now that he had submitted?

As he was at a loss for what to do,

“There. Now, if we just dispel the demonic energy in your lower body, you’ll be completely recovered.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Lee Gwang looked at him with a suspicious gaze and said,

“...Are you giving me a carrot to deceive me now?”

“No. As I said, I’m exercising some flexibility.”

“Flexibility?”

“Yes. I’ve had conversations with people from your organization several times, but I couldn’t obtain anything proper.”

“...”

“I don’t know if it’s the same for your side, but every single one of them...”

-Tap tap!

Mok Gyeong-un tapped his head with his finger and said,

“Has a seal.”

‘Seal...’

Lee Gwang’s eyes turned cold.

Among the members of the organization, there were those who belonged to the second realm but were unaware of this truth, but Lee Gwang, who had been loyal to that person for two or three generations, knew about the seal.

He himself was probably sealed as well.

If he tried to say something important, his head might explode with a pop.

“So, aside from knowing that there are ranks like the emblem, the first realm, and the second realm, there was no way to find out anything else. But the thing is, I don’t really need such information.”

“...What the hell are you after?”

“It’s nothing much. Actually, if you just provide what I want, I don’t think I need to have a major confrontation with your organization.”

“What you want?”

“Yes. To be honest, I have no interest in who the leader of your organization is or what they’re trying to do.”

“You have no interest?”

“Yes. I don’t care what they do. Even if your organization kills all the people in the Central Plains.”

'!?'

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Lee Gwang's eyes wavered.

If the hypocrites of the righteous faction or others said such a thing, it wouldn't have had much impact.

But this bastard was definitely not a benevolent type of person.

Rather, he was close to being evil itself, enough to be called the Sickle-slaying Demon.

'He might be the talent that person wants.'

An existence that could carry out slaughter without question if an order was given.

Moreover, this bastard's martial prowess had reached the sixth heaven, which could be considered the great sage realm.

If he were an enemy, he would be an existence that must be killed, but as an ally, such a monstrous talent would certainly be a great asset.

-Glance!

Lee Gwang then glanced at Guyang Sa-oh.

Meeting his eyes, Guyang Sa-oh unconsciously swallowed his dry saliva with a tense gaze.

Seeing that, Lee Gwang snorted.

Right.

That cunning old man didn't even compare to the value of this bastard.

No, could they even be compared?

'Right. That person would also prefer this monster-like brat over that old man who betrayed the organization to save his own life.'

Rather, he might be valued even more for bringing such an exceptional talent.

Once his mind was somewhat organized, Lee Gwang spoke in a slightly softened tone.

"Are you certain? That if we give you what you want, you'll join the organization?"

"Yes. I told you, right? The reason I've been tracking your organization until now was for that purpose."

"...I don't know what you want, but if it's an exceptional talent like you, not that traitorous old man, that person would want to bring you in, even if it means giving you a substantial reward."

At Lee Gwang's words, Guyang Sa-oh's expression gradually turned pale.

Even if things got twisted, how could it turn out like this?

Chapter 317 – Half-Human, Half-Monster (4)

"...I don't know what you want, but if it's an exceptional talent like you, not that traitorous old man, that person would want to bring you in, even if it means giving you a substantial reward."

At the scarred middle-aged man Lee Gwang's words, the expression of Guyang Sa-oh, the patriarch of the Guyang Clan, hardened.

This was a situation he had never anticipated.

He had barely submitted, disregarding the organization's aftermath and his reputation, all to save his life at the moment, but that monster-like bastard said he would join the organization.

It was maddening.

If no one else had been present, it might have been different, but since this happened in front of Lee Gwang, a senior member of the second realm, he couldn't take back the words he had uttered.

'What should I do about this?'

If Lee Gwang attacked him together with that bastard, there would be no chance to do anything.

No, in the first place, that monster-like bastard alone could kill him.

Guyang Sa-oh's mind became complicated.

With his arm broken, his primordial energy was also damaged, making it difficult to even run away.

'Damn it!'

It was truly a desperate situation where he didn't know what to do.

Then, his eyes met Lee Gwang's.

That fellow, who still couldn't move his lower body, looked at him with a meaningful gaze and raised the corners of his mouth, then said to Mok Gyeong-un,

“Sickle-slaying Demon. Since you said you’d join the organization, can you do one thing for the organization?”

“You’re already making demands before I even receive what I want.”

“It won’t be a difficult task for you. And if you become one of us, it’s something you must do.”

“What is it?”

“Executing a traitor.”

“Traitor? Ah.”

Lee Gwang stared at Guyang Sa-oh, revealing his murderous intent.

Seeing this, Guyang Sa-oh, who had been racking his brain on what to do, hurriedly shouted at Mok Gyeong-un,

“Hey, you. Even though I submitted to you, I did it while prepared for the organization’s aftermath. But now, if you come after me, isn’t that going too far?”

As soon as he finished speaking, Lee Gwang pressed,

“Going too far? You old fox! How thick-skinned are you to utter such words?”

“Wh-what?”

“You betrayed the organization that invited and treated you well, and you have the audacity to say it proudly. Tsk tsk, this is all your just deserts.”

“Treatment? Ha!”

At his sarcasm, Guyang Sa-oh showed a reaction as if he found it ridiculous.

He wanted to say something but eventually closed his mouth.

Right now, the issue was how that monster would respond.

Then,

“So you’re asking me to kill him? There are already many tasks to do even though I haven’t officially joined yet.”

“Please understand. Strictly speaking, you bear some responsibility for that person betraying the organization, don’t you?”

“I suppose so.”

“I will definitely inform that person of your merit. So right now...”

Before he could even finish his sentence,

-Whoosh!

As if he had no other choice, Guyang Sa-oh kicked the ground and used lightness skill to rush in the opposite direction from where they were.

As Guyang Sa-oh suddenly ran away, Lee Gwang shouted,

“We must catch that traitorous old man!”

At his resounding cry, two of the few remaining masked individuals hurriedly launched themselves in the direction of Guyang Sa-oh.

‘No. These fellows?’

He hadn’t been talking to them, so it was perplexing that they went after him.

No matter how much Guyang Sa-oh had betrayed, he wasn’t someone those lowly fellows could catch even if they chased after him.

‘Could it be?’

For a moment, Lee Gwang clicked his tongue.

Come to think of it, it didn’t seem like they were really chasing after Guyang Sa-oh to catch him.

A considerable number of the masked individuals had lost their lives, and seeing himself lying on the ground covered in blood and Guyang Sa-oh running away, anyone could tell the situation was unfavorable.

They were using the pursuit of Guyang Sa-oh as an excuse to naturally attempt an escape.

So Lee Gwang shouted at Mok Gyeong-un, who was acting leisurely,

“Sickle-slaying Demon. If you let that old man go, the organization’s existence will be exposed. If that happens, you might not be able to obtain what you want.”

“Goodness. You’re troublesome in many ways.”

-Swish!

In the end, Mok Gyeong-un moved.

As his figure dispersed and disappeared, Lee Gwang gritted his teeth.

If only his lower body had been intact, he would have personally chased after that traitorous bastard and sliced off his head.

But he became inwardly anxious.

If that Sickle-slaying Demon bastard caught Guyang Sa-oh, that old man, it would be fortunate, but if he deliberately let him go, that person might punish him with death.

‘That bastard must catch him.’

Otherwise, it would truly become problematic.

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Despite suffering an injury where his arm was twisted and the bone protruded, befitting his status as an expert of the transformation realm who had surpassed the wall, the Eight Poison Sect Leader Guyang Sa-oh was using lightness skill at a tremendous speed, cutting through the thicket.

His speed was much faster than a horse running at full speed.

Guyang Sa-oh ran with all his might, to the point where his surroundings were barely visible.

He had never run so desperately even in his youth, but there was no other way to survive.

‘Anyway, that Lee Gwang fellow can’t even walk right now, so if I can just shake off that monster...’

A sliver of possibility would arise.

While running like this, he used all the hidden weapons and even poisoned the path to hinder the pursuit as much as possible.

‘!?’

But then, Guyang Sa-oh’s expression suddenly hardened.

He had only been paying attention to what was behind him.

But in the direction he was using lightness skill, a figure appeared.

‘Damn it!’

Guyang Sa-oh could instinctively be certain that it was Mok Gyeong-un.

Realizing it was no use, Guyang Sa-oh shot a powerful energy infused with poison energy towards that figure.

-Swoosh!

Then he changed direction and headed east.

It was just a temporary measure, but he had to try everything in this situation.

Still, it was a powerful energy infused with the power of ten stars and the Eight Poisons, so he thought it would at least buy him some time, but,

-Smack!

At that moment, a blurry shadow appeared just five steps ahead of him.

And that shadow quickly solidified,

‘Oh no!’

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

Guyang Sa-oh’s face contorted as he clicked his tongue.

No matter how much he had surpassed the wall, he didn’t know the gap would be this wide.

In the end, no matter what he did, he was no different from being in the palm of Buddha’s hand.

Eventually, Guyang Sa-oh stopped, unable to hide his sense of futility.

Seeing his expression that seemed to have given up, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“Don’t you have any intention to resist further?”

“What resistance can I put up? Are you toying with me?”

“Of course not.”

Mok Gyeong-un shrugged his shoulders.

Then Guyang Sa-oh made a disgusted expression and spoke in a choking voice,

“Look here. I still have many attachments to life, so I surrendered while being prepared for the organization’s aftermath. But this is really too much. Do you have to kill me to feel satisfied?”

“It’s unfortunate that you have attachments to life. I had no intention of killing you.”

“...”

Right. It was Lee Gwang’s request.

So Guyang Sa-oh spoke in a pleading voice,

“Then please, can’t you let me go? No matter how much that Lee Gwang fellow made the request for the sake of the organization, isn’t a man’s word as heavy as a thousand gold? How can you speak with a forked tongue?”

“Well, depending on the situation, I might do that.”

“If you’re a gentleman, you should...”

“I’m not a gentleman, and I’ve never considered my words to be like gold.”

“...”

When even his desperate plea didn’t work, Guyang Sa-oh was at a loss for words due to frustration and futility.

It seemed like no words would get through to this bastard.

At the very least, if he had a sense of righteousness, he should have released him or shown a bit of mercy, but that seemed difficult to expect.

‘Is this the end?’

He had even thrown away his pride and begged for his life, but he didn’t expect it to turn out like this.

Even if he couldn’t see the end through poison, there was just one thing he wanted to accomplish somehow.

But it seemed impossible in this life.

So, Guyang Sa-oh, having given up, plopped down on the ground, closed his eyes, and muttered,

“Ah, in the end, I can’t settle the match.”

“Match? What match?”

“What’s the point of telling you when you won’t spare my life even if I do?”

Guyang Sa-oh didn’t want to become any more pitiful.

He had already thrown away his pride as much as he could, and there was no need to try to look good in front of someone who wouldn’t spare his life anyway.

To him, Mok Gyeong-un chuckled and said,

“Who knows? I don’t have the discerning eye, so who can say if my heart will be moved?”

“...You’re already trying to break the agreement you made once, so how can I trust you?”

“If you put it that way, you betraying the organization’s trust to save your life is no different, so how can I trust you?”

“That’s...”

At this, Guyang Sa-oh tried to say something but eventually closed his mouth.

Even if he had his own reasons, it was meaningless if the other person couldn’t accept them.

“No, you’re right. Even if my life was hanging by a thread, I easily submitted and said I would reveal information, so I’m the one who can’t be trusted.”

“Then it’s fortunate.”

“...”

This bastard’s words are subtly biting.

It was inwardly unpleasant, but since it couldn’t be resolved by force, he endured it. Then Mok Gyeong-un said,

“But I am curious. If you could easily betray them to the point of disregarding the aftermath just to save your life, why did you follow that organization?”

“What are you trying to do by hearing that?”

To that question, Mok Gyeong-un smiled and replied,

“To decide whether to kill you or not.”

“To decide whether to kill me or not? Aren’t you taking my life too lightly, even if you’re capable?”

Guyang Sa-oh frowned and showed his defiance.

Then Mok Gyeong-un folded his arms and said with an indifferent gaze,

“Do you think I’m merely discussing the weight of a life? It’s better to keep in mind who holds the authority over life and death.”

-Shudder!

It was truly strange.

He didn’t particularly reveal his energy.

Yet there was a sharp sensation around his neck.

Startled by this, Guyang Sa-oh unconsciously swallowed his dry saliva.

Even though this fellow was clearly younger than half, no, one-third of his life, how did he possess this level of weight and pressure?

As he was puzzled, Guyang Sa-oh soon seemed to understand the reason.

‘...The caliber of a leader?’

This bastard was born with the caliber of a ruler.

Regardless of age, those with the caliber of a ruler embrace others as a leader or a dominant figure and guide everyone on the path they have created.

Guyang Sa-oh inwardly exclaimed in admiration.

It seemed that his intimidation by this fellow wasn't simply because of power.

As he was inwardly marveling, Mok Gyeong-un said,

"Does your silence mean you're choosing death?"

At those words, Guyang Sa-oh hesitated for a moment before opening his mouth.

"It might sound like an excuse if I say this now, but it was to repay a debt."

"Debt?"

"That's right."

"What kind of debt?"

"My granddaughter was afflicted with an almost incurable disease. Thanks to a medicinal herb called Creeping Rockfoil that they helped me obtain, she was barely able to prolong her life."

"Creeping Rockfoil? Isn't that a rare herb that grows in extremely cold, snowy regions?"

‘This fellow?’

Guyang Sa-oh couldn’t hide his surprise at Mok Gyeong-un’s knowledge of medicinal materials.

Creeping Rockfoil was a special medicinal ingredient that not only the medicinal merchants and physicians in the Central Plains but also those in the Western Regions, where the Guyang Clan’s estate was located, hardly knew about.

Even he had barely found out about it while trying to treat his granddaughter’s illness.

But to think this fellow knew about Creeping Rockfoil, his knowledge of medicinal materials was no ordinary.

Just who was this bastard?

Then, Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin and said,

“Anyway, you’re saying that you worked with them in exchange for your granddaughter’s life because of the hard-to-obtain Creeping Rockfoil.”

“...That’s right. I had no choice. Creeping Rockfoil was a medicinal herb that was difficult to grow naturally in both the Western Regions and the Central Plains, and even I had been searching for it for a long time but couldn’t find it, so I desperately needed their help.”

“It’s the life of your flesh and blood, so of course, you would. But then, all the more reason you shouldn’t have betrayed them, right?”

“Yes, you’re right about that. But I have sufficiently repaid my debt to them. I worked for them for nearly ten years and was dragged around too much with Creeping Rockfoil as a hostage.”

At those words, Mok Gyeong-un asked with a puzzled look,

“Wasn’t Creeping Rockfoil used only once?”

“It wasn’t just once, but she had to take it regularly and consistently. I don’t know where they obtained Creeping Rockfoil from, but they always supplied a certain amount, and that’s why I had no choice but to help them, even if it was to pay the price.”

There was a subtle sense of disillusionment in Guyang Sa-oh’s voice as he spoke.

His granddaughter’s life was practically held hostage, so he had no choice but to work with the organization, but most of the things they did were not to his liking.

Moreover, when countless civilians, not just martial artists, lost their lives due to the poison he created, his desire to cut ties with them grew even stronger.

Seeing him like this, Mok Gyeong-un said with twitching lips,

“In the end, you chose your own life over your granddaughter’s.”

At those words, Guyang Sa-oh raised his voice, flaring up,

“What do you take me for? Even if I was dragged around by them, I take pride in being one of the top three in terms of medicinal knowledge in both the Central Plains and the Western Regions.”

“Oh, could it be that you found a solution to replace Creeping Rockfoil?”

“...You’re really quick-witted.”

Guyang Sa-oh clicked his tongue and nodded.

“You’re right. For ten years, I analyzed the remaining Creeping Rockfoil and created a medicinal material that could replace it.”

“You were gradually preparing to cut ties with them.”

“That’s right. In fact, although it got twisted because of you, I was going to settle things with that bastard Tang In-hae after this job and retire with my family.”

“...The settlement you’re referring to is with the Thousand Poisons Hand, Tang In-hae.”

“I’ve been competing with that fellow for a long time but could never settle it. That has always remained a lingering attachment.”

The Eight Poison Sect Leader Guyang Sa-oh and the Thousand Poisons Hand Tang In-hae were widely recognized as rivals by anyone in the Central Plains.

And they, too, had always been conscious of each other and competed.

Seeing Guyang Sa-oh’s pure lingering attachment, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes turned strange.

-Why don’t you agree with it?

Cheong-ryeong asked Mok Gyeong-un.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un shrugged and replied,

-Who knows.

-You may not understand, but having a rival to compete with for a lifetime is something to envy.

-Is that so?

-Of course. Even I have someone like that... No. What are you going to do? Sparing his life or not is up to you, mortal, but you need to consider the impact it will have later.

-I should.

Then Guyang Sa-oh, looking refreshed as if getting the secret off his chest had relieved him, opened his mouth.

“So what will you do with me?”

To his question, Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin and replied,

“Hmm. It’s definitely a waste to just kill you.”

At those words, Guyang Sa-oh’s face brightened.

“Then will you let me go as agreed?”

“That’s not difficult, but if I let you go, it will be hard for you to have the settlement you want while running away, and your family will also be in danger. Are you okay with that?”

At this question, Guyang Sa-oh’s expression suddenly hardened.

Certainly, he could save his life for now, but the organization would try to eliminate him somehow, and they would target his family members who hadn’t escaped yet to find him.

If things had proceeded according to the original plan, he could have quietly disappeared, but now it was thoroughly entangled.

What should he do about this?

Faced with the complicated situation, Guyang Sa-oh sighed with frustration.

“Sigh...”

To him, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“But there’s not necessarily no way out.”

“Are you saying there’s a way?”

“Yes. Because if you just die, it will be resolved.”

“What?”

Guyang Sa-oh was dumbfounded by Mok Gyeong-un’s answer.

He talked as if there was some solution, but in the end, he was saying that it would be resolved if he died. What the hell did that mean?

To the perplexed Guyang Sa-oh, Mok Gyeong-un said with a sarcastic smile,

“It’s quite painful, but you can endure the pain of having your skin peeled off, right?”

‘!?’

-Swoosh!

The rain had weakened a bit, but it was still pouring down.

Lee Gwang, a member of the second realm, looked in the direction where Guyang Sa-oh, the patriarch of the Guyang Clan, had fled with a somewhat impatient expression.

No matter how much he thought about it, he couldn't understand.

That old man was almost like having his granddaughter held hostage, making it difficult for him to betray the organization.

Of course, he could submit since it was a matter of his own life, but the Guyang Sa-oh he had observed wasn't such a small-minded person.

Why did he struggle so desperately to live?

He even ran away.

Just as he was thinking that, someone emerged from the bushes.

-Splash! Splash!

Walking through the pooled rainwater was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

As Mok Gyeong-un appeared, Lee Gwang's gaze naturally turned to something, which was what he was holding in his right hand.

Seeing it, the corners of Lee Gwang's mouth rose.

'As expected! As expected! As expected!'

The reason for his reaction was simple.

What Mok Gyeong-un was holding in his hand was none other than Guyang Sa-oh's severed head.

The sight of his tongue hanging out and his dead appearance was horrifying beyond words.

'This bastard is really something.'

He had anticipated a situation where Mok Gyeong-un might let him go or release him.

But he had brought the head, cleanly cutting it off.

Having reached the level of a great sage, he had easily caught up and executed the traitor despite taking it easy.

'That's fine.'

With this much, that person would also be satisfied despite losing Guyang Sa-oh.

Because he had gained an even more outstanding talent.

"Is this enough?"

-Thud! Splash!

Mok Gyeong-un threw Guyang Sa-oh's head close to Lee Gwang.

Despite his tongue sticking out, his expressionless face, as if he didn't even know he was dead, made Lee Gwang inwardly gasp in admiration.

He still couldn't understand this pace of advancement, but it was truly remarkable.

Considering that even an expert of the transformation realm was dealt with like this.

"Good work. The leader of the organization, that person, will also praise your merit."

"I don't need praise. I just hope to receive what I want."

"Don't worry. As long as it doesn't interfere with that person's doubts or the organization's work, he will unconditionally grant it, just as you said."

"I would be grateful if he does."

"Of course, it's natural."

"Then I guess this is no longer necessary."

With those words, Mok Gyeong-un walked over and then,

-Squish!

"Wh-what are you..."

Before he could even say anything to stop him, Mok Gyeong-un crushed Guyang Sa-oh's head with his foot.

This sight left Lee Gwang speechless.

Of course, he had directly confirmed it with his own eyes, but he had intended to take the head and have it verified.

But now that it was crushed, that was no longer possible.

Dumbfounded by Mok Gyeong-un's hasty action, Lee Gwang clicked his tongue inwardly.

'Ha!'

If he were just a subordinate, it would have been a matter to reprimand him, but this fellow had monstrous potential, reaching the level of a great sage despite not even being of age.

He would undoubtedly be valued by that person.

They had already started on bad terms, so there was no point in scolding him over this matter and making things awkward between them.

"Is there a problem?"

"...No."

Seeing him give up without saying a word, Mok Gyeong-un's lips twitched.

He had anticipated that Lee Gwang would react this way to some extent.

With this, Guyang Sa-oh became a dead man to them, and there was no way to confirm his corpse or anything else.

The image of Guyang Sa-oh's shocked face flashed in Mok Gyeong-un's mind.

Guyang Sa-oh asked, startled,

[Y-you're going to peel off my face?]

[Yes.]

[Are you serious?]

[Yes. It might be a bit painful, but if you can't sacrifice one face to break ties with them, isn't it a cheap price to pay?]

[No, how the hell are you going to deceive that Lee Gwang fellow with just the face skin? Unless you cut off my head, he absolutely won't believe it.]

[I just so happen to have something useful.]

Saying that, Mok Gyeong-un brought something that was lying far away.

It was the severed head of a dead masked man.

While chasing after Guyang Sa-oh, he had discovered two masked men running away and had beheaded them both in an instant.

[What are you going to do with that?]

[I'm going to put your face on this head.]

'!!!!'

Hearing this, Guyang Sa-oh couldn't hide his astonishment.

[No way. You know how to make human skin masks too?]

[Yes. It's not that difficult. Especially if I peel off the face of a living person, it's even easier.]

At these words, Guyang Sa-oh was at a loss for words, clicking his tongue.

Just how far did this fellow's abilities go?

Although he was terrified at the mention of peeling off his face, in the end, Guyang Sa-oh realized that this was the only way to break free from them, so he accepted Mok Gyeong-un's proposal.

Of course, there was a small price to pay for this proposal as well.

As a result, since Lee Gwang was deceived, the plan could be considered successfully concluded.

Then Lee Gwang cautiously spoke up.

"By the way, since we're practically family now, can you dispel the energy in my lower body?"

Lee Gwang gestured towards his lower body with his eyes.

While Mok Gyeong-un had gone to catch Guyang Sa-oh, he had tried to dispel the energy that kept penetrating his lower body.

However, although he could release some of the energy, he couldn't completely dispel it, so his muscles and tendons still hadn't recovered.

"Is there anything difficult about that? But before that, can you first provide me with information about the person I want?"

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Lee Gwang furrowed his brows.

What was he doing, trying to bargain with his lower body after saying he would join the organization?

A hint of suspicion arose in Lee Gwang, and he said,

"Do you not trust me?"

"Not yet."

Hearing those words, Lee Gwang's eyes narrowed.

He had temporarily put aside his doubts, getting carried away by the thought that such an outstanding fellow joining as a talent would be praised by that person.

But with the current conversation, his suspicions grew a bit more.

If the fellow was pretending to join under false pretenses to obtain information, the worst-case scenario could unfold.

So Lee Gwang cautiously opened his mouth.

"I see. But it's the same for us. What if you kill me after hearing only the information you want?"

“I said I would exercise flexibility.”

“How can I trust those words?”

“I even killed the elder who used poison as he wished for you, yet you’re being quite tiresome. It’s going to become quite troublesome at this rate.”

With those words, Mok Gyeong-un lightly exerted his pressure.

Then Lee Gwang spoke with a somewhat pale face due to the pressure.

“Then prove one more thing.”

“What more do you want me to prove, and how?”

“Have your subordinates send away Holy Fire Priestess first. In return, since I need your help anyway, I’ll stay here with you for five days.”

At his proposal, Mok Gyeong-un snorted inwardly.

This fellow was also using his head more than he thought.

Considering that he was trying to achieve what he wanted while preparing for any contingencies.

Lee Gwang stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un.

If he couldn’t readily accept this proposal, then the fellow’s claim of joining their organization was a blatant lie.

‘How will he respond?’

As he observed the reaction,

“Well, if that proves it, let’s do that.”

Mok Gyeong-un shrugged his shoulders and readily accepted it without any fuss.

This made Lee Gwang inwardly puzzled.

‘...Was it just my misunderstanding?’

Had he been too suspicious?

The fellow kept agreeing to his demands without question.

Moreover,

“Should I send her away right now?”

Mok Gyeong-un dispelled the true energy surrounding him and gestured while shouting,

“Please bring the elder here.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s command, the subordinates guarding the vicinity of the residence were puzzled, but soon Seop Chun brought Holy Fire Priestess closer.

However, something happened here that piqued Mok Gyeong-un’s interest.

Upon discovering Lee Gwang, Holy Fire Priestess's complexion darkened with a stiff face, as if she knew him.

Likewise, Lee Gwang seemed to know her as well,

"Holy Fire Priestess. It's been a long time."

"..."

Holy Fire Priestess averted her gaze and remained silent.

Seeing her reaction, Lee Gwang chuckled and gestured to summon the surviving masked individuals.

As they approached, Lee Gwang said to her,

"Where is the prophecy?"

"..."

At that question, Holy Fire Priestess clenched her mouth even tighter.

Then Lee Gwang shook his head and spoke in a low voice,

"I guess you couldn't find Guardian Jang, no, that old man Mun-no?"

'!?'

As soon as those words ended, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes sharpened.

‘Mun...no?’

That was his grandfather’s name.

Chapter 318 – Half-Human, Half-Monster (5)

“I guess you couldn’t find Guardian Jang, no, that old man Mun-no?”

‘!?’

At Lee Gwang’s words, the complexion of Holy Fire Priestess, who had been keeping her mouth firmly shut, darkened.

Seeing her reaction, Lee Gwang’s eyes sparkled.

‘As expected.’

“Finally, there’s a reaction.”

“...It’s a lie. You’re just trying to test me with some scheme, aren’t you?”

The Holy Fire Priestess opened her mouth without meeting his eyes.

Then Lee Gwang snorted and said,

“A scheme? What would we gain by scheming with such a thing?”

“Even with the power of the holy fire...”

She didn't finish her sentence.

At her words, Lee Gwang let out a hollow laugh and said,

"So it was true. Even with the power of that great holy fire, you couldn't find that old man Mun-no. Or have you really lost the power of prophecy?"

"..."

At those words, the Holy Fire Priestess trembled her cheeks without giving any answer.

Seeing this reaction, Lee Gwang furrowed his brows with an intrigued gaze.

"Don't tell me... that rumor was really true?"

Lee Gwang spoke as if surprised.

Although most of the high-ranking members didn't know, he had been assigned to deal with the Fire Faith Order before, so he knew well where her power originated from.

'Holy Fire.'

It was a sacred orb called the Holy Fire.

She seemed to receive prophecies or revelations through that orb.

Therefore, he knew that if it fell from her hands, she would no longer receive prophecies or revelations.

But this was unexpected news.

[...The orb might not be the problem.]

‘Was that person’s prediction true?’

If that’s the case, this old woman would have no value whatsoever.

Of course, since she was the spiritual pillar of the Fire Faith Order and the leader who guided the believers along with the sect master, she could be used in a different way, but there was absolutely no need for them to make such sacrifices.

“Well, well. You’re quite something. Even though you really lost that power, you kept it hidden until now.”

“Nonsense! The power of the holy fire is not as simple as you think.”

“Don’t beat around the bush. Then prove that you haven’t lost your power. It’s a good thing. You don’t even need to report it to that person. Just tell me. Where is the orb?”

“...”

“You need the orb to find what that old man Mun-no stole, don’t you? Even if it’s not us, the Fire Faith Order will also try to find it.”

“...”

“You’re going to keep your mouth shut until the end? Ha! Fine.”

-Smack!

As soon as he finished speaking, Lee Gwang pushed his palms towards the ground.

Then his body floated up and flew towards Holy Fire Priestess.

Even though the muscles and tendons in his lower body had not yet recovered, he was still a pinnacle-stage expert of the Transformation Realm who had surpassed the wall, and thanks to the demonic energy of the Imoogi, his close-range movement was completely free.

“Gasp!”

The Holy Fire Priestess was startled and tried to dodge him.

His appearance, with his entire skin transformed like a snake’s scales, was closer to a monster than a human, so she couldn’t help but be terrified.

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh smack!

But Lee Gwang, who had hit the ground with his palms a few times, grabbed her in an instant.

-Thud! Splash!

“Aah!”

Lee Gwang straddled Holy Fire Priestess’s back as she fell to the ground, grabbed her neck, and said,

-Grip!

“I’ll make you confess directly before taking you to that person.”

“L-let go.”

"If I were to let you go easily, why would I do this? Now, I'm going to break your fingers one by one. Of course, that's just the beginning. Once I'm done breaking your fingers, I'll pull out your nails one by one. And if you still keep your mouth shut, I'll cut off your fingers one by one."

-Gnash!

At Lee Gwang's threat, the Holy Fire Priestess gritted her teeth.

It was scary and terrifying, but she was someone who had kept her mouth shut until the end despite the torture and threats at the imperial palace.

Even if the torture Lee Gwang was about to inflict was more severe than that, she had no intention of yielding.

'What the hell is going on?'

Seop Chun couldn't understand this situation at all.

He didn't know the identities of these people, so why was his lord suddenly cooperating with them?

The Holy Fire Priestess was an important person the Society Leader had told him to bring.

He couldn't just leave her to get hurt.

So Seop Chun tried to step in.

"Yo-"

-Just leave it be for now.

But he had to stop due to Mok Gyeong-un's telepathic message.

Seop Chun looked at Mok Gyeong-un in puzzlement, turning his head to ask for the reason, but,

-Shudder!

The moment he saw Mok Gyeong-un's face, he couldn't say a word.

He had never seen such a cold expression without a hint of a smile.

Then,

-Crack!

“Aaah!”

Along with the sound of fingers being broken, a scream burst from Holy Fire Priestess's mouth.

“Speak.”

“Ugh...”

“Where is the orb?”

“Ugh...”

The Holy Fire Priestess groaned and then bit her lip hard.

Seeing her reaction, Lee Gwang snorted and then bent her middle finger backward.

-Crack!

The finger was completely bent backward and broken.

Seeing this, Lee Gwang grinned and asked again,

“Where is the orb?”

“...”

-Crack!

“Ugh.”

Another one of her fingers was broken again.

Unlike before, Holy Fire Priestess bit her lip so hard that blood flowed from it, enduring the pain.

Seeing the remarkable endurance of the old woman, Lee Gwang clicked his tongue and said,

“You’re quite something, but do you think you can keep enduring? Fine. Let’s see who wins. This time, I’ll break two fingers at a time...”

Before he could even finish his sentence,

“Gyeong-un! Gyeong-un!”

Holy Fire Priestess, who had been enduring the pain, called out to Mok Gyeong-un.

At her cry, Lee Gwang couldn't hide his puzzlement.

Was she referring to the Sickle-slaying Demon as Mok Gyeong-un?

"Gyeong-un! Help me!"

The Holy Fire Priestess rolled her eyes and asked for help from Mok Gyeong-un, who was just watching her.

He was a disciple of the Shadow Clan Master of the Fire Faith Order, so he was a believer of the Fire Faith Order.

Naturally, he had the duty to protect her, the Holy Fire Priestess.

'!?'

But why wasn't he responding to her call?

It was strange enough already.

She couldn't understand why Mok Gyeong-un, who was supposed to protect her, was just watching as this man threatened and intimidated her.

She thought he might have some plan, but now it seemed that wasn't the case either.

So she shouted,

"Believer Gyeong-un!"

She had kept their relationship hidden for the sake of each other's safety, as the members of the Heaven and Earth Society with Mok Gyeong-un seemed unaware of their identities.

But if he was trying to betray her for some unknown reason, there was no reason to do so.

“Believer Gyeong-un?”

At those words, Lee Gwang, who was straddling Holy Fire Priestess's back and pressing down on her neck, furrowed his brows and turned his head to look at Mok Gyeong-un.

“What the hell is this about? Believer Gyeong-un?”

To that question, Mok Gyeong-un shrugged.

Then he casually said,

“I told a little lie to bring her along obediently when I took her out of the underground prison, so she has been regarding me as a fellow Fire Faith Order member all along.”

“Oho. I see. No wonder this stubborn old woman followed you meekly without being restrained. It seemed strange to me.”

‘What the hell...’

The Holy Fire Priestess was dumbfounded.

If she were to die here or be captured by their organization, the rebuilding of the Fire Faith Order would become even more impossible.

But that bastard Mok Gyeong-un was just watching, saying such things. Was it really a lie?

But how did he know about the existence of the Shadow Clan Master?

Then did he also betray the Shadow Clan Master?

Her mind became confused, and all sorts of thoughts came to her.

Then,

-Grip! Thud! Splash!

Lee Gwang turned her raised face to the side and slammed it into the ground.

Then he whispered in her ear,

“Too bad. Old woman. You must have had some hope, but...”

“Ugh...”

“Just give up now. You’re too old to suffer like this. Don’t you want to live out the rest of your life in peace?”

“...”

“Truly stubborn. According to the prophecy, aren’t you nothing but the root of evil that the Fire Faith Order must eliminate? But why did that old man Mun-no hide it without your knowledge? No matter how much I think about it, I don’t understand.”

-Squish!

Lee Gwang pressed the Holy Fire Priestess's face even harder.

Then she shouted in a pained voice,

"I don't know! I know nothing!"

"Still making excuses until the end. Either you told that old man to hide it, or that old man betrayed you and the Fire Faith Order and hid it. It has to be one of the two, so why are you trying so hard to keep it a secret?"

-Squish!

-Tremble tremble tremble!

As Lee Gwang pressed her face even harder, the Holy Fire Priestess trembled and spoke with difficulty.

"Why...are...you...so...obsessed...with...the prophecy?"

"..."

"Your...leader...is...supposed to be...an omniscient...and omnipotent...being...so why...is he...afraid of...the prophecy..."

-Crack!

"Aaah!"

Before she could even finish her sentence, Lee Gwang broke all her remaining fingers.

Then Lee Gwang spoke with an angry face,

"That person is not someone you can judge recklessly. That person fears nothing."

"Ah...k-kuk...kekekeke."

She suddenly started laughing like a madwoman.

At her sudden, insane laughter, Lee Gwang frowned.

Regardless, she continued to laugh and then opened her mouth.

"Do you...really...think...your leader...is obsessed with it...because he has no fear?"

"What? You wench, really..."

"No matter...how great...your leader is...in the end...he's just...a parasite...in a human body..."

-Bam!

Before she could finish her sentence, Lee Gwang slammed her face into the ground.

He slammed it so hard that the rainwater pooled on the ground gradually turned red with blood.

She seemed to have lost half her mind from the pain, her eyes unfocused.

To her, Lee Gwang whispered in a voice filled with anger,

"If you don't want to follow that old man Mun-no, don't you dare..."

-Swoosh!

‘Wh-what?’

Lee Gwang’s expression soon hardened.

An immense murderous intent was engulfing the surroundings, making him feel like he was about to lose consciousness.

-Thud! Thud!

The masked individuals nearby collapsed to the ground, convulsing.

It was no different for his allies.

“Haa...haa...my Lo-Lord...”

Seop Chun also staggered back, gasping for breath from the unimaginable murderous intent.

Murderous intent is said to be the materialized energy of murderous will.

The murderous will engulfing the surroundings made everyone feel death while alive.

‘That...wasn’t...it...earlier?’

Lee Gwang’s eyes shook like crazy.

If there was a god of death, could they emit such murderous intent?

Right at that moment,

-Roar!

Lee Gwang's body, which had been straddling the Holy Fire Priestess's back, gradually floated into the air.

Lee Gwang tried to resist by raising the demonic energy within his body, but it was meaningless from the start.

His body was slowly being pulled towards the center of the storm of murderous intent.

It was right in front of Mok Gyeong-un.

In Lee Gwang's crazily trembling eyes, Mok Gyeong-un was not the being he had been looking at until just now.

-Shudder!

Covered in black demonic energy and murderous intent, his appearance was the embodiment of fear, dread, and death itself.

Seeing that, Lee Gwang, who was terrified for the first time in his life, stuttered and opened his mouth.

“W-why are you doing this...”

“He was...very...very...close.”

“S-Sickle-slaying Demon, I don’t know why you’re doing this, but...first, calm down. If there’s some misunderstanding...”

“The person who killed Mun-no.”

“What?”

“That’s the person I was looking for.”

‘!!!!!!’

Chapter 319 – Fragments of Truth (1)

-Crumble! Crumble!

The walls of the residence building cracked, and even the roof tiles began to shatter.

Ma Ra-hyeon’s heart, standing on the roof tiles, pounded heavily.

Despite the considerable distance, the waves of murderous intent spreading in all directions made one feel death even while alive.

This was the first time he had seen a mere human’s murderous intent cause such an uproar.

“Amitabha. I thought the owner’s heart was filled with demons, but he wasn’t just filled with them, he was a demon himself.”

The excommunicated monk Ja Geum-jeong, who had his arms crossed under the roof, chanted a Buddhist prayer for the first time in a long while, fiddling with his broken prayer beads.

Maguni.

In Buddhist scriptures, demons themselves are referred to by various terms.

One of them is Maguni, also known as the Demon Army, the Heavenly Demon... and the Demon of the Son of Heaven.

Ja Geum-jeong, who had mastered the Incomparable Great Power, could sense the energy of the great nature.

‘Even the energy of the great nature is in turmoil.’

Everything that existed feared that murderous intent.

Just how enraged must one be to emit this level of murderous intent?

Ja Geum-jeong looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

His appearance, shrouded in the emanating demonic energy, was the embodiment of a demon.

-Roar!

‘W-what the hell is he?’

Lee Gwang, held in the air by Mok Gyeong-un’s true energy, had an expression of fear for the first time in his life.

Even when he first bowed to that person, he had never been this terrified.

He was merely overwhelmed by the pressure, but now his heart was pounding so hard that it was difficult to even meet his eyes.

‘Why... Why is he doing this?’

Despite his fear, Lee Gwang was perplexed.

Why, of all people, was the one he was looking for that old man Mun-no?

As far as he knew, that old man had no blood relatives or anything, so he couldn’t understand.

So Lee Gwang barely suppressed this sense of terror and parted his lips.

And for the first time in his life, he felt fear from this tremendous murderous intent and evil-stained nature.

“There... must be some misunderstanding...”

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un lightly raised his hand.

Then he slightly tilted his hand to the right.

-Crack!

As soon as he did that, Lee Gwang’s right arm was forcibly raised and then torn off to the right.

“Aaaaargh!”

Even though his recently reattached arm was torn off again, the pain was beyond imagination.

Blood gushed out like a fountain, and Lee Gwang gasped roughly.

Thanks to the regenerative ability of the demonic energy, the torn part was quickly healing, but it was still agonizing to have a perfectly fine arm ripped off.

‘D-damn it! It hurts. It hurts so much. Ugh.’

It hurt even more than when it was cut off.

He wanted to die rather than endure this.

As he was suffering, Lee Gwang unconsciously raised his head and made eye contact with Mok Gyeong-un.

Just from meeting his eyes, at that moment,

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

He was engulfed in the illusion of his entire body being shredded by a sword.

And it wasn't just for a moment.

Like a piece of meat tied up in a slaughterhouse, he was unable to move an inch and was continuously and relentlessly slashed, and it felt like there was no end to it.

It felt like it was going on for a whole day, no, even for several days.

-Slash! Slash!

‘What the hell is this?’

Seop Chun, who had stepped back due to the murderous intent, couldn’t hide his astonishment at the bizarre sight.

Lee Gwang was convulsing, and his entire body was being slashed on its own, blood flowing down.

It was so strange that it was eerie, without even feeling any sword energy.

“Haah!”

Then Lee Gwang roughly exhaled and arched his back, and black blood poured out of his mouth.

As he spat out so much black blood that it was like vomiting, Lee Gwang’s eyes shook like crazy.

What was that just now?

It felt like he had been slashed for days, but when he came to his senses, it was only a moment.

He thought it was just an illusion, but his whole body was covered in blood, and even his internal organs seemed to be in a wretched state.

“Ugh...”

It hurt too much.

It was so painful that he even thought he wanted to die.

So Lee Gwang spoke as if pleading,

“S-stop... Please, just stop...”

“It would be troublesome if you’re tired out by just this much. We’re just getting started.”

-Swish!

This time, Mok Gyeong-un slightly tilted his hand to the left.

-Crack!

As soon as he did that, Lee Gwang’s left arm was raised and then pulled to the left, eventually being torn off.

“Aaaaargh!”

The blood vessels in Lee Gwang’s white eyes burst, and his eyes turned red.

He was even shedding bloody tears.

It was more agonizing because his body was recovering due to the demonic energy inside him, making it difficult for him to die easily.

Mok Gyeong-un knew this, so he was inflicting pain on him without using demonic energy or the energy of death.

To him, who was suffering like that, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“Why did you do it?”

“Ugh... Wh-what...”

“I’m asking why you killed Mun-no.”

“I... I...”

-Stab!

“Kuh!”

Mok Gyeong-un’s hand pierced into his hesitating abdomen.

Easily penetrating even the hard scales, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his internal organs with his hand.

“Aaaaargh!”

It was already agonizing to have external wounds, but when he directly inflicted pain on his internal organs, Lee Gwang trembled his body as if he would faint at any moment.

Even his only remaining lower garment was being stained by the fluid and blood oozing out.

‘I... I have to die.’

As if he couldn’t take it anymore, Lee Gwang made an extreme decision.

Although he couldn’t move his body, he could still circulate his internal energy, so he decided to induce death by making it go out of control.

So he tried to raise his energy, but,

-Grip!

“Ugh!”

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un’s hand that had pierced his abdomen was now heading towards his danjeon.

As Mok Gyeong-un’s hand touched his danjeon,

-Sizzle sizzle sizzle!

The gathered internal energy scattered as if corroded by a strange energy.

The scattered energy escaped his control and seeped out of his body through his skin like a haze.

“Uhhh...”

As the energy drained out, the scales on his skin gradually lost their color.

Then the pain he had been feeling so far gradually doubled.

Just moving the hand stuck in his abdomen a little made him want to die from the excruciating pain.

“Aaaaargh, please! Please just kill me.”

“How could I do that?”

“Kill... Kill me...”

Seeing him suffering, Mok Gyeong-un grinned with a smile so eerie that the corners of his mouth reached his ears.

The moment he saw that, Lee Gwang felt like he would go crazy.

This bastard was enjoying this situation.

His pleas for death only continued to amuse this bastard.

Even if he wanted to forcibly endure it, his will to do so had long been broken since the moment he was gripped by fear.

Enduring it was out of the question in this situation.

“Uhhh...”

“You don’t have to answer my questions at all. Just keep suffering like that.”

This was sincere.

Mok Gyeong-un intended to give him pain worse than hell, and he planned to sustain it, not just end it briefly.

He hadn’t been searching for him just to end it with a single instance.

Then Lee Gwang mustered all his remaining strength to say something.

“What... What... kind of relationship... do you have with Mun-no... to do this... to me?”

“Ah. Right. Yeah. You should know that.”

Mok Gyeong-un turned his head and smiled at Seop Chun, saying,

“Seop Chun. Could you go over there for a moment?”

“Ah, yes, I understand.”

-Whoosh!

At Mok Gyeong-un’s command, Seop Chun, who had been watching with a pale complexion, immediately launched his body towards the residence building.

As he left, Mok Gyeong-un turned his head back and said,

“That’s right. You should know the reason why you have to suffer.”

“Uhhh...”

“He’s my grandfather.”

‘!?’

At those words, Lee Gwang’s eyes widened.

He doubted his own ears right now.

Mun-no was his grandfather?

“What... What does that mean?”

“It’s exactly as you heard. Mun-no is my grandfather.”

“That can’t be? Mun-no has no blood relatives... Huh?”

The image of a burning house flashed through Lee Gwang’s mind.

He thought that crazy old man Medicine Immortal Hae Yeong had noticed their approach and burned down the house to erase the traces of his living there and escape.

But that wasn’t the case.

Burning down the house wasn’t to erase the traces of him living there.

It was to hide this bastard.

To conceal the existence that was with him, he burned down the house.

‘Wait... Then how did he know the Demon Sword Technique of the first realm...’

-Smack!

“Aaaaargh!”

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his intestines.

Lee Gwang screamed in pain and suffered.

To him, Mok Gyeong-un said,

“There’s no need to be so surprised that we’re not blood-related. You seem to know something. Is that why you killed my grandfather?”

“Please, just let go of this... Ugh...”

“Does it hurt? Bear with it. You’ll get used to it soon.”

What the hell was this crazy bastard saying about getting used to it while grabbing his internal organs?

Was this bastard truly a demon?

Lee Gwang’s trembling eyes wavered.

‘Evil?’

In Lee Gwang’s trembling eyes, Mok Gyeong-un’s appearance, exuding demonic energy, was the embodiment of a demon.

Seeing that, Lee Gwang was dumbfounded.

The prophecy that old woman Holy Fire Priestess had made.

The original text of that prophecy came to mind.

[Beware, for the incarnation of Ahriman, who will taint the sacred flame with black evil, shall appear in this world.]

That person had said that the prophecy would be about a being that doesn't exist in this world, an otherworldly being.

It was a being different from spiritual creatures or demons and spirits, so it was an evil that had to be eliminated.

In fact, everyone, including himself, naturally believed it to be an otherworldly being.

But it seemed they had misunderstood.

‘…How could this be.’

To think they failed to recognize it even when it was so close to them.

This monstrous talent who hadn't learned martial arts, was too late to learn it at the age of seventeen, and reached the level of a great sage in less than half a year.

This was not something an ordinary human could achieve.

‘Huh?’

Lee Gwang raised his head and stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un.

Guardian Jang of the Fire Faith Order... The existence that old man Mun-no, Medicine Immortal Hae Yeong, had tried to hide with all his might... It was none other than,

“It... It was you.”

“…What are you talking about now?”

“You were the incarnation of Ahriman in the prophecy.”

‘!?’

Chapter 320 – Fragments of Truth (2)

“You were the incarnation of Ahriman in the prophecy.”

‘The incarnation of Ahriman?’

The moment Mok Gyeong-un heard those words from him, he recalled the passage from Persian that the leader of Shadow Clan Master, Hwan Ya-seon, had along with the scripture.

It clearly stated:

“Beware, for the incarnation of Ahriman shall appear in this world... Are you referring to that now?”

“You?”

Lee Gwang’s eyes widened at Mok Gyeong-un’s words.

How does this bastard know about that prophecy?

Only a tiny minority within the organization were aware of it, and as far as he knew, only those at the level of Bishop or above in the Fire Faith Order, including Holy Fire Priestess, were privy to this information.

But this bastard wasn’t from Fire Faith Order.

What the hell is going on?

“Where did you hear that from, you bastard?”

In response to his question, Mok Gyeong-un scoffed and said:

“You seem to be misunderstanding something.”

“What?”

“Only I get to ask the questions here.”

-Swish!

With those words, Mok Gyeong-un clenched his left fist and made a pulling motion.

Instantly, the flesh on Lee Gwang’s left thigh began tearing as if it would be ripped off at any moment.

“Kueeuk.”

-Crunch!

Lee Gwang gritted his teeth, trying to endure it.

However, even after experiencing the agony of having both arms torn off, this pain was still unbearable.

-Rip rip rip!

“Aaaaaaargh!”

A scream bordering on a howl erupted from Lee Gwang’s mouth.

His left leg had finally been ripped off.

All that remained of him was his right leg, torso, and head.

Lee Gwang, whose body was no longer fit for living, groaned in agony, drool mixed with blood dripping down his chin.

Lifting his chin, Mok Gyeong-un said:

“Shall we continue our conversation? Why did you call me the incarnation of Ahriman? I thought that was a prophecy and directive of Fire Faith Order.”

“Kuuuh...”

“Your answer is late. Then, to give you more motivation...”

“...The sacred flame... shall be tainted by black evil... Beware the incarnation of Ahriman who will appear in this world.”

“Taint the sacred flame with black evil?”

Mok Gyeong-un tilted his head in confusion.

The prophecy was different from what he had seen.

No, to be more precise, the passage he had seen only contained the latter part.

Finding this strange, Mok Gyeong-un asked:

“Who did you hear those words from just now?”

At that question, Lee Gwang strained to turn his eyes and looked at someone.

That someone was Holy Fire Priestess, who lay face down on the ground, unconscious and unmoving.

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

As expected, the Holy Fire Priestess was somehow connected to this organization.

Although they were currently on hostile terms, they may have had a friendly relationship in the past.

“Haa... haa...”

Despite his lifeforce surpassing that of a human due to demonic power, Lee Gwang’s condition was not good, likely because a significant portion of the energy in his danjeon had been dispersed and he had suffered severe blood loss.

His complexion had turned a pale purple, and he looked as if he could die at any moment.

Mok Gyeong-un placed his hand near the danjeon on the abdomen he had pierced.

-Sssss!

“Hurkk!”

Lee Gwang's half-closed eyes snapped wide open.

Thanks to the energy flowing in through Mok Gyeong-un's hand, he had regained consciousness.

'What in the world?'

Lee Gwang was baffled.

The energy that had entered through Mok Gyeong-un's hand was not internal energy, but resembled the energy that had flowed from the black sword that had almost become one with him.

This energy was demonic power.

Mok Gyeong-un had injected a tiny portion of the unrefined demonic power he had received from the Golden Nine-Tailed Fox.

'Damn it.'

Lee Gwang inwardly cursed.

If he had been left alone a bit longer, he might have naturally died, but thanks to the bastard injecting energy into him, the bleeding had stopped and he had regained consciousness.

'Even if I want to die, I can't.'

It was truly ironic.

Who would have thought there would come a moment when the desire to die would surpass the will to live?

Seeing him lamenting his return to consciousness, Mok Gyeong-un said:

“It seems you’re in a condition to live now. Then, let’s continue our conversation. What is this incarnation of Ahriman? And why do you think it’s me?”

“…Because if not you, then who else could be the incarnation of Ahriman?”

“An interesting notion.”

“Hah!”

Lee Gwang scoffed incredulously at Mok Gyeong-un’s words.

What he was talking about wasn’t simply a matter of limits or willpower.

Even if one had a different constitution from others or possessed innate martial talent, these were things difficult for a human to achieve.

This bastard completely surpassed human standards.

There was a reason that person referred to him as a being beyond human.

“You... You don’t realize how dangerous you are.”

“Dangerous...”

-Grip!

Mok Gyeong-un tightly clutched Lee Gwang’s chin.

Then, in a low voice, he said:

“None of that matters. What’s important is who you killed.”

“You bastard...”

“I heard that leaving a mark is a warning to the organization, so why did you kill him? It seems Ghost Blade only warned my grandfather and left, so why did you go against that and kill him?”

-Tremble! Tremble!

With each word uttered, the murderous intent squeezing down made Lee Gwang feel as if his heart would burst.

How could mere killing intent exude such overwhelming pressure and even make him feel threatened?

If it were ordinary people and not him, they might have died from the killing intent alone, unable to endure it.

“No answer, I see. I don’t mind if you keep your mouth shut all day. The longer you stay silent, the more time I have to torment you – a day, no, a month, even a year.”

A chilling smile lifted the corners of his mouth as he spoke.

Seeing Mok Gyeong-un’s face, Lee Gwang couldn’t bear it anymore.

This bastard’s malice seemed like he would really do it.

His resolve weakening, Lee Gwang pleaded:

“Please... Please just kill me.”

“You want to die?”

“Please...”

“Begging now? You’re really tugging at my heartstrings.”

“...”

Damn this guy.

Contrary to his words, the murderous intent hadn’t lessened one bit.

While emitting such intense killing intent, he was still trying to torment him further, making Lee Gwang sick of it.

“Do you want to die a little more comfortably? Then tell me everything. Give me a convincing reason why I should kill you quickly.”

‘Aaaah.’

It would have been better if he had a mental restriction implanted in his head like the others.

Even the deputy leaders of the Second Realm mostly had mental restrictions.

But thanks to the merits of his predecessors, he was the only one without such a restriction, so he couldn’t even induce his own death.

As he hesitated, Mok Gyeong-un whispered:

“It seems you can still endure it. Then perhaps it wouldn’t be bad to experience how it feels to have your internal organs sliced one by one.”

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un gently unleashed his aura through the hand embedded in Lee Gwang’s abdomen.

-Sssssht!

“Kurkk.”

As the sharp energy spread to his internal organs, Lee Gwang’s expression contorted in agony.

It was a completely different sensation from having his guts grabbed.

“Kuaaack.”

It felt as if hundreds of shattered blades were slicing and stabbing each and every organ, so painful that he vomited and tears streamed down his face.

“What a nice look. Since you’re enduring well, let’s take it further.”

Mok Gyeong-un tried to intensify his aura.

Lee Gwang’s eyes shook like a madman.

He had tried to stubbornly endure it out of loyalty to that person, but his resolve crumbled.

Lee Gwang hastily cried out:

“It wasn’t really me who killed Mun-no!”

‘!?’

At that outburst, Mok Gyeong-un, who was about to increase the intensity of his aura, paused and looked at Lee Gwang’s face.

Lee Gwang’s eyes, glistening with tears of blood from the pain, showed no wavering.

Mok Gyeong-un made an expression of incomprehension.

“What are you saying now? Clearly, you...”

“I merely contributed to Mun-no’s demise.”

“...Merely contributed?”

In response to Mok Gyeong-un’s question, Lee Gwang began to speak, his eyes lost in reminiscence.

[What? What do you mean by that?]

[Exactly as I said. If the First Realm Ghost Blade returns empty-handed after encountering Medicine Immortal Hae Yeong, you, Lee Gwang, shall discreetly take over the mission.]

[Why is that?]

[Ghost Blade prioritizes his agreement with the Heaven and Earth Society Leader over that person's orders.]

[If that's the case, rather than Ghost Blade...]

[No. Ghost Blade will carry out the mission.]

[Then, the Heaven and Earth Society Leader... No, my apologies.]

Lee Gwang shook his head resolutely.

The Heaven and Earth Society Leader was not someone he could do anything about.

Even that person was merely observing without action.

Rather than indulging in pointless pride, he should simply follow the given orders and protect the Heaven and Earth Society Leader's safety.

‘Smoke?’

Sensing something off about the smoke rising from the middle of the mountain, Lee Gwang hurriedly headed in that direction.

He had been waiting and watching from afar for Ghost Blade to completely withdraw.

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

He spotted Ghost Blade urgently heading somewhere using his internal skills.

It seemed more like he was chasing something rather than fleeing.

‘What’s going on?’

Though puzzled, this was his chance either way.

Had Ghost Blade managed to find out something or capture him?

Or had he acted as they feared?

Upon arriving, Lee Gwang discovered a burning house and an old man barely standing in a vegetable garden not far away, swaying unsteadily.

It was none other than Medicine Immortal Hae Yeong, Mun-no.

‘As feared.’

As expected, Ghost Blade had neither captured nor killed Mun-no.

What was he scheming?

As he pondered this, Lee Gwang furrowed his brow.

‘Hmm?’

Judging by the traces of multiple confrontations around Mun-no, he had assumed Ghost Blade had fought him, but something was odd.

If he had faced off against Ghost Blade, a master of the sword, there should have been sword marks left behind, but there were no such traces—only remnants of palm techniques and poison arts.

Finding this strange, Lee Gwang approached Mun-no, who was barely keeping himself upright.

Mun-no seemed to be in a terrible state, likely due to severe injuries.

[Guardian Jang. No, Mun-no.]

[...Lee Gwang?]

Spotting him, Mun-no couldn't hide his surprise.

It seemed he hadn't anticipated a follow-up team being sent in addition to Ghost Blade.

Lee Gwang drew closer and spoke:

[I thought you had fought Ghost Blade, but looking around, it seems you fought someone else. Is that so?]

There were no sword marks anywhere, no matter how he looked at it.

If not Ghost Blade, then who had Mun-no fought here?

As he puzzled over this, Mun-no uttered incomprehensible words:

[If you don't want to be infected with the Formless Poison, it's best not to come close.]

‘Formless Poison?’