

## Mayhem 331

Chapter 331 – Sichuan’s Upheaval (4)

About 53 years ago.

Tang Yeon-jong, the Thousand Poison Hand and the Tang Clan’s Head from two generations prior, was about to face a showdown.

His opponent was Baek Yoo, an up-and-coming expert in poison techniques from the evil faction, known by the alias “Lord of Ten Thousand Poisons.”

When it came to poison techniques, the Tang Clan was considered the best alongside the Guyang Family, located on the path to the Western Regions.

However, this poison expert Baek Yoo had not only earned the title of one of the top ten experts in the martial arts world within just five years of his debut, but he also challenged the dominance of Elder Tang Yeon-jong in poison techniques.

‘Ah...’

Tang In-hae, the grandson who was only ten years old at the time, couldn’t hide his perplexity at the sight of his nervous Elder Tang Yeon-jong.

Elder had always shown great pride, saying that no one could match the Tang Clan when it came to poison.

But this was the first time he had seen his grandfather so nervous that he was even breaking out in a cold sweat.

They say that an expert recognizes another expert.

Even his father Tang Ho-yeon, the Junior Clan Leader, had a dark expression whenever he saw Baek Yoo.

At the mere age of ten, Tang In-hae couldn't tell how strong the Lord of Ten Thousand Poisons Baek Yoo was, but judging from their reactions, he could tell that he was no ordinary expert.

[...Father. No, Clan Leader. Do you really have to face that person? No matter how I look at it, that person has reached the realm of the Ten Thousand Poison Pool Body.]

‘Ten Thousand Poison Pool Body?’

It was the highest realm said to surpass even the realm of a Poison Man.

As far as he knew, his grandfather had reached the realm of a Poison Man.

Tang In-hae looked at Baek Yoo and his three sons, with Baek Sa-ha being the successor, with an expression of disbelief.

Had that person really reached a realm that even his grandfather and father had not attained?

How could this be possible?

As he was perplexed, his grandfather Tang Yeon-jong opened his mouth.

[If we back down here, the family's reputation will be ruined. Even if he has reached the Ten Thousand Poison Pool Body, we have the Formless Poison.]

[But...]

[That's enough. This showdown can no longer be avoided.]

[Clan Leader...]

[If this father fails to survive the showdown, rise to the position of the Clan Leader. And... You must complete the Formless Poison Technique. That is the only way to match or counter the Ten Thousand Poison Pool Body.]

Grandfather had already prepared himself to lose his life.

The atmosphere on the family's side became gloomy.

At that moment, someone they had never seen before approached where they were.

'What muscles?'

His muscles were so thick that his upper and lower garments looked like they were about to burst.

Not only did he have such incredible muscles, but his face was also extremely handsome.

As he approached, Elder Tang Yeon-jong and his father Tang Ho-yeon seemed to recognize him and greeted him with surprised faces.

[Lord Yoo Moo-jin]

[It's been a while, you two.]

The two men, who always exuded confidence no matter who they met, were strangely cautious towards this man who looked to be only in his mid-thirties.

Then, his father Tang Ho-yeon spoke with a joyful expression, clasping his hands together in respect.

-Pak!

[Lord Moo-jin. Please, for our Clan Leader...]

[Ahem!]

Grandfather Tang Yeon-jong interrupted his father's words midway.

Then, he also showed respect to the man named Yoo Moo-jin and said,

[Lord Moo-jin, you don't need to intervene in this matter. This is a place where the representatives of the families face each other in a fair showdown. It is absolutely not a situation where our family is in danger.]

At his words, Yoo Moo-jin turned his head, glanced at the Lord of Ten Thousand Poisons Baek Yoo, and spoke.

[I heard it's a life-or-death match.]

[That's right.]

[Are you sure you don't need my help?]

[That's right. This is a matter of the Tang Clan's honor.]

[...You will surely lose your life.]

'!!!!'

At those words spoken with certainty, Tang In-hae couldn't contain his anger and raised his voice at him.

[Who are you to say that Grandfather will...]

[Ahem! Who told you to intervene without permission?]

[Grandfather, but...]

[Apologize to Lord Moo-jin at once.]

[Gr- Grandfather?]

[The Yoo Family has long protected our family. You cannot act rashly like a child who doesn't know any better.]

[What? They have protected our family?]

As he was puzzled, Yoo Moo-jin extended his large hand and patted his head.

[So you're Tang In-hae. It seems like only yesterday when you were crawling around, but you've grown a lot.]

-Clank clank!

As he patted his head, a strange sound was heard.

He glanced up and saw a golden bracelet on his right wrist.

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-Boom!

Tang Cheol-young, the Deputy Head of the Sichuan Tang Clan, couldn't close his mouth.

What was he seeing right now?

Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung, known as one of the top experts of the Eight Stars in the martial arts world, was hammered into the ground by a single punch from a young man.

The power of the seemingly simple punch was beyond imagination.

Just by looking at the ground that had caved in nearly 5 jang (approx. 16.5 meters), one could tell.

The Green Forest bandits were in an uproar.

It was a natural reaction since their leader had been attacked by someone of unknown identity who had suddenly appeared.

Then, someone's voice was heard from the side.

"...That person has appeared."

"Bro- Brother... No, Clan Leader?"

Tang Cheol-young was perplexed to see Clan Leader Tang In-hae beside him, not knowing when he had approached.

Then, he asked in confusion,

"Clan Leader. Do you happen to know that young man?"

“...That golden bracelet on his wrist. Don’t you recognize it?”

“Golden bracelet? Could it be?”

The eyes of Deputy Head Tang Cheol-young, who had noticed the golden bracelet on the young man’s right wrist, widened.

There was a long-standing instruction passed down in the Tang Clan’s bloodline.

It was a message about the Yoo Family who protected the Tang Clan.

[When the Tang Clan is in danger, if they appear, greet them with utmost respect.]

There was one criterion to recognize them.

It was the golden bracelet worn on their wrist.

‘He’s not the one from back then.’

He was much younger than the man called Yoo Moo-jin

It had been over 50 years since he had seen the Yoo Family after his grandfather, the Lord of Ten Thousand Poisons Tang Yeon-jong, had lost his life in the showdown that day.

‘Could he be a descendant of that person?’

Although he had seen Yoo Moo-jin, he had never truly witnessed his skills.

But now, seeing the Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung hammered into the ground by that young man's hand, he couldn't help but feel amazed.

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-Sizzle!

White steam gushed out from Yoo Moo-jin's body, whose muscles had swollen and turned red not only on his right arm but all over his body.

Feeling intimidated by this sight, the Green Forest bandits couldn't move rashly.

To them, their leader Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung was an untouchable monster.

But that very leader had been pounded into the ground by a single punch.

Just what was the identity of this monster?

As they were perplexed,

“Boss!”

Someone shouted with a flushed face.

Seok Pae-ung, who they thought might have lost consciousness after being hammered into the ground with his head by a single punch, was getting up.

“Oh, you’re quite sturdy.”

Yoo Moo-jin looked at him with intrigued eyes and spoke.

-Grit!

Seok Pae-ung wanted to spit out the blood welling up inside, but he forcibly suppressed it.

It was the first time he had felt faint from a single punch.

No, it wasn't the first time.

It was the first time since his showdown with that person, one of the Six Heavens.

However, back then, he was no different from a greenhorn who had not yet completed his martial arts, so it was difficult to compare to the present.

“Boss!”

“The boss got up!”

“Wooooaaaahhh!!!”

The nearby Green Forest bandits cheered.

He understood that they were happy their leader had gotten up, but they should stop shouting.

His pride was hurt, and it felt like his dignity was hitting rock bottom because of their cheers.

‘Damn it. Do I have to use that?’

He had a secret move that he had been hiding for a rematch with that person from the Six Heavens.

But he wasn't confident.

Not only did this monster catch his tyrannical punch, which held 10-star power, with one hand, but he also made his legs go weak with a single strike.

Experts had a sense that only experts possessed.

Even if he used his secret move and fought with the resolve to go down together, could he defeat this monster-like fellow?

Seok Pae-ung gradually regained his senses.

Unlike other Green Forest bandits, he was not the type to be belligerent but rather belonged to the cold and calculating side.

Therefore, he valued practicality over saving face.

'Damn it.'

Who would have thought that such a variable would get entangled in this matter that he had started to have her?

The fellow said he was from the Yoo Family, so he didn't seem to be from the Tang Clan. But why was he suddenly appearing and interfering with them... Ah...

Suddenly, he recalled the words the fellow had said about just leaving.

He had called out to that fellow.

‘I did something stupid.’

He should have let him go when he said he was leaving.

With this in mind, Seok Pae-ung finally stabilized his boiling body and raised his head.

“Hah.”

There was a glint in Seok Pae-ung’s eyes as he raised his head.

The reason was,

“...You bastard, what is your relationship with Hae Yeok-won, the Alliance Leader of the Four Evils Alliance?”

-Sizzle!

The moment he saw the reddened skin and the white steam flowing from his entire body, Seok Pae-ung thought of only one person.

It was Hae Yeok-won, the Alliance Leader of the Four Evils Alliance, which could be considered the center of the current evil faction.

“Hae Yeok-won?”

“Yeah. Your appearance is undoubtedly the Advancing Blood Golden Body of Hae Yeok-won.”

“Ah. The Advancing Blood Golden Body and the Hae Family.”

“So you do have a connection.”

“I guess we’re not unrelated. Even if we haven’t been in contact for a long time, for now, I know we’re considered distant relatives.”

At Yoo Moo-jin’s words, Seok Pae-ung thought it was fortunate.

The Four Evils Alliance and the Green Forest were practically allies as part of the same evil faction.

If this fellow had even the slightest connection to the Four Evils Alliance, he could use it as an excuse to naturally avoid a fight.

“If you’re a distant relative, then you do have a connection. Moreover, you even cultivated the same martial arts.”

“The same martial arts?”

“Yeah.”

“I think there’s some misunderstanding.”

“Misunderstanding?”

“Yes. The people in my family don’t cultivate martial arts.”

“What?”

What was he talking about now?

That appearance was undoubtedly the Advancing Blood Golden Body of the Hae Yoo Clan.

Then, Yoo Moo-jin scratched his head and said,

“Should I say it’s achieved through natural talent and moderate muscle training?”

“...Muscle training?”

“Well, that’s not important. And about that martial art. It’s something that should be cultivated by those who aren’t naturally gifted or are weak anyway.”

-Bulge! Bulge bulge!

As soon as he finished speaking, Yoo Moo-jin’s right arm muscles swelled even more.

Seeing his appearance, Seok Pae-ung was terrified.

The moment the fellow clenched his fist, all five senses, no, six senses of his body were giving him a warning.

It was very dangerous.

“H- Hey! You said your name is Yoo Moo-jin. Stop. If you’re a distant relative of the Hae Family, you’re practically part of the evil faction like us, so we have no reason to fight.”

“We’re not fighting.”

“What? Then why are you clenching your fist like that?”

“To drive you guys away. I was going to just leave, but it wouldn’t be bad to stretch my body a bit since it’s been a while...”

At that moment, Yoo Moo-jin stopped mid-sentence and turned his head.

Then, he looked somewhere, tilted his head, and opened his mouth.

“Is this related to you guys right now?”

“...What are you talking about? Related to us?”

“It’s not? But it’s coming with a terrifying force.”

“A terrifying force, what do you...”

-Flinch!

Seok Pae-ung stopped mid-sentence and turned his head in the direction Yoo Moo-jin was looking with a startled face.

That was because he felt something tyrannical and sinister approaching at a tremendous speed from that direction.

‘!!!!!!’

The energy was so eerie and strong that it sent chills down his spine.

Then, from the void in the northeast, a black fog swirled, and a figure was seen riding on a sword, flying towards them.

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

“Go! Run faster!”

The expelled monk Ja Geum-jeong, holding the reins of the carriage horse, shouted and urged the horse.

Then, the running horse spoke with a dumbfounded expression as if it were absurd.

“You damned bald monk. Do you really think I’m a horse? And I’m already running with all my might without you nagging.”

Although it had the appearance of a horse, its true identity was the demonic beast Alyu.

The speed of Alyu when it ran with determination was incomparably faster than any ordinary horse.

Therefore, all of Mok Gyeong-un’s subordinates were riding on the roof of the carriage.

“I never thought I’d see someone riding a sword and flying.”

Sword riding and flying.

It literally meant riding on a sword and flying.

It sounded simple at first, but freely riding and controlling a sword was a sophisticated technique as much as sword mastery.

As Seop Chun clicked his tongue and spoke, Mong Mu-yak also recalled that scene from earlier.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had suddenly gotten off the carriage, had an unusual expression on his face, and saying he would go ahead first, he flew away riding on his sword.

Why was he in such a hurry all of a sudden?

Was it because of the confrontation between the Sichuan Tang Clan and the Green Forest?

Anyway, it seemed like they had to hurry and catch up with their lord.

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The expression of Tang In-hae, the head of the Sichuan Tang Clan, hardened.

It was due to the sudden appearance of another unknown person.

‘Who the hell is that?’

The sight of him standing on a single sword, accompanied by a swirl of black fog, was truly mystical and even awe-inspiring.

“...Clan Leader. Isn’t that sword riding and flying?”

Deputy Head Tang Cheol-young spoke with his mouth agape, unable to hide his astonishment.

Sword riding and flying was something impossible unless one had reached a high level of sword mastery, lightness skill, and true energy control.

Even he himself, who had surpassed the pinnacle-stage and reached the realm of Transformation, couldn’t perform such a divine skill.

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae’s gaze didn’t leave the unidentified person riding on the sword.

Although he was far away, he looked very young at a glance.

However, if he had reached such a realm, he could appear young due to profound internal energy and rebirth, so it was difficult to make a judgment.

‘Just what is going on?’

Tang In-hae was more confused by the situation than the identity of that person.

Not only had the hidden protector of the Tang Clan, the Yoo Family, appeared, but a supreme expert who could be called not just Eight Stars but even a true grandmaster had also shown up.

He could guess that the appearance of the Yoo Family member was due to the confrontation with the Green Forest.

But he couldn’t understand that person at all.

Why had such a monster-like individual appeared at this particular time?

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It was a truly coincidental occurrence.

No one had ordered or done it, but just a moment ago, the Green Forest bandits were in an uproar due to the confrontation between Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung and the unidentified young man named Yoo Moo-jin.

But now, it was as if no one was present, and silence filled the air.

Everyone present was tense and gripped by a sense of intimidation due to the appearance of a single person.

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

-Rumble!

It was like the feeling of prey standing before a ferocious beast.

'...This is crazy.'

Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung couldn't take his eyes off Mok Gyeong-un, his face filled with tension.

He was emitting a sinister and tyrannical black energy from his entire body, and just looking at it made it difficult to breathe.

It wasn't that he hadn't had a similar experience before.

It was the same as when he first met that person, one of the Six Heavens.

At that time, he was also crushed by the overwhelming presence and found it difficult to even speak.

But he never thought he would experience that feeling again.

'Who the hell is he?'

Aside from that one person from the Six Heavens, he knew the appearances of most others to some extent.

But he had never seen someone like that before.

Based on his face alone, he didn't even look like he was in his twenties, but it was hard to believe what he saw.

However, one thing he could be certain of.

'He's definitely... not from the righteous path.'

There was no one among the righteous cultivators who possessed such a sinister energy.

The energy emanating from that person felt like darkness itself.

If that was the case, he seemed to be from the evil faction, but he had never heard of such a person even in the Four Evils Alliance.

At that moment,

-Tap!

Mok Gyeong-un, who had been riding on the demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword, landed on the ground with a light movement.

The moment Mok Gyeong-un's figure touched the ground, the Green Forest bandits unknowingly took a deep breath and exhaled.

They hadn't been able to breathe properly due to the overwhelming pressure, although it wasn't for very long.

Then, someone opened their mouth.

"I don't know what purpose you're here for, but if you had just left, you would have almost regretted it."

It was none other than Yoo Moo-jin.

Even Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung, one of the top experts of the Eight Stars in the martial arts world, was overwhelmed by the pressure and couldn't speak, but he was different.

Although it was quite different from when he faced Seok Pae-ung, he still had a relaxed demeanor.

It was a composure that could only come from absolute confidence in one's own strength.

-Click!

At that moment, the demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword, which had been floating in the air, was sheathed into the scabbard at Mok Gyeong-un's waist.

As the sword was sheathed, Mok Gyeong-un swept his gaze around once and then turned his eyes to Yoo Moo-jin, opening his mouth.

"Since you were fighting the Green Forest, I can assume you're on the same side as the Tang Clan, right?"

In response to that question, Yoo Moo-jin scratched his head and replied,

"Well, in the current situation, it seems that way, but asking such a question means you're not someone who is favorable towards the Sichuan Tang Clan, right?"

"Favorable... For now, I guess you could say that."

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Yoo Moo-jin rubbed his unnaturally swollen chest muscles and said,

“As I thought, it would have been a big problem if I had just left.”

“A big problem?”

“It was fine to leave these mountain bandits alone, but it seems you’re different.”

-Rumble!

A glint flashed in Yoo Moo-jin’s eyes.

He had exceptional eyes passed down from his ancestors.

It allowed him to discern the strength of an opponent through color, and the Mok Gyeong-un he saw with his two eyes was completely different from anyone he had seen before.

It was the first time he had seen someone completely black.

The size of that black energy was overwhelming everyone present.

‘If I had just left, it would have caused trouble.’

It was difficult to compare the danger level with the Green Forest bandits.

Even if they outnumbered them, the potential of the Sichuan Tang Clan was not to be underestimated.

But that seemed quite dangerous.

He wasn’t the only one thinking this way.

‘Strange.’

With his third eye open, Mok Gyeong-un could also clearly see Yoo Moo-jin’s energy.

That energy was completely different from ordinary martial artists.

It was similar to innate true energy, yet different.

The purity of the energy was high, and it seemed like the surrounding natural energy had gathered together.

It was quite interesting how it circulated throughout his entire body.

-Whoosh!

What was even more peculiar was that the energy was condensed and suppressed by something.

That was probably,

‘That thing?’

It seemed to be because of the golden bracelet he was wearing on his right hand.

Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes narrowed.

The golden bracelet didn’t seem to be an ordinary object.

An immense amount of innate true energy that couldn’t even be compared to So Yerin or Joo Woonhyang was emanating from the bracelet, and apart from that, it formed hundreds, no, thousands of loops as if numerous spell techniques were merged into one.

That object had surpassed the level that could be called a treasured artifact.

At that moment, Yoo Moo-jin turned his neck, stretching his muscles, and opened his mouth.

-Bulge! Bulge!

“Since you said you’re not favorable towards the Tang Clan, I can’t just leave, so I’ll have to subdue you.”

“...Subdue? You’re saying something interesting.”

At his words, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes sharpened.

It seemed he had to deal with this person first in order to settle things with the Tang Clan.

If this person deliberately tried to interfere, it would be difficult to do anything.

-Shing!

Mok Gyeong-un drew the demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword from his waist.

-Tremble tremble tremble!

As if detecting the energy of a strong opponent it was meeting for the first time, the blade of Evil Commandment Sword trembled, emitting a strong resonance.

It was like a competitive spirit.

“...Fighting King. What should we do about this? Are you just going to watch?”

At the question of Hyungtaek, who could be considered his left arm, Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung couldn't hide his inner perplexity.

That newly appeared bastard and the guy named Yoo Moo-jin were having a conversation and creating an atmosphere to fight as if they didn't even care about them.

It was a humiliating situation, so it was absurd, but it seemed that if they carelessly intervened between these two monsters, it would only cause trouble.

‘Damn it.’

However, no matter what, he couldn't easily admit it and suggest retreating in front of his numerous subordinates.

“Fighting King?”

At the urging call of his left arm, the Throwing Killing Guest Hyungtaek, Seok Pae-ung frowned and then turned his gaze to the newly appeared person.

‘Wait a moment... Come to think of it, that person said with his own mouth that he wasn't favorable towards the Tang Clan.’

That was the reason he was currently confronting that monster guy named Yoo Moo-jin.

If that was the case, he needed to think differently.

There was a saying that the enemy of an enemy is a friend.

If that person's goal was also the Tang Clan, he might be able to persuade him and form an alliance.

With this in mind, Seok Pae-ung spoke to Mok Gyeong-un.

"Hey, you. If your goal is also the Tang Clan, how about working together?"

'Yes, this is it.'

It wasn't bad as a justification.

He could make up an excuse to his subordinates, and while these monsters fought each other, he could pressure the Tang Clan and gain practical benefits.

If this guy had any sense, he wouldn't easily dismiss his proposal.

"While you deal with that guy, we will..."

-Boom!

Before he could even finish his words.

With an ear-splitting explosive sound and an immense energy rushing towards him, Seok Pae-ung crossed his arms without a moment to think.

"What?"

-Whoosh!

Despite activating his protective energy, his body was pushed back more than ten steps, unable to withstand the tremendous shockwave.

He wondered what was happening all of a sudden, but when he lowered his crossed arms, his eyes widened.

Mok Gyeong-un's sword and Yoo Moo-jin's fist had already clashed and were in a confrontational state.

What was astonishing was that even though they had merely clashed their sword and fist, the aftermath was so strong that the ground where the two were standing had caved in more than ten jang (approx. 33 meters) and was cracked and split in all directions.

"Ugh..."

"Bo- Boss!"

The nearby executives of the Green Forest, including the left arm Throwing Killing Guest Hyungtaek, were also blown away by this aftermath and were rolling on the ground.

They seemed to have failed to withstand this power at all and had even suffered internal injuries.

At this sight,

-Gulp!

Seok Pae-ung swallowed his dry saliva.

These two monsters were on a completely different level.

They hadn't even clashed properly and had only exchanged a single move, but if the aftermath was this severe, his subordinates might end up dying in large numbers if he wasn't careful.

Sacrificing them just to protect his pride was a foolish act.

Therefore, Seok Pae-ung no longer cared about his pride or anything else and shouted to his subordinates, infusing his internal energy.

“Retreat!!!”

As soon as his shout ended, the Green Forest bandits quickly distanced themselves and retreated in an orderly manner as if they had been waiting for it.

As the Green Forest bandits moved away, Yoo Moo-jin grinned and said,

“Now that the distractions are gone, let’s do this properly.”

-Bulge! Bulge!

With those words, Yoo Moo-jin’s reddened right arm muscles swelled even more.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un’s figure, who had been matching his demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword against his fist, gradually began to be pushed back.

-Whoosh!

It was when he had been pushed back about five steps.

Ripples appeared on the blade of Mok Gyeong-un’s sword.

Along with that, Yoo Moo-jin’s fist, which had been pushing forward with strength, was bounced upward as if repelled by the wondrous principle of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi.

‘Huh?’

It didn't end there.

-Bam!

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

Then, pulling the blade, he thrust the sword forward.

With that, a whirlwind of qi surged from the tip of the sword, rushing towards Yoo Moo-jin's abdomen with a storm-like momentum.

#### Chapter 333 – Sichuan's Upheaval (6)

Mok Gyeong-un had an extraordinary memory and embodiment ability compared to ordinary people.

Thus, he could remember what he had seen once without a single mistake and had the ability to imitate it exactly.

This ability of Mok Gyeong-un was further maximized after he opened his ghost eyes and obtained the supernatural power of the three eyes, allowing him to embody not only ordinary movements but also the forms consisting of energy and gestures.

Of course, that didn't mean he could flawlessly steal everything.

Things that couldn't be performed without the support of profound internal energy or special mind techniques, where the gestures were not only formed by energy but also reached the level of mental imagery, were impossible for him to embody no matter what.

One of the martial arts of this type was the True Chasing and Turning Sword, one of the sword techniques of the Thousand-men Commander So Yerin.

'Can it only be manifested with innate true energy?'

He had suffered a defeat because of this technique, so he had observed it with interest.

However, it was particularly difficult to manifest this sword technique.

It seemed that the unique energy of innate true energy was necessary to fully utilize the technique.

And it seemed like it would continue to be that way, but the situation changed.

Having surpassed the peak of peaks, his understanding of energy had completely changed, and although it was difficult to do it flawlessly, he had reached a level where he could imitate and manifest even the circulation method of innate true energy.

And this was the result.

-Bam!

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

Then, pulling the blade, he thrust the sword forward.

With that, a whirlwind of qi surged from the tip of the sword, rushing towards Yoo Moo-jin's abdomen with a storm-like momentum.

[True Chasing and Turning Sword]

The True Chasing and Turning Sword manifested by Mok Gyeong-un's hand was not a widely spreading whirlwind but was formed in a fixed shape.

It struck Yoo Moo-jin's abdomen precisely.

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!

The whirlwind of qi fiercely swept through as if piercing his abdomen.

Even if the range was reduced, the power had increased instead.

However,

-Clang clang clang clang clang!

One of Mok Gyeong-un's eyebrows, who was unleashing the sword technique, rose upward.

It was as if he had unleashed the sword technique against a solid iron wall, and blue sparks flew from the abdomen, accompanied by a sound similar to metal ringing.

'No way?'

"It's sturdy, right?"

'!?'

Mok Gyeong-un was dumbfounded.

The strength of Yoo Moo-jin's reddened abdominal muscles was no exaggeration to call it indestructible, not receiving any damage from the sword technique.

Rather,

-Tak!

He was taking a step forward, nullifying the power of the sword technique.

And not only that,

-Whoosh!

Yoo Moo-jin threw a punch towards the center of the whirling True Chasing and Turning Sword.

The punch he threw created a tremendous wind pressure, and the sword technique that had been creating the whirlwind of qi was completely destroyed.

In that instant, Yoo Moo-jin grabbed the blade of the demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword with his left hand.

-Clang!

‘If I break the sword blade, it will become a state of bare-handed combat, and he will weaken, right?’

Gripping the blade of Evil Commandment Sword with his hand, Yoo Moo-jin tried to break it.

It didn’t matter whether it was a treasured sword or anything else.

He was confident that he could crush even diamond with his grip strength alone.

But at that moment,

-Swish!

‘Huh?’

His hand holding the sword slipped and lost its grip on it.

Yoo Moo-jin couldn’t hide his confusion.

He was definitely gripping the sword tightly, but due to a force strongly pushing it out, the sword forcibly slipped out of his hand.

This was the Ritual of Repulsion, one of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques.

-Swish!

In sync with drawing out the sword, Mok Gyeong-un swung a palm strike towards Yoo Moo-jin’s chest.

Trusting in the strength of his muscles, Yoo Moo-jin didn’t dodge it at all.

Rather, at that moment, he simultaneously swung his fist towards Mok Gyeong-un’s chest, with his biceps and forearm muscles swelling.

-Boom! Bang!

Mok Gyeong-un’s figure, hit by the fist, was sent flying like a cannonball.

He was sent flying nearly twenty jang (approx. 66 meters).

Was he overpowered by Yoo Moo-jin in a clash of strength?

However,

“Cough! Cough cough cough!”

Yoo Moo-jin clutched his abdomen and staggered backward, eventually kneeling on one knee.

-Thud!

‘What?’

Yoo Moo-jin’s eyes widened.

Mok Gyeong-un’s palm strike was not the type that inflicted external damage.

It was a force emission that transmitted internal energy to strike the internal organs.

Of course, it wasn’t just a simple force emission.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had opened the supernatural power of the three eyes, judged that not only the strength of the muscles but also the internal resistance of Yoo Moo-jin was completely different from ordinary people.

Therefore, he infused the extreme yin cold energy of the Thousand Yin Meridian Severing into the force emission.

As a result, the penetrating cold energy caused the internal organs to become stiff, and at the same time, the force emission inflicted damage, causing internal injuries.

“Cough cough cough...”

Crystals of blood that had turned into frost-like particles splattered from Yoo Moo-jin’s mouth as he coughed.

Seeing this, the corners of Yoo Moo-jin’s mouth twitched and rose.

It was the first time.

It was the first time he had bled in his life.

-Bulge!

Yoo Moo-jin exerted force on the muscles throughout his body, circulating his blood even faster.

Then, the steam became thicker, and the cold energy flowing out of his mouth gradually turned into steam, and his body became hot again.

“Hah...”

On the other hand, Mok Gyeong-un, who had been sent flying like a cannonball, was also protecting his body with his qi, but the tremendous impact that penetrated through it, ignoring it, caused his heart to stop for a moment.

As a result, his body stiffened, and he spat out a mouthful of blood.

If he hadn’t inflicted damage on the guy, if the attack had come right away, he would have suffered a defeat.

‘...He’s strong.’

He was a different type of strong opponent from the numerous adversaries he had encountered so far.

No, should he say that this type of strength was completely new?

The body itself, with extremely developed muscles and natural energy dwelling within it, was invincible without internal energy.

The innate strength was to this extent.

He couldn't help but click his tongue.

Then, Yoo Moo-jin grinned at Mok Gyeong-un, revealing his blood-stained teeth, and said,

"This is a first. No one has ever injured me outside the house, not even my father."

"You must have had a comfortable life."

"Comfortable? Well, I wonder. If you knew what my family does, you wouldn't say such a thing. We serve almost everyone, you know."

"Serve?"

"I don't need to tell an outsider that much, but subduing you with four stages is not enough. I'll go all out now."

With those words, Yoo Moo-jin tried to bring his hand to the golden bracelet on his right arm.

The name of the golden bracelet was the Force Suppressing Bracelet.

It was an object that suppressed his muscles and strength.

This Force Suppressing Bracelet had a lock with a total of 10 stages, and the lower the number, the more the restriction on his strength was released.

'I'll have to go straight to stage three.'

Stage three of the Force Suppressing Bracelet was the last stage Yoo Moo-jin could unlock.

He had heard that the ancestor called the progenitor in the distant past could unlock it up to stage one, but no one had reached stage one except for the progenitor in later generations.

Even his father, who was said to have the best physique and muscle quality for generations, only reached the point of unlocking stage two.

Of course, even that was said to be the first time in many generations.

Anyway, Yoo Moo-jin, who had acknowledged Mok Gyeong-un as an opponent, tried to maximize the release of his suppressed strength through the Force Suppressing Bracelet.

'I didn't expect him to be able to unlock up to stage three.'

Even if he wasn't like the progenitor or his father, he took pride in being the best with just stage three.

[Unless they are the top experts who can be counted on one hand in the martial arts world, there will be no need to unlock up to stage three.]

Those were the words his father had said to him.

How long would he be able to endure when he unlocked stage three?

-Swish!

'!?'

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un appeared right in front of him.

-Flinch!

Before he could even turn the Force Suppressing Bracelet, Mok Gyeong-un suddenly appeared in front of him, and he was about to be caught off guard, but suddenly, a sense of foreboding that stimulated his five senses, unlike before, rose.

With this, Yoo Moo-jin kicked his foot, trying to escape from Mok Gyeong-un's range.

However,

-Swish!

At that moment, a black line slashed through the air, and Yoo Moo-jin's body soared upward.

-Boom!

'!!!!'

Yoo Moo-jin's eyes widened as he floated upward.

He could clearly feel it.

In an instant, Mok Gyeong-un's power gathered into a single point and penetrated his abdomen, which was no different from being indestructible.

The pain of something penetrating his body was something he felt for the first time, so Yoo Moo-jin's expression distorted.

-Whoosh!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un, who had brushed past Yoo Moo-jin's body, kicked the ground and changed direction.

He had no intention of ending it here.

'I can't give him a chance to turn it.'

Mok Gyeong-un, who had opened the supernatural power of the three eyes and was aware that the golden bracelet was suppressing strength, had been waiting for the moment when he would release it.

'One more time!'

If it was now, he could use this unified force sword a few more times.

There was no need to hold back just because it was his qi.

The most rational way to deal with an enemy was to thoroughly trample them when they showed a slight opening.

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un's figure disappeared, and a black line appeared in the air.

The line connected to where Yoo Moo-jin's body had soared into the air, and his body was hit by the impact and bounced away in midair.

"Cough cough cough."

Yoo Moo-jin had a pained expression.

Although he couldn't see it because it was too fast the first time the power was unified, he could immediately recognize what the second one was aiming for.

It was the heart.

He crossed his hands to somehow reduce this unified force.

Of course, as a result, holes were made in both of his hands.

'Stage three...'

Although his body was spinning and being bounced away, Yoo Moo-jin somehow concentrated his mind and brought his hand to the lock of the Force Suppressing Bracelet on his right wrist.

However,

-Boom!

Mok Gyeong-un, who had kicked the air, changed direction and unleashed a unified force sword strike towards Yoo Moo-jin.

The speed was at a level that surpassed even the category of ultra-high-speed movement, so even with Yoo Moo-jin's eyes, he could barely recognize that it was approaching.

Yoo Moo-jin could tell that this sword strike was aiming for his glabella this time.

-Grit!

'Three times is not possible.'

Yoo Moo-jin gritted his teeth and twisted his head back in an instant.

-Swish!

The black line passed by his eyes dangerously close.

Along with that, the shockwave from being hit by the unified force sword strike twice was reduced, and his body fell towards the ground.

As he fell, Yoo Moo-jin couldn't take his eyes off Mok Gyeong-un with a tense gaze.

If another sword strike followed here, it would be difficult to block it.

However,

-Tak!

Mok Gyeong-un's right hand, which had landed on the ground, was trembling violently.

'Consecutive strikes are impossible.'

Even though he had surpassed the peak of peaks, the unified force sword put a tremendous strain on his entire body just by unleashing it once.

But when he unleashed it three times in a row, his entire body ached as if his muscles were being torn apart.

When he tried to unleash it a fourth time, even his heart was causing intense pain, so he had no choice but to stop.

“Haa... haa...”

Even though his abdomen was penetrated and both hands were penetrated, it wasn’t the end.

-Clench!

As the pain in his heart subsided a little, Mok Gyeong-un gripped the sword handle tightly, calmed his breathing, and tried to gather his power one last time.

Right at that moment,

-Flinch!

With a feeling of the air twisting for a moment, the surrounding energy became overwhelming.

Mok Gyeong-un turned his head with sharp eyes at the strange sensation that even affected the surroundings.

-Bulge! Bulge bulge!

Yoo Moo-jin's entire body muscles, which had been swollen and reddened, shrank as if compressed, and his skin turned not just red but black.

It seemed that he had finally failed to stop him from releasing the restriction of that object.

'...It became more troublesome.'

The surroundings were trembling to the extent that the natural energy was being affected.

With this, he thought he had no choice but to take action before Yoo Moo-jin completely transformed, and he was about to launch himself towards him,

-Boom!

At that moment, Yoo Moo-jin threw a punch towards Mok Gyeong-un.

It looked like a very simple punch, but,

-Boom boom boom boom boom boom!

In the direction he threw the punch, with a tremendous wind pressure and a long explosive sound, everything that existed in a fan-shaped area of nearly twenty jang (approx. 66 meters) was completely devastated.

"Hah... hah..."

Yoo Moo-jin clicked his tongue, exhaling rough breaths.

It seemed like it was really the first time he had struggled to turn the lock and release the Force Suppressing Bracelet.

If he had known this would happen, he should have gone all out from the beginning.

Then he wouldn't have gotten injured like this.

-Drip drip drip!

Blood slowly flowed from his perforated fist and abdomen.

Normally, when he released the Force Suppressing Bracelet, his body would recover quickly, but it was strangely slow.

It felt like that guy's strange energy was interfering with it.

Still, he had finished it off with a near-full-powered punch after releasing stage three, so no more...

'!?'

Yoo Moo-jin's eyes narrowed.

The dust hadn't completely settled yet due to the aftermath of the punch, but something could be seen through it.

'What?'

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Two black qi-controlled sword energies were rotating rapidly in a crossed pattern, creating a thick curtain of sword energy around Mok Gyeong-un.

## Chapter 334 – Mastermind (1)

-Murmur murmur!

The Tang Clan's executives and warriors, who were watching the situation outside from the Tang Clan's walls, were stirred.

It was because of the tremendous confrontation unfolding before their eyes.

"Clan Leader... Just what is going on?"

Deputy Head Tang Cheol-young's mouth was agape and couldn't close.

That was because the confrontation unfolding before their eyes had completely transcended the category of ordinary martial artists.

Even when watching a confrontation between experts at the peak of the Transcendent Realm, the level would be considered high.

However, this was not something that could be evaluated like that.

'Is this a confrontation between grandmasters?'

In the eyes of Tang Cheol-young, who had reached the extreme pinnacle-stage of the Transcendent Realm, he couldn't even see their movements, and he could only hear the sounds of something clashing.

But every time they clashed, it was as if heaven and earth were being recreated, and everything around was being devastated.

The ground was cracking, shattering, and it was a complete mess.

In between, there were movements that could be seen with the eyes, and at those moments, the ultimate techniques of the Transcendent Realm were rampant, leaving them speechless.

“What the hell is happening?”

“Putting aside the Green Forest, why are such monsters here?”

“How would I know that?”

The Tang Clan’s executives were dumbfounded.

Of course, since it was a high-level confrontation, they were also martial artists, so they couldn’t take their eyes off it, but they were gradually becoming worried.

Why were these people doing this here?

‘...Sigh.’

Tang In-hae, the head of the Tang Clan, felt the same way.

He knew who that muscular man was.

Since he was wearing a golden bracelet, he recognized that he was the being who had been protecting the Tang Clan for a long time.

But he didn’t know who the one who appeared now was.

He seemed to have no relation to the Green Forest, but seeing him fight against that family, who were like the Tang Clan’s protectors, there was a very high probability that he was an enemy of the Tang Clan.

‘What should I do about this?’

It felt better when the Green Forest was surrounding them.

Just as an expert who had barely surpassed the peak and reached the early stage of the Transformation Realm couldn’t challenge the dominance of the Eight Stars, who were considered the top experts in the martial arts world, those two people had clearly surpassed the peak of peaks.

‘...It’s impossible.’

If they were to fight, he would barely be able to endure for about 10 seconds.

Just by seeing that Green Forest Fighting King Seok Pae-ung, whose external martial arts had reached the peak, had suffered a defeat, the difference in skill was evident.

Just who were they?

Both of them looked like they were in their twenties, not even reaching their prime based on their appearance.

If they had reached such a realm, had they undergone rebirth and returned to a youthful state, not aging at all?

Tang In-hae, who had been continuously clicking his tongue, fell into contemplation.

Among them, the only certain thing was that it would be best for that family’s monster, who claimed to be the Tang Clan’s protector, to win.

But if that person with the brutal and tyrannical martial prowess were to win, the Tang Clan might face the worst enemy in its history.

‘Or should I hope for a mutual defeat?’

Looking at it now, the confrontation seemed to be even, like a fierce battle between a dragon and a tiger.

If one side doesn’t have overwhelming martial prowess or luck is not on their side, a confrontation between evenly matched experts never ends without injuries.

In that case, he might have to keep looking for an opportunity.

If the monster, not the protector, wins, he might have to seize that moment.

-Boom boom boom boom boom!

‘Huh?’

At that moment, he saw Yoo Moo-jin rolling on the ground.

Seeing this, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae’s eyes trembled.

He had hoped for Yoo Moo-jin to win, but judging from the blood flowing from his abdomen and back, he had suffered penetrating wounds.

That meant the outcome of this confrontation had become clear.

‘Then what about that monster?’

Tang In-hae turned his gaze with a slight hope.

He saw Mok Gyeong-un barely maintaining his posture with trembling hands.

Although not as much as the protector, that bastard also seemed to have exhausted his internal energy and was heavily injured.

Tang In-hae's eyes sharpened.

Perhaps he could seize an opportunity.

'Now, within one or two moves, the match will be decided. If not now, there may not be another chance.'

At that moment,

"Clan Leader? Just what is going on?"

'Ah!'

At the voice coming from behind, Tang In-hae turned his head with a troubled expression.

The one who called him was none other than Ye Song-ah, the granddaughter of the Holy Fire Priestess.

After he left in the middle of their conversation, she had come out, puzzled by the sound of booming coming from outside and the constant stirring of the Tang Clan warriors.

With this, Tang In-hae waved his hand and said,

"Go to the villa area. If you stay here, it might become dangerous..."

-Gulp!

Tang In-hae stopped mid-sentence and swallowed his dry saliva.

What?

The air was becoming so heavy that it was suffocating to breathe.

From behind, an immense energy that stimulated not just his qi sense but all five senses was emanating, but he didn't know what was happening.

He thought the confrontation was almost over, but why did the energy become even stronger?

It was a moment of confusion.

-Boom!

Before his words could even finish,

A tremendous boom erupted, and all the buildings of the Tang Clan shook, and the ground trembled.

Startled by this, Tang In-hae hurriedly turned his head.

Then, countless fragments and hazy dust were rushing towards the Tang Clan's side.

-Whoosh!

With this, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae raised his hand and emitted a powerful force with his profound internal energy to block the flying fragments.

-Clang clang clang clang clang clang!

After all, he was one of the Eight Stars, so this wasn't a difficult task.

As he blocked the fragments, some of the dust cleared, and there he saw Yoo Moo-jin, whose entire body's skin had turned black and muscles had compressed as if condensed.

Yoo Moo-jin was extending his fist, and in that direction, nearly twenty jang (approx. 66 meters) was completely devastated in a fan-shaped area, leaving his mouth agape.

'Was his energy not completely exhausted?'

Tang In-hae was dumbfounded.

He had thought the protector had almost been defeated, but he didn't expect him to have such hidden strength.

No, was it even correct to call this hidden strength?

To this extent, it was fair to say that he hadn't used his full power.

'It's an unbelievable punch.'

Tang In-hae couldn't hide his shock, feeling intimidated.

If nearly twenty jang could be devastated with just a single punch, if he directly confronted it, not only would his entire body be torn apart, but he wouldn't even be left intact.

'...He's truly a monster.'

Why hadn't such a monster-like being made his debut in the martial arts world?

If he stepped forward even now, the landscape of the martial arts world would be overturned, and it would change from the Six Heavens to the Seven Heavens.

Those who received the title of "Heaven" and reached the pinnacle of the martial arts world were monsters who had transcended human limits.

That person possessed the martial arts befitting that.

However,

"Lo- Look at that!"

"...That's impossible!"

Exclamations burst out from here and there.

Wondering why, he saw that in the place where the dust had cleared, two qi-controlled sword energies were rotating in a crossed pattern, creating a curtain.

'...'

Seeing this, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae was left speechless.

He thought the confrontation was almost over, but seeing the strength they had revealed, they hadn't used their full power.

This was truly a confrontation between monsters.

At that moment,

“Ah!”

At the voice coming from the side, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae frowned and sighed.

While his attention was captured by those monster-like beings, at some point, Ye Song-ah, the granddaughter of the Holy Fire Priestess, had climbed onto a platform set up to allow a view beyond the wall.

With this,

“Didn’t I tell you to go quickly? This is not a place for you to be now...”

At that moment,

-Thud!

Ye Song-ah knelt on the spot, crossed her hands on her shoulders, and her eyes turned red.

Startled by her sudden behavior, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae asked in confusion,

“Why are you acting like this?”

“It’s him. He has come.”

“What do you mean by him?”

“Thank you. I sincerely thank you, Clan Leader.”

As she suddenly expressed her gratitude, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae had a look of incomprehension.

Why was this child acting like this?

Then, she looked at Tang In-hae with teary eyes and said,

“I had hoped that you would make the right choice, and it seems my prayers and wishes have been answered.”

“Song-ah, what are you...!?”

At that moment, Tang In-hae’s expression froze.

Could it be that she was talking about that?

As he thought that, she continued,

“I was worried that you might make a grave mistake, caught up in desire, but seeing him come here to protect the Tang Clan, it seems you have made the right choice. I sincerely apologize for doubting your words even for a moment.”

“What?”

“Isn’t he fighting that monster to protect the Tang Clan?”

‘!!!!’

Tang In-hae’s breath was caught in his throat for a moment.

She was misunderstanding the situation.

The one who was protecting and the one who was trying to pose a threat.

But thanks to this, Tang In-hae could finally understand the identity of that monster-like being.

Could it be that he was the being from the prophecy that Ye Song-ah had said she saw through the precognition of the Holy Fire Priestess?

'Ha...'

How could this happen?

Tang In-hae recalled the conversation he had with her.

She had definitely said,

[Grandmaster Mun-no leaving even Grandmother and hiding him was probably to protect him.]

[To protect him?]

[Yes. Since the wings he needed to spread were torn off, no matter how great he is, he is still extremely weak. If he were to encounter enemies...]

She couldn't continue.

She was afraid of such a situation.

[Clan Leader... As you said, I have revealed everything I know. So please help Grandmaster Mun-no. A crisis is approaching him.]

Through this, Tang In-hae could deduce one fact.

If the prophecy were to come true unconditionally, would there be a reason to worry about what would happen in the future like this?

If the outcome was predetermined, all of it would be meaningless.

But the fact that she was so worried meant that the prophecy was not something that would be fulfilled unconditionally, but that variables could arise at any time and change accordingly.

If that was the case, this prophecy could be an indicator to respond to any dangers or hardships.

‘It’s tempting.’

The power to respond in advance to what would happen in the future.

This was a tremendous ability that anyone would find tempting.

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[Haa... haa... You’re... coveting something... you shouldn’t covet.]

[I shouldn’t covet it? Ha! Don’t you think it’s more problematic for such a dangerous power to be in the hands of a group that promotes deception and misleading the people? Rather, it’s right for such a dangerous power to be handled not by the likes of you, but by those who can uphold justice and righteousness.]

[...You’re attaching a good-sounding cause. In the end, you’re admitting that you’re caught up in your own greed. Cough... cough...]

-Grit!

Indeed, he really disliked this fellow Mun-no.

No, it had been like that for a long time.

His grandfather, the Lord of Ten Thousand Poisons, Thousand Poison Hand Tang Yeon-jong, had tried to pass on the secrets of the family to this fellow, who was just a branch family member with thin blood ties.

If his father and he hadn't dissuaded him, such a thing would have really happened.

Perhaps his ill-fated relationship with this fellow had continued since then.

[Talk all you want. In the end, you, who are addicted to the Formless Poison and will soon cross over to the netherworld, can do nothing.]

[Cough cough... haa...]

Seeing the fellow's pale and weakened appearance, he felt a bit refreshed now.

Since he was skilled in poison techniques to the extent that even his grandfather acknowledged him, preparing the Formless Poison as a precaution had become a divine move.

No matter how much of a fellow he was, once addicted to this, he couldn't move.

Then, shall we finish it?

-Swish! Swish!

With the sword he had prepared, Tang In-hae drew a mark on the immobile Mun-no's body, a vertical line passing through the center of the character "two."

This was the mark of that secret organization or whatever, wasn't it?

The corners of Tang In-hae's mouth rose sardonically.

He had heard that what the Secret Society fellows really wanted was not the ability of prophecy, but to deal with the being in that prophecy.

Those fellows should be grateful to him.

He had made what they wanted come to them on its own.

'It's killing two birds with one stone.'

With this, it was done.

If she lost everything, in the end, that child Song-ah would rely on him even more.

Chapter 335 – Mastermind (2)

[How did it go? What about Grandmaster Mun-no and that person?]

To the question of Ye Song-ah, the granddaughter of the Holy Fire Priestess, Tang In-hae, the head of the Sichuan Tang Clan, casually replied,

[As you said, I informed them. Fortunately, it seems they arrived before those people could find them.]

[Ah, that's really fortunate.]

[Didn't I tell you not to worry too much? Thanks to your early warning, we prevented a tragedy, so it's fortunate.]

[Yes... You're right.]

[But why aren't you informing the other order members? For example, your grandmother or those in high positions in the order?]

At his question, Ye Song-ah shook her head.

And with a voice mixed with a sigh, she said,

[...The fact that this power possessed by Grandmother has passed on to me is because Grandmother has betrayed the will of Holy Fire.]

[The will of Holy Fire?]

[Yes. The order members, regardless of their position, will have to pay a price if they betray the will of Holy Fire.]

[A price... So that's why you told me not to inform your grandmother?]

[Yes. I don't know why Grandmother betrayed Holy Fire's expectations, but she must have crossed a line that shouldn't have been crossed, so this happened.]

'A line that shouldn't be crossed...'

What could that be?

She was so obsessed with the cult that came from Persia.

But did she suddenly change her mind in her old age?

As he was puzzled, Ye Song-ah carefully asked him,

[By the way, Clan Leader. When will I be able to meet that person and Grandmaster Mun-no?]

[Ah. When, you ask? Well, let's see. Since I've evacuated them to a safe place, I think it would be fine to bring them back depending on the situation or when there's an opportunity.]

[Can I know where they have been evacuated to?]

At her persistent questioning, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae unknowingly sighed and replied in an irritated voice,

[I had them take refuge in the outskirts, so even I, the Clan Leader, don't know the exact location.]

At his answer, Ye Song-ah looked at him for a moment with a suspicious gaze.

Realizing his mistake, the Clan Leader changed his expression and spoke in a gentle voice,

[The exact location could be leaked in the process, so those who escorted them to the outskirts didn't even inform me. But once they have taken refuge, I will soon find out, so don't worry.]

He thought he had handled it well.

However, once suspicion started, it couldn't be easily quelled.

After that, Ye Song-ah frequently visited Tang In-hae and kept urging him to find out when she could hear from them.

With this, Tang In-hae was looking for an opportunity.

Originally, he had intended to inform them that they had failed to avoid the pursuit of the Secret Society and eventually lost their lives.

However, since she had become suspicious of him due to a single mistake, he had been delaying it.

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Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae couldn't hide his perplexity with a stiffened face.

She, who possessed the power of prophecy, referred to that unidentified person as "him" while looking at him.

How could this happen?

Why did that person appear here and fight against the Yoo Family, who could be considered the Tang Clan's protectors?

Tang In-hae's eyes trembled.

'...Could it be that he knows something?'

No.

That can't be.

What Ye Song-ah was concerned about was that the person referred to as “him” in the prophecy was so weak that he could be described as feeble.

But is that feeble?

No, in the first place, it's a mystery how he even survived.

Mun-no, the only protector he could rely on, had also died from the Formless Poison, and he had deliberately left a mark to make him find the Secret Society on his own.

How could that bastard, who should have been dead, appear here?

The only one who knew this truth was himself.

To ensure that no one would know, he had acted alone, so there was no risk of it being revealed.

Only one guy got involved, but since he was also addicted to the Formless Poison and fell off a cliff, he was practically dead.

Then why was that bastard here?

As he was puzzled, Ye Song-ah's voice was heard.

“Clan Leader?”

“...”

At her call, Tang In-hae's mind became even more complicated for a moment.

What should he do in this situation?

That person, no, that monster-like bastard, was clearly targeting the Tang Clan, seeing him fight the protector like that.

But the Tang Clan had no particular grudge against that bastard.

If that's the case...

'He knows something.'

If not, there would be no reason for him to come here like this.

Tang In-hae's hand trembled slightly.

It was because he was extremely tense.

Even though the Formless Poison Technique had nearly been perfected after three generations, the opponent was a monster who had surpassed the peak of peaks and reached the level of a Grand Master.

Even with the advantage of poison, he had no confidence in defeating such a monster.

If that bastard was determined to kill him...

-Gulp!

Tang In-hae swallowed his dry saliva and slowly turned his head to look at the Tang Clan's executives and warriors clinging to the wall.

They seemed unaware of how much danger they were in.

It was natural since they didn't know the reason.

'...Is it at least fortunate that I sent that fellow to the Righteous Alliance?'

The people here were not all of the Tang Clan's forces.

According to the alliance agreement, each sect and martial arts family had to send about 30% of their forces to the main hall and branches of the Righteous Alliance.

Because of this, his son Tang Ren Yoo, the young elite disciples of the Tang Clan, and his younger brother, the Internal Head Tang Yoo-in, had gone to the Righteous Alliance.

-Clench!

Tang In-hae bit his lip tightly as he looked at the Tang Clan's warriors.

'I'm sorry.'

No matter how much he racked his brain, there were only two paths that came to mind now.

If the protector of the Yoo Family wins by luck, they could get through this without any incidents, but if the opposite situation occurs, the Tang Clan would face their worst enemy.

If that happens, they might face the crisis of annihilation.

With this, he had to choose whether to risk his life and fight that monster bastard together with them, or quietly escape alone while that bastard was still fighting the former member of the Yoo Family, hoping for the future.

If that monster bastard had come here with a desire for revenge against Mun-no, no one here might be able to survive.

-Swish!

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae turned his head and looked at Ye Song-ah.

He had already made his choice.

"Deputy Head. Take this child Song-ah to the villa for a moment and come back. Keep an eye on the situation."

"Understood!"

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'He's being troublesome.'

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae clicked his tongue as he loaded the unconscious Ye Song-ah, whose acupoint had been sealed, into the carriage.

She had realized that something was wrong and tried to escape.

As a result, he had no choice but to knock her unconscious.

"Sleep for a while. It will only make things more complicated if you're awake. Go!"

Tang In-hae personally took the coachman's seat and grabbed the reins.

Fortunately, thanks to all the Green Forest bandits retreating, almost all of the Tang Clan's forces had gathered at the main gate.

Since he had sent the remaining guard warriors to the front, there was no need to be cautious.

He had to hurry and get out of here.

-Clop clop!

With that, Tang In-hae drove the carriage and left through the back gate.

The carriage had only gone about ten jang when,

-Clop clop!

At that moment, the sound of rough hoofbeats and wheels was heard from somewhere.

Wondering what it was,

The bushes rustled, and then a horse that looked much larger than an ordinary horse appeared, and then a bald monk-like person appeared, driving a carriage.

At first, he was puzzled, but then he tried to turn the reins to change direction.

However,

“Go!”

The carriage that had burst through the bushes changed direction as well and blocked the path.

Angered by this, Tang In-hae was about to raise his voice at the person driving the carriage, but then he frowned.

‘That person, could it be the Demonic Demon Fist Sage Ja Geum-jeong?’

He realized who it was by looking at his appearance.

Since the notoriety of the Three Madmen was so high, most martial artists were familiar with their appearance.

This was also the case for Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae.

‘Why has Ja Geum-jeong come here?’

Except for one of the Three Madmen, the other two were close to being neutral, but their conduct itself was not very good, so most martial artists treated them as part of the evil faction.

Tang In-hae also felt the same way.

Following the Green Forest bandits, even that crazy bald monk had come. He had no idea what was going on.

Then, someone jumped down from the carriage.

-Tap tap tap!

There were three people, none other than Mok Gyeong-un’s subordinates: the masked Ma Ra-hyeon, Seop Chun, and Mong Mu-yak.

Ja Geum-jeong also got up from the coachman’s seat and opened his mouth.

“Is that guy really the Clan Leader or whatever that the lord wants to catch?”

'Clan Leader or whatever?'

Tang In-hae was dumbfounded by his rough expression.

Although he was notorious as one of the Three Madmen, he was the head of the great Sichuan Tang Clan and one of the Eight Stars, who could be considered the top experts of the martial arts world.

Regardless of the righteous or evil factions, their status itself was different.

However,

'...What?'

Tang In-hae frowned as he looked at Ma Ra-hyeon, who was wearing a mask.

The crazy bald monk wasn't the problem.

No matter how he looked at it, that masked guy seemed to have surpassed the peak, even though he was trying his best to restrain his energy.

This level could be considered comparable to the elders of the Nine Great Sects.

Moreover,

'Those two are also not ordinary.'

Both of them were experts who had reached the extreme peak of the Transcendent Realm.

Tang In-hae's eyes were filled with wariness.

If it was just Ja Geum-jeong alone, he could have dealt with him with his overwhelming martial prowess, but if there was someone who had reached the realm of a superhuman beyond the peak, the situation was different.

"Who are you guys?"

-Rumble!

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae deliberately revealed his energy and spoke to them.

The purpose was to show an overwhelming appearance and make them retreat on their own.

Although it was quite annoying to have an expert who had surpassed the peak and three experts who had reached the extreme peak of the Transcendent Realm, there was nothing he couldn't handle as someone who had reached the pinnacle of poison techniques.

"...Indeed worthy of being one of the Eight Stars."

Seop Chun clicked his tongue at Tang In-hae's overwhelming aura.

His level was completely different from his own.

But he wasn't afraid.

It was because he was serving a true monster up close.

He still couldn't forget the aura that Mok Gyeong-un had shown at that time.

It was like death and fear itself.

Compared to that, even though the aura of Thousand Poison Hand Tang In-hae, one of the Eight Stars, was impressive enough to make his skin tingle, it was tolerable.

Then, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae opened his mouth again.

“I won’t say it twice. If you want to save your lives, leave now.”

-Sizzle! Sizzle!

It was a warning filled with murderous intent.

Faced with Tang In-hae’s aura that surged like waves, they drew out their energy and assumed a formation stance.

Seeing their behavior, Tang In-hae was inwardly exasperated.

Even though he was revealing his energy to this extent and warning them, they showed no sign of retreating at all?

Just who were these bastards?

-Hiss hiss hiss!

Tang In-hae, who was dumbfounded, released purple poison energy from both hands and spoke in a threatening tone.

“You truly have lost your fear. In the hands of this Clan Leader...”

"The bald monk's master is abandoning his family and running away in fear, yet his tongue is long."

"..."

Ja Geum-jeong's sarcastic remark, cutting off his words, left Tang In-hae momentarily speechless.

He had wondered who these bastards were, but could it be that they were related to that monster?

'He had subordinates too?'

What the hell was going on?

Wasn't it said that Mun-no and he were living in seclusion alone?

But why were these guys with him?

Tang In-hae's mind became complicated.

Then, his mind became clear as he heard the sound of a huge boom coming from behind.

-Boom!

If he didn't run away right now, he might be caught by that monster-like bastard and go to the netherworld.

With this, Tang In-hae brought his hand behind his waist.

Among the secrets of the Sichuan Tang Clan, there were many secret weapons for dealing with multiple opponents.

One of them was the Thousand Flower Rain.

The Thousand Flower Rain infused with his poison energy could temporarily incapacitate those guys.

He had to take that opportunity to escape with Ye Song-ah.

‘Even if there’s a gap in martial prowess, I should be able to escape from these bastards.’

Having made this decision, Tang In-hae was about to take out needles from inside his waist.

But at that very moment,

-Swish!

At that moment, Ma Ra-hyeon’s figure blurred and disappeared.

Then, in the blink of an eye, he appeared right in front of him.

‘What speed does this guy have?’

Tang In-hae was surprised and tilted his head back as Ma Ra-hyeon’s speed was so tremendous that even he momentarily lost sight of his figure.

-Swish!

At that moment, a kick brushed past where his face had been.

It was an extremely fast kicking technique.

With this, Tang In-hae released a handful of needles he was holding and launched a palm strike infused with poison energy to make Ma Ra-hyeon retreat.

-Boom!

Faced with his powerful palm strike, Ma Ra-hyeon somersaulted backward to avoid it.

-Tap tap!

Then, he kicked the ground twice and was about to unleash a proper technique when,

“Wait a moment, stop!”

Someone stopped Ma Ra-hyeon.

Tang In-hae, who was about to respond, also turned his gaze to that direction at the familiar voice.

It was none other than the carriage they had brought.

At that moment, the carriage door opened.

-Creak!

Then, a man in his mid-thirties holding a snake-shaped staff appeared from inside the carriage.

It was a face he had never seen before, but the moment he saw the staff, Tang In-hae’s eyes widened.

‘!!!!’

It was because that staff belonged to Guyang Sa-oh, the head of the Guyang Family, who could be considered his archrival, known as the Eight Poison Snake Staff.

### Chapter 336 – Mastermind (3)

‘That thing?’

Tang In-hae, the patriarch of the Sichuan Tang Clan, displayed a glint of interest in his eyes.

And for good reason. The snake-shaped walking cane grasped by that man in his mid-thirties was none other than the Eight Poison Snake Staff, the staff of Guyang Sa-oh, the patriarch of the Guyang Clan.

Guyang Sa-oh was the only one who could match Tang In-hae’s reputation in terms of poison, and they had engaged in several duels over the long years, making it impossible for Tang In-hae not to recognize the cane.

But why was this young man holding Guyang Sa-oh’s cane?

‘Could he be a descendant of that old man Guyang?’

Just as Tang In-hae was wondering, it happened.

-Swish!

Ma Ra-hyeon, the masked man, unfurled his Pungsindo and used extreme high-speed movement to create distance, saying,

“Will the elder do it?”

“Hasn’t this matter between your lord and me already concluded?”

At Tang In-hae’s words, Ma Ra-hyeon suppressed the energy he had unleashed and pointed at Tang In-hae with his palm, as if conceding to him.

Seeing this, Tang In-hae snorted.

Although he was quite surprised by the tremendous lightness skill, he found it absurd that Ma Ra-hyeon was displaying an attitude of conceding to someone.

“This is no longer tolerable. Does the venerable one take me so lightly...?”

“Your opponent will be this old man.”

‘!?’

Tang In-hae flinched for a moment.

He had only thought about getting away from that monster somehow, so he hadn’t realized it, but this voice was extremely familiar.

‘Could it be?’

Tang In-hae looked at the man’s face.

It wasn’t a face he recognized.

Which meant...

“That face, could it be a Human Skin Mask?”

“As expected of you, little brother Tang. I thought you would recognize me by voice alone.”

“Big brother Guyang?”

“It’s been a while, little brother Tang.”

Upon hearing how he was addressed, an exclamation escaped Tang In-hae’s mouth.

He had suspected it, but it was indeed his one and only longtime rival, the Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh.

He had thought their next meeting would be when they were both more advanced in age, but who would have imagined they would face each other like this, with Guyang Sa-oh wearing a Human Skin Mask?

However, this wasn’t a major issue.

Rather...

“...Big brother Guyang, why are you with them?”

“It just turned out this way.”

“Just turned out?”

“That’s right. Anyway, didn’t we agree to duel at White Jade Hall in due time?”

“That’s true, but big brother Guyang, isn’t there still time left until the appointed date?”

"This old man has his circumstances, so it seems difficult to wait until then."

-Simmering!

As soon as he finished speaking, a green poisonous aura flowed out from Guyang Sa-oh's entire body.

He had instantly drawn out up to seven of the Eight Poisons.

From the beginning, they knew each other's abilities better than anyone, so he had unleashed his poisonous energy close to his full strength.

Faced with his momentum, Tang In-hae's complexion darkened.

Until Guyang Sa-oh revealed himself, Tang In-hae had thought that with his difference in martial arts, he could repel them if he went all out.

But the situation had completely changed.

If that old man, his equal in poisonous techniques, was determined to stop him, there was no escape.

Moreover...

-Swish!

Tang In-hae shifted his gaze to look at the masked Ma Ra-hyeon.

If that villain who had surpassed the wall during their duel intervened and launched a sneak attack, he would suffer a miserable defeat.

As if sensing his thoughts, Guyang Sa-oh spoke.

“This will be the final duel of our lives, little brother Tang. None of you should interfere.”

“We’ll do as you wish.”

“Understood.”

“Keheheh. This will be quite a spectacle.”

Seop Chun and Mong Mu-yak gave brief responses, while the heretic monk Ja Geum-jeong rubbed his hands together as if excited.

Ma Ra-hyeon nodded his head with a slightly regretful look in his eyes.

Having reached enlightenment and experienced a surge in his martial arts, he had inwardly wanted to test himself against a master of similar or higher level, so he was disappointed to miss this opportunity.

However, even though they had expressed their intention not to interfere, Tang In-hae was not one to take their words at face value.

“Big brother Guyang. They are no different from enemies to our sect. I cannot easily trust their words. And do you think we can properly focus and engage in a duel in this situation?”

Patriarch Tang In-hae wanted to avoid this confrontation at all costs.

The monsters had to be avoided until their duel concluded, but if he remained trapped here, the worst-case scenario could unfold.

“Big brother Guyang. Please postpone our duel, even if just for the sake of our past ties. I implore you with utmost sincerity.”

-Clap!

Tang In-hae clasped his hands together and bowed his head, even performing a formal salute.

Seeing his behavior, the heretic monk Ja Geum-jeong gulped down some wine from his gourd and sneered.

“Tsk tsk. He’s really going all out to avoid being caught by his master.”

“What did you say!”

Tang In-hae glared fiercely at him.

Then Guyang Sa-oh spoke, drawing out even more poisonous energy and momentum.

“Your opponent is this old man.”

“Big brother Guyang!”

“Listen, little brother Tang. The only choice given to you is to fight against this old man. If you refuse and attempt to flee, even if it’s not a duel, I will have no choice but to detain you here as per my agreement with that person. Now, let’s begin!”

-Whoosh!

With those words, Guyang Sa-oh unleashed a fearsome momentum, infusing his green poisonous energy into his serpent cane and executed a sweeping strike.

‘Damn it!’

Faced with his attack, Tang In-hae had no choice but to respond.

He, too, exuded a purple, no, indigo poisonous aura and unleashed his own technique to block the strike.

-Boom!

-Sizzle!

As their poisonous energies collided, the surrounding grass withered and the ground began to turn black due to the impact of their clashing forces.

Although they had only exchanged a single move, the two rivals who had completed their probing could discern each other's improved skills.

'That old man Guyang has become even stronger.'

'As expected, he has grown stronger. But now that I have nearly perfected the Eight Poison Secret Technique, let's settle this once and for all!'

Thus, the life-or-death duel between the two arch-rivals began.

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[Father.]

Moo-jin called out to his father, Moo-jeok.

In response to his call, his father Moo-jeok, without taking his eyes off the dark valley that seemed like an endless abyss, opened his mouth.

[What is it?]

[How long do we have to stay here?]

[How would I know?]

[I don't understand why our family has to go this far.]

[Then you're saying we should neglect the duty passed down from our ancestors and leave this place? Moo-jin. The moment we leave here, the Central Plains will turn into a wasteland.]

[...I know that, but this is almost like volunteer work.]

[Volunteer work or not, it doesn't matter. If many people can find peace because of us, that's enough satisfaction.]

[It's not very satisfying to me.]

[Then what will you do about it? Are you saying you'll just leave?]

[No, not that... It's just a bit frustrating. Grandfather and you have been stuck here for so long...]

[Then train hard and figure out a way to deal with that thing. Then our family won't have to stay here like this.]

[...]

Moo-jin furtively glanced down at the valley that resembled a bottomless pit.

If that were possible, would they be doing this?

The ancestor who could be considered their progenitor was born with such innate strength that it was said all the energies of heaven and earth had gathered within him, so he had no equal. However, his descendants, including Moo-jin himself, were different.

Perhaps because their bloodline had grown thinner with each generation, they had become much weaker compared to their predecessors.

[Sigh. I'll stop talking about it.]

[You too.]

Moo-jeok chuckled.

Then Moo-jin stood up and spoke.

[Even if it's like this here, until when do we have to continue serving the Tang Clan? No matter how much it's a request, no, a dying wish from the wife of our progenitor, is the Tang Clan really in that much danger? There aren't many among the martial artists who can threaten them.]

[Of course, it's rare for them to be in that much danger.]

[Right? You think so too, Father?]

[But it's not always the case.]

[What do you mean?]

[Have you already forgotten about the day of the Great Calamity?]

[...That was when inhuman beings went berserk and caused chaos.]

[Yes, that's right. But at that time, the one your great-grandfather confronted to protect the Tang Clan was not an inhuman being, but a deformed human.]

[Deformed? I see.]

-Tap tap!

Moo-jeok tapped his forehead with his finger and said,

[He had an eye here too.]

[...Where in the world is there a person with three eyes?]

[Does it sound like a lie? But what can you do? This father of yours also saw that three-eyed freak fifty years ago.]

[You saw it? Where?]

[Here.]

[What?]

Moo-jin couldn't hide his surprise at those words.

This place was a hidden forbidden area.

How could someone enter this place that even ordinary people, no, even exceptional martial artists couldn't see with their naked eyes?

[So what happened?]

[What else could have happened? This father of yours drove him away.]

[Phew.]

At that, Moo-jin let out a sigh as if it was anticlimactic.

Well, of course.

It was hard to imagine his father, who had unlocked the Force Suppressing Bracelet up to the second stage, something no one in their clan had achieved for generations, being defeated by someone.

However...

[It wasn't easy to drive him away.]

As he spoke, Moo-jeok slightly lifted his upper garment.

Then, a long scar running across the center of his chest was revealed.

Seeing this, Moo-jin's eyes widened as he asked,

[Wasn't this the scar you got from fighting great-grandfather?]

[No. It's the wound inflicted by that bastard.]

[But why did the scar remain like this?]

Their clan possessed a recovery ability bordering on regeneration to an extraordinary degree.

Although it was rare for them to get wounded, even if they did, it healed quickly, so it was unusual for scars to remain unless it was a severe injury.

That's why Moo-jin had always found the scar on his father's chest puzzling.

[I don't know. It could be because that bastard's peculiar energy slowed down the healing, or it could be because the wound was that severe.]

'!!!!'

At his words, Moo-jin's expression hardened.

His father was called invincible, a title that was no exaggeration.

To think there was a being who not only left a scar on his invincible father but also managed to escape alive.

He must be truly formidable.

As Moo-jin inwardly marveled, his father Moo-jeok solemnly advised,

[Don't neglect your training. Our clan is growing weaker with each generation. Even if it's not that three-eyed freak, there's no guarantee that a new powerhouse won't emerge at any time.]

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-Boom boom boom boom!

‘...That new powerhouse is right here.’

Moo-jin inwardly clicked his tongue.

He had unlocked the Force Suppressing Bracelet up to the third stage and was displaying his full strength, yet his opponent was withstanding it.

No, as the enemy gathered that power into one and unleashed a violent black aura from his entire body, he became even stronger.

It wasn’t mere luck that he had blocked that punch earlier.

-Swish swish swish!

‘Fast.’

Moreover, in terms of speed, the enemy was a step above Moo-jin.

Even if he could vaguely discern the enemy’s location with his naked eye, it was difficult to catch up with the extreme high-speed movement.

Whenever Moo-jin thought he had caught him, the enemy would scatter using the Shifting Image Technique.

Furthermore...

-Swish! Swish!

-Clang! Crash!

Moo-jin stopped running, tilted his head to the side to avoid the sword, and then struck the incoming sword with his fist.

‘Damn it.’

He had to constantly deal with the two black-colored swords imbued with this vicious aura, which further diverted his attention.

In that case, a different approach was needed.

-Crack! Creak!

The biceps and forearms of Moo-jin’s blackened right arm bulged greatly.

Not only did his muscles swell, but the surrounding energy began to converge towards his fist.

-Rumble!

Sensing an ominous feeling, Mok Gyeong-un, who had been using extreme speed and the Clear Water Surpassing Steps to exploit openings, tried to create distance.

That very moment.

Moo-jin abruptly swung his fist towards the ground.

‘Third Stance of the Secret Technique: Ground Destruction!’

-Kwaaang!

As soon as his fist struck, an astonishing event unfolded.

With the point of impact as the center, the ground within a radius of about thirty jang began to shake violently as if an earthquake had occurred, and soon, along with cracks...

-Crumble! Crash crash crash!

The shattered fragments of the ground all shot upwards.

‘What?’

Mok Gyeong-un was dumbfounded.

Who would have imagined that his movements would be obstructed in such an absurd way?

With no room to even set foot as the entire ground shattered and debris flew up, Mok Gyeong-un had no choice but to momentarily stop and use his Demonic Swords to block the fragments.

That very instant.

-Boom!

“Got you.”

Moo-jin appeared in front of the halted Mok Gyeong-un.

Along with his appearance, Moo-jin’s fist flew towards Mok Gyeong-un’s face.

-Swish!

It was at that precise moment.

Mok Gyeong-un kicked off the Evil Commandment Sword that had flown close to him and soared upwards.

‘He dodged it?’

Having eliminated any footing, Moo-jin hadn’t expected him to utilize the Ghost Hungry Sword.

However, would he let him escape?

Such a feat was possible after unlocking the third stage of the Force Suppressing Bracelet.

-Boom!

Moo-jin kicked the air.

Leaping into the air, Moo-jin interlocked his hands and spun his body while rotating.

‘Fifth Stance of the Secret Technique: Revolving Flying Dragon!’

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

As he rotated his body, creating a whirlwind, a tremendous gale arose.

The force was so strong that the sound of the air being torn could be heard all around.

Seeing Moo-jin swiftly catch up to him, Mok Gyeong-un clicked his tongue and tried to change direction to evade.

However...

-Whoosh!

The whirlwind generated by Moo-jin was strangely drawing in everything around it.

Due to the immense pulling force, Mok Gyeong-un's figure, who had tried to change direction, was about to be sucked into the center of the whirlwind.

'Ah.'

A glint flashed in Mok Gyeong-un's eyes.

The reason for the pulling force seemed to be because the whirlwind was generated inwardly.

The moment he was sucked into it, it would be the end.

However, while an ordinary person would be desperate to escape from this...

'The weakness of rotation is...'

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un stretched out his hand, and the Evil Commandment Sword that had been flying in the air was drawn in.

-Thud!

Kicking off the air while grasping the Evil Commandment Sword, Mok Gyeong-un gained even more speed due to the pulling force and swiftly flew towards the center of the whirlwind.

‘Seems like a mistake.’

Seeing this, Moo-jin smirked.

Although the center of the whirlwind could be a weak point like the eye of a typhoon, he himself, with his monstrous strength, was positioned at that center.

The center was absolutely not a weakness.

Rather, it could be said that Mok Gyeong-un had chosen the worst possible move.

But at that very moment...

-Swish!

The Plundering-killing Sword flew in.

The target was not Moo-jin.

The Plundering-killing Sword created a foothold for Mok Gyeong-un, who was flying towards the whirlwind.

-Thud thud!

Mok Gyeong-un kicked off the blade of the Plundering-killing Sword twice.

At that moment, his figure split into two.

-Swish! Swish!

One of the split figures pulled the Evil Commandment Sword and stretched forward.

At that instant, the tip of the Evil Commandment Sword trembled, and a predestined whirlwind arose.

‘Competing with whirlwinds?’

Moo-jin scoffed.

Could the predestined whirlwind generated by a mere sword block his own whirlwind created with his entire body?

‘Huh?’

But there was something strange about the whirlwind.

Since the directions of these whirlwinds were colliding, they should have been fiercely rotating in opposite directions, but...

‘The same direction?’

The whirlwinds were rotating in the same direction.

This was not the right-rotating Chasing Whirlwind Sword, but the left-rotating Reverse Chasing Whirlwind Sword.

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Thanks to this, the two whirlwinds cleverly adhered to each other without pushing each other away, and an unexpected event occurred.

A passage opened up in the middle.

Through that passage...

-Swish!

A black line appeared.

Seeing this, Moo-jin immediately stopped rotating.

‘I knew it.’

He had thought that if an opening was created, this technique of concentrating power into a single point would be used in some way.

If not for this, there was no way to deal a fatal blow to him.

Moo-jin’s eyes sparkled.

Then...

-Clang!

Moo-jin clapped his palms together as if applauding.

Along with the sound of metal, the blade of the Evil Commandment Sword was suddenly caught between his palms.

Although tremendous power flowed through his hands as the enemy's strength converged into one, it wasn't a significant problem to withstand it with the force of the third stage of the Force Suppressing Bracelet unleashed.

Moo-jin spoke with a smile.

"Do you think the same technique will keep working?"

-Grip!

With those words, Moo-jin, while grasping the sword with his left hand, tried to swing his fist towards Mok Gyeong-un's chest.

However, before it could even touch...

-Gush!

Mok Gyeong-un's face turned pale, and black blood flowed from his mouth.

Judging by the rapid depletion of his energy, it seemed he had suffered severe internal injuries.

The victor had finally been decided.

'Having used techniques that strain the body in succession, it's only natural that he couldn't endure...'

-Stab!

It was at that very moment.

Moo-jin looked down at something sharp that had pierced through his chest.

It was a sword imbued with vicious black sword energy.

“This... How?”

As he was bewildered, Mok Gyeong-un spoke, lifting the corners of his mouth.

“...Although it takes quite some time compared to directly unleashing it, it’s possible to concentrate power into one point even with the Demonic Swords. The effort of deliberately becoming bait was worth it.”

“Bait?”

Moo-jin’s expression twisted in pain.

If concentrating power into the demonic sword had failed, Mok Gyeong-un could have died, yet he had risked his life and became bait just to test that?

Chapter 337 – Mastermind (4)

It was a gamble for Mok Gyeong-un as well.

Strictly speaking, concentrating power into a single point was akin to becoming a sword oneself, so Mok Gyeong-un was half in doubt whether it would be possible to manifest this using the Demonic Swords.

However, with his understanding of energy heightened after surpassing the wall's wall, Mok Gyeong-un thought it would be theoretically possible.

But there were two problems here.

This technique had two glaring weaknesses.

'Convergence of energy.'

Concentrating all the energy and power from one's entire body into a single point and focusing it on a sword at a distance was by no means easy.

When unleashing it with the body, it could be executed at any time, even if there was a burden on the whole body, but it took quite some time to send energy to the Demonic Swords.

And secondly...

'It's too conspicuous.'

This was the biggest problem.

If enough energy was concentrated to focus power into one point with the Demonic Swords, the probability of the opponent noticing it would be extremely high.

This was especially true for masters of higher realms.

Unable to recklessly test this out, Mok Gyeong-un had no choice but to lure the opponent's senses to focus solely on him.

That's why Mok Gyeong-un created that opportunity.

Through continuous extreme high-speed movement, he made Moo-jin desperate and exert his full strength.

With the explosion of the vast natural earth energy shattering the ground and the whirlwind of energy generated by the stances and techniques unleashed by the two superhuman beings, the surroundings were shaken, allowing it to be faintly concealed to a certain degree.

But Mok Gyeong-un didn't stop there.

He created a situation that the opponent could predict, directly concentrating power into one point and drawing all attention to himself.

That's what being bait meant.

Confident of victory, Moo-jin ultimately let his guard down, and this was the result.

"Urgh..."

Moo-jin's face twisted in pain.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un inwardly clicked his tongue.

Although he had intuitively felt that the power would be weaker than when he unleashed it himself, since he had concentrated energy into a single sword to gather his strength, he hadn't expected it to fail to completely penetrate Moo-jin's body.

'Or is he that sturdy?'

In any case, the gamble had succeeded, but it was undoubtedly a technique that was difficult to utilize in many ways.

Anyway, with the sword piercing his heart, the match was decided.

No...

"I should finish it."

The match would only end when the opponent's breath was definitively cut off.

Unless a whim arose, Mok Gyeong-un, who never left any loose ends, removed his hand from the Evil Commandment Sword caught in Moo-jin's grasp and formed a sword of demonic energy with his sword fingers.

-Whoosh!

As Mok Gyeong-un was about to behead him, Moo-jin gritted his teeth and abruptly kicked Mok Gyeong-un's chest.

-Thud!

As a result, Mok Gyeong-un was sent flying backward and fell, while Moo-jin also plummeted at a fast speed, pushed back by the force of his kick.

-Thump!

Landing on the ground, Mok Gyeong-un barely regained his posture and clicked his tongue.

The heart was pierced not by an ordinary sword but by his own energy-infused Plundering-killing Sword. He hadn't expected Moo-jin to have this much strength left.

However, even that seemed difficult now.

The staggering Moo-jin couldn't even properly stand up.

"Ugh..."

No matter how much of a monster he was, transcending the realm of humans, having his heart penetrated must be unimaginably agonizing.

No, it was rather astonishing that he was still breathing.

Of course, Mok Gyeong-un himself had survived even after his heart area was stabbed, but Moo-jin was penetrated not by a simple sword strike but by a Ghost Sword imbued with demonic energy, so how was he still enduring like this?

Well, it didn't matter.

Even with a tenacious life, he would have no choice but to die if his head was severed.

-Swish! -Clack!

The Evil Commandment Sword was drawn into Mok Gyeong-un's hand.

Grasping the Evil Commandment Sword, Mok Gyeong-un swiftly leaped forward.

-Whoosh!

With his figure blurring and scattering, Mok Gyeong-un reached Moo-jin's front in an instant and attempted to behead him with the Evil Commandment Sword.

However...

-Slam!

Mok Gyeong-un, who was swinging the Evil Commandment Sword imbued with black sword energy, abruptly stopped midway.

As a result, a large, claw-shaped sword mark about ten jang long appeared outward in the direction he had been swinging the sword.

-Boom boom boom!

It was evidence that he had swung the sword with all his might to behead Moo-jin, who possessed a body as indestructible as vajra.

-Gulp!

Moo-jin subconsciously swallowed dry saliva.

Perhaps due to his innate boldness, he didn't close his eyes, but the moment he perceived death, he couldn't help but feel tense involuntarily.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

"What did you just say?"

"..."

At Mok Gyeong-un's question, Moo-jin stared at him intently.

Could it be that he had stopped the sword because of those words?

As Moo-jin wondered, Mok Gyeong-un asked again.

“What did you say?”

-Swish!

The sharp blade touched the skin of Moo-jin’s neck.

The ominous black sword energy on the blade seemed ready to behead him at any moment.

Although Moo-jin didn’t fear it, he spoke, feeling curious.

“Haa... haa... I asked what your relationship is with the Three-Eyed.”

At his answer, a glint flashed in Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes.

As expected, it seemed he had correctly read Moo-jin’s lip movements.

Mok Gyeong-un had read Moo-jin’s muttering with an incomprehensible expression while looking at the sword piercing his heart using the art of lip-reading.

“Haa... haa... Could it be... cough... that you stopped because of those words?”

“The Three-Eyed you mentioned... Do you mean a being with a third eye on the forehead?”

At this question, Moo-jin furrowed his brows.

How does this person know about the Three-Eyed his father mentioned?

Then was his guess correct?

"It seems... cough cough... you really are related to the Three-Eyed. Otherwise, this wound wouldn't be... ugh..."

-Sizzle!

Before he could finish speaking, steam began to flow from Moo-jin's body, and his blackened body gradually turned red.

Along with that, Moo-jin continuously vomited blood.

"Blargh!"

The golden bracelet's ratchet on Moo-jin's right wrist turned.

-Click click click!

The number on the ratchet rapidly increased and returned to ten.

Then, the steam from Moo-jin's body stopped, and his face turned pale.

'Did he forcibly seal his energy?'

Mok Gyeong-un made that guess while looking at the bracelet on Moo-jin's right arm.

As Moo-jin's momentum weakened, the bracelet seemed to suppress his energy as if it had been waiting.

Having somewhat returned to a more human-like appearance, Moo-jin raised his head with great difficulty, his face even more agonized.

His rough breathing made it seem like he would stop breathing at any moment.

‘Hmm.’

For a fleeting moment, Mok Gyeong-un fell into contemplation.

Should he keep Moo-jin alive to learn something he knew about the Three-Eyed or not?

However, Moo-jin was an extremely annoying opponent.

Mok Gyeong-un himself had also considerably depleted his energy while fighting with all his might, so if he gave Moo-jin even the slightest chance to recover here, who knew what would happen?

-Kill him, Joongsheng. This guy is too dangerous. Even if it's not this monster-like fellow, there will be other opportunities to obtain information.

Cheong-ryeong urged him to kill Moo-jin.

Within the wooden figurine in Mok Gyeong-un's bosom, she had closely observed the fight more than anyone else.

That's why she believed Moo-jin should never be given a chance to recover.

However...

“...Let's hear him out first.”

-What? You again... Ha!

Cheong-ryeong clicked her tongue at Mok Gyeong-un's stubbornness.

She couldn't understand why he displayed such dangerous whims at times like this.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un lightly waved his hand.

-Swish!

Then...

-Pop!

The Plundering-killing Sword that had been stabbed into Moo-jin's back, piercing his heart, was pulled out.

“Ugh!”

A scream burst from Moo-jin's mouth at the pain.

From Moo-jin's perspective, it was the most extreme pain he had ever experienced in his life, so he couldn't help but suffer.

His clan possessed innate physiques, so they were stronger against pain compared to others, and their sturdy bodies rarely sustained injuries.

This applied not only externally but also internally.

Moreover, even if they were wounded, their extraordinary recovery ability quickly healed the injured areas.

However, strangely, the vicious and dark energy that had entered along with the sword piercing his heart and the peculiar evil nature of the sword interfered with his rapid recovery.

‘I can’t breathe...’

The penetration of the heart ultimately hindered the smooth circulation of blood, and Moo-jin could only approach death.

It was at that very moment.

-Whoosh!

The vicious energy that had been obstructing his recovery finally left his heart.

Although the peculiar evil nature remained, the energy that had most hindered his recovery was gone, and the penetrated area slowly began to regenerate.

And as the blood circulated...

“Haah!”

Moo-jin exhaled roughly as if his blocked breathing had burst open.

Mok Gyeong-un said to him,

“...Seeing you breathe again after I only adjusted the demonic energy makes me contemplate my choice.”

“Haa... haa... Demonic energy?”

“Yes. You can feel that energy that left your heart, right?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, a glint flashed in Moo-jin’s eyes.

“…Why?”

“It must be out of necessity, right?”

“Necessity? ...Could it be because of that Three-Eyed? No, what is your relationship with the Three-Eyed?”

Moo-jin, whose mind had suddenly cleared, asked Mok Gyeong-un.

In response, Mok Gyeong-un moved the demonic energy within Moo-jin’s body.

As the vicious energy actively moved again, Moo-jin frowned.

“I haven’t fully removed the demonic energy yet. Since it’s near the heart, I can reinsert it.”

“You mean you hold the upper hand?”

Mok Gyeong-un replied with a smirk,

“If you understand, I hope you’ll obediently answer my questions.”

“...”

Moo-jin stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un.

Although the evil nature that had remained in the sword piercing his heart was still hindering his recovery, if given a little more time, it seemed he could escape the critical condition.

For now, it was better to play along, even if only for a short while.

“Ask away.”

“How do you know about the Three-Eyed?”

“…You could say my clan has a bit of a bad history with him.”

“A bit of a bad history?”

“Both my great-grandfather and father fought against that Three-Eyed with an eye on his forehead, whether by coincidence or not.”

‘They fought against the Three-Eyed?’

At the unexpected answer, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes turned peculiar.

He had wondered what kind of relationship they had, but if Moo-jin’s great-grandfather and father had fought against the Three-Eyed, weren’t they essentially his enemies?

At that moment, Moo-jin parted his lips and continued,

“What is your relationship with the Three-Eyed?”

“I thought I made it clear that only I would ask the questions.”

“You already hold the upper hand over my life, so can’t you at least answer this much...”

-Whoosh!

Before he could finish speaking, the vicious energy surged into Moo-jin’s heart, attempting to worsen the slowly recovering wound again.

-Slam!

“Ugh.”

As Moo-jin clutched his chest, Mok Gyeong-un spoke with a smile.

“Despite your surprisingly excellent recovery ability, I hope you weren’t under the mistaken impression that I would kindly allow the penetrated wound to heal.”

“Haa... haa... I had hoped for that, but it seems I shouldn’t wish for it.”

“I’m glad you understand.”

-Whoosh!

As the wound worsened again, Mok Gyeong-un withdrew the demonic energy from Moo-jin’s heart, causing his face to turn pale.

Then, he casually said,

“Well, my relationship with the Three-Eyed is similar to yours.”

“Phew... phew... Similar, you say? Then do you mean you’re also in a hostile relationship with the Three-Eyed?”

“You could say that.”

“But why do you possess a power similar to that Three-Eyed?”

“Similar, you say?”

Mok Gyeong-un tilted his head.

What did he mean by that?

As he wondered, Moo-jin spoke.

“Due to our clan’s innate bodies, our wounds heal quickly, leaving no scars. However, that deformed person called the Three-Eyed left an indelible scar on my father’s chest.”

“You mean the scar never fully healed?”

“Yes.”

At that answer, Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin.

Just like the energy of death, which could be called death energy, the demonic energy born from it also possessed the property of destroying the opponent’s energy.

But did the Three-Eyed also possess a power similar to this or one that hindered recovery?

If this Three-Eyed was identical to the being he knew, it could be quite useful information.

However...

“So you suspected I was related to the Three-Eyed because of that?”

“…Do you think there would be many individuals with such bizarre powers?”

“Well, there’s some truth to those words. But just like you, that Three-Eyed is related to the death of the one who raised me, so while being mortal enemies is possible, being on the same side is unlikely.”

“Ah...”

At the mention of the death of the one who raised him, Moo-jin felt awkward for no reason.

Then wouldn’t that person be almost like a parent?

‘Are they really unrelated?’

If the one who raised him was killed, as Mok Gyeong-un said, they would be nothing less than mortal enemies.

However, it was quite a coincidence that they possessed such similar powers.

But upon reflection, there was no reason for Mok Gyeong-un to interrogate him so persistently about the Three-Eyed if he held the upper hand and was on the same side as that being, so Moo-jin’s doubts gradually dissipated.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un asked him,

“If there’s anything else you know about the Three-Eyed, please tell me.”

“There’s nothing.”

“…Nothing, you say?”

“Yes.”

“That’s all you have? Since you mentioned they fought against the Three-Eyed, don’t you at least know why that person fought against your clan or what purpose they clashed for?”

“I really don’t know. All I know is that the Three-Eyed infiltrated the place where our clan resides and was driven away by my father.”

At these words, one of Mok Gyeong-un’s eyebrows rose.

He had thought Moo-jin might possess some useful information, but it was disappointingly lacking.

If this was truly all, there was no point in further conversation.

“If that’s all, it’s unfortunate. If you had more useful information, I could have spared your life in exchange.”

“…That’s uncertain.”

To the hesitant Moo-jin, Mok Gyeong-un spoke with a chilling smile.

“That’s the correct answer. You are a significant hindrance to my work.”

-Flinch!

At the strong malice he felt for the first time, Moo-jin momentarily shuddered.

He had never encountered someone like this in his life.

With concern, Moo-jin stared at him and spoke.

“Even if the Three-Eyed may be your mortal enemy, as you said, why do you show such hostility towards the Tang Clan? Are you trying to eradicate the Tang Clan?”

“Depending on the situation, yes.”

-Grip!

At those words, Moo-jin clenched his fists tightly.

This person was too dangerous.

Not only was he powerful, but if he possessed such chilling malice, he might truly annihilate the Tang Clan.

Seeing Moo-jin clench his fists, Mok Gyeong-un also spoke with a sneer.

“I don’t understand why you’re trying so hard to protect the Tang Clan. What is your relationship with them?”

“…We’re distant relatives, so we’re not unrelated.”

“Distant relatives?”

“Yes, distant relatives.”

“So you’re trying to protect them because they’re essentially your bloodline?”

“Although distant, does one need more reason to protect family?”

At those words, Mok Gyeong-un chuckled.

Then...

“Ah. Is that so? Then what do you think about a bloodline that killed someone who was essentially family, even if distant?”

“…What do you mean by that?”

In response to his reaction, Mok Gyeong-un spoke in a meaningful voice.

“The one who raised me belonged to one of the Tang Clan’s branch families, sharing that bloodline. However, the person known as the Tang Clan’s patriarch killed that individual with the Formless Poison.”

‘!!!!!!’

Chapter 338 – Mastermind (5)

On a mountain peak not far from the Sichuan Tang Clan’s estate.

“Oh my!”

An elderly, hunched woman leaning on a cane was left dumbfounded.

And for good reason. Anyone witnessing this tremendous duel would be astonished.

This had already surpassed the level of ordinary martial artists.

It was literally a confrontation between superhumans.

-Boom boom boom boom!

Every time they swung their swords or fists, everything around them shattered and split apart in utter chaos.

The surroundings had already been reduced to ruins, with not a single place left intact.

Seeing this, the hunched old woman, her mouth agape, clicked her tongue and spoke.

“Lady Chunchu... It seems they have already transcended the realm of humans.”

“...Indeed.”

Beside the old woman stood a woman with half black and half white hair.

Dressed in a provocative yet bright yellow attire reminiscent of rapeseed flowers, revealing her cleavage, she was both mysterious and incomparably beautiful.

As her voice sounded somewhat subdued, the old woman, thinking she might be in a foul mood, cautiously glanced to the side.

But something seemed strange.

Lady Chunchu's eyes, which were observing their duel, sparkled with fascination and interest.

‘…Has she developed an interest?’

She was the most emotional among the executives of her realm.

As a result, she was quite capricious and prone to mood swings, so it was difficult to understand why she was showing interest now.

She had been unable to hide her disappointment when Seok Pae-ung, the Green Forest Gambling King, whom she had considered a useful piece and invested in, lost his fighting spirit with just a single punch.

But her current reaction was completely opposite.

‘Is it because of that monstrous human fighting against the hidden power of the Tang Clan?’

The old woman's guess was none other than that human.

While the hidden power of the Tang Clan was astonishing, that suddenly appeared human was also no pushover.

When the monstrous hidden power of the Tang Clan began to fully unleash its strength, Lady Chunchu had said with a surprised expression:

[…He's strong. With this level of power, he wouldn't be inferior even when compared to the Six Heavens, let alone the Eight Stars.]

[S-Six Heavens, you say?]

The Six Heavens were considered the pinnacle among martial artists.

But did those unknown individuals possess strength comparable to such formidable figures?

How had they never been caught by their intelligence network?

It was truly astonishing.

Now it made sense why that person remained seated, maintaining caution.

The Central Plains was not a place to be taken lightly.

However...

“Ah!”

The old woman let out an exclamation as she watched the duel.

Their fight was reaching its climax.

Who would emerge victorious?

They were such fierce rivals that it wouldn't be surprising regardless of who won, making it difficult to predict.

But eventually, a winner was determined.

And the victor was...

‘How can this be...’

Contrary to expectations, it was not the hidden power of the Tang Clan but the one wielding that vicious energy who emerged victorious.

In that case, there was only one thing for them to do.

“Lady Chunchu! As you said, now is our chance!”

Fisherman’s gain.

It was a saying that a third party could benefit from the fight between a crane and a clam, meaning an outsider could profit from their conflict.

What they had been aiming for was precisely this fisherman’s gain.

At first, it was simply to gauge the level of the hidden power.

However, since it was a fight between fierce rivals, regardless of who won, the depletion of true energy would be severe, making it a perfect opportunity to exploit their vulnerability.

But...

“No.”

“Pardon?”

“I changed my mind.”

The old woman stared at her with a dumbfounded expression.

Why would she let go of such a great opportunity?

Right now, they could easily deal with them or capture and subdue them.

If they could eliminate the hidden power of the Tang Clan that even that person couldn't rashly touch and secure that unknown supreme master, they could make a tremendous contribution to the organization.

“Lady Chunchu!”

“I said no.”

“B-But this excellent opportunity, how can you...?”

“Because it's an excellent opportunity.”

“Pardon?”

“That guy... I want him.”

“That guy? You don't mean the hidden power of the Tang Clan...”

“No, that guy.”

Reflected in her gray-tinted pupils was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

“There's no need to invest in other things. If we eliminate everything else and have just that guy, wouldn't that be enough?”

At her words, the old woman couldn't help but feel restless.

She hadn't anticipated that Lady Chunchu would show such whimsical behavior at this crucial moment.

Was it because her greed couldn't be controlled once awakened?

The old woman carefully spoke as if advising her.

"Lady Chunchu. If you truly want him, you should seize the opportunity. If you can easily obtain him, there's no need to postpone it to next time..."

"You think I wouldn't be able to get my hands on him unless he's weakened?"

"T-That's..."

The old woman realized her mistake.

She had touched upon Lady Chunchu's pride.

"No, that's not it. How could that be possible? If Lady Chunchu puts her mind to it, it's definitely possible."

"Didn't I tell you? Men are simple creatures."

"...Indeed."

"Just watch. With the right opportunity, I can easily turn him into a slave."

She had already made up her mind.

Realizing that further discussion would be meaningless, the old woman closed her mouth.

Perhaps it would be better to secretly report these two individuals to the council.

At that moment, Lady Chunchu spoke in a warning tone.

“I’m telling you in advance, if you secretly report to the council again without permission like last time, I definitely won’t let it slide.”

-Gulp!

The old woman swallowed dry saliva with a tense expression.

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“The one who raised me belonged to one of the Tang Clan’s branch families, sharing that bloodline. However, the person known as the Tang Clan’s patriarch killed that individual with the Formless Poison.”

‘!?’

Moo-jin’s expression hardened.

He had wondered what Mok Gyeong-un was trying to say when he mentioned someone who was like family.

But what on earth was this?

If the one who raised him was from a branch family of the Tang Clan, wouldn't that make them the main family and branch family? Was he saying the Tang Clan's patriarch killed that person with poison?

“Right now... That's...”

“It's exactly as you heard. The Tang Clan's patriarch killed the one who raised me.”

“Why would he do such a thing...?”

“I don't know either. As for why that person killed my grandfather.”

“Could there have been a misunderstanding?”

“If the Formless Poison, known to have been perfected only by the Tang Clan, was used, what misunderstanding or excuse is there?”

At those words, Moo-jin hurriedly spoke.

“Wait, how can you distinguish whether it was the Formless Poison or not?”

“I learned about poisons, so how could I not know?”

As soon as he finished speaking, Mok Gyeong-un raised poisonous energy with his left hand.

‘!?’

The purple poisonous energy rising from his left hand left Moo-jin at a loss for words.

He had mastered the art of poison as well?

Although his clan had strong resistance to poisons, rendering the art of poison ineffective against them, Mok Gyeong-un's swordsmanship had already reached the pinnacle, and now even his poison techniques were at this level, which was astonishing.

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un suppressed the poisonous energy and continued speaking.

“According to your logic, even if it’s distant, it’s like a dispute between family members, so will you keep interfering?”

“...”

Faced with this question, Moo-jin couldn’t say anything further.

Within the Tang Clan, they might distinguish between the main family and branch families, but from his perspective, as someone who protected the Tang Clan due to the dying wish of his ancestor, they were all part of the Tang Clan.

The dying wish was to protect the Tang Clan if there were enemies threatening them.

However, there was no dying wish regarding internal conflicts within the Tang Clan.

‘This is the first time encountering such a situation... What should I do?’

Moo-jin couldn’t help but feel perplexed.

If his hostility stemmed from an internal matter within the Tang Clan, it wouldn’t be right for him to interfere.

Rather, it felt like fighting until now had been a futile act.

But there was one thing he needed to ascertain.

‘I need to verify if it’s true or not.’

The possibility that this person’s words were lies couldn’t be ruled out.

With words alone, anyone could say anything.

If everything he said now turned out to be lies, he would be deceived, and the worst-case scenario would unfold for the Tang Clan.

Therefore, Moo-jin spoke.

“If your words are true, then this is an internal matter of the Tang Clan, so it’s not something I should rashly interfere with.”

“Oh? You accepted it readily. If I had known, I should have engaged in more conversation.”

“…But how will you prove that it’s true?”

“Prove?”

Mok Gyeong-un retorted, raising one eyebrow.

Nevertheless, Moo-jin continued with what he was saying.

“How can I know if the one who raised you is really a branch family of the Tang Clan or not?”

This was the most important point.

If they were truly a branch family, there would be some way to prove it.

However, at this question, Mok Gyeong-un chuckled and said,

“I’m already providing the ultimate proof.”

“The ultimate proof?”

“The fact that I’m having this conversation instead of killing you right away, isn’t that the ultimate proof?”

‘!?’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Moo-jin furrowed his brows.

It was truly peculiar.

If someone else had said this, it could be dismissed as somewhat far-fetched, but instead, these words resonated even more deeply.

“Hearing you talk about proof and whatnot, it seems I’ve done something unnecessary. It would be better to just kill you like this...”

-Swish!

Interrupting his own words, Mok Gyeong-un turned his head.

It was in the direction of the Tang Clan's estate.

As Mok Gyeong-un suddenly looked toward the estate, the Tang Clan's executives and warriors, who had been observing them while holding their breath, became extremely tense.

However, Mok Gyeong-un wasn't looking at them.

To be precise, it was beyond them.

After gazing in that direction, Mok Gyeong-un turned his head back to Moo-jin and spoke with a smirk.

“Hmm. This is fortunate. You said you needed proof, right?”

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-Bam!

“Ugh!”

“Urgh!”

The two individuals, who had been engaged in a fierce exchange for over thirty seconds without giving an inch, each landed a blow on the other's chest and face, causing them to be pushed back by the recoil.

-Crash!

-Boom! Crack!

As the body of the Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh was flung back and collided with a tree, the trunk snapped and melted away due to the intense poisonous energy.

-Sizzle!

“Haa... haa...”

-Swish!

Guyang Sa-oh wiped the blood flowing from the corner of his mouth.

Then, he glared at Tang In-hae, the patriarch of the Sichuan Tang Clan, who had been pushed back about ten steps and was regaining his posture, just like him.

‘As expected, he’s not easy to deal with.’

Even after unleashing the Eight Poisons realm, where even his hair turned green due to the poisonous energy, he couldn’t gain the upper hand at all.

Despite not neglecting his cultivation at all, the fact that they were still equals meant that his opponent had also steadily improved his martial arts over the years.

‘This won’t be easy. In the end, the key is the secret technique.’

Realizing that the battle wouldn’t be decided like this, Guyang Sa-oh thought he couldn’t continue this way.

The same was true for his long-time rival, the Tang Clan patriarch Tang In-hae.

“Pft.”

-Spit!

Tang In-hae spat out a broken molar and inwardly clicked his tongue.

How could that old geezer not weaken with age but instead grow stronger?

It was truly incomprehensible.

Moreover, unlike their previous duels, this time, he was charging at him as if his life depended on it, and each move was extremely lethal.

In a duel between masters of the poisonous arts, each move was critical, unlike ordinary masters.

Since each move was a poisonous technique, immediate detoxification was necessary upon being hit, resulting in a much greater depletion of energy.

That's why Tang In-hae had always wanted to avoid a confrontation with Guyang Sa-oh.

'This won't do. I don't have much left, but to quickly end this, I need to unleash the Formless Poison Technique.'

The Formless Poison Technique.

It was the Tang Clan's greatest secret technique, developed over three generations from his grandfather to his father.

Having made up his mind, Tang In-hae assumed the stance for the Formless Poison Technique.

Suddenly, the indigo-colored poisonous energy flowing from his entire body disappeared, and his surroundings began to waver and ripple like a mirage.

-Croak! Croak!

On the other hand, Guyang Sa-oh's throat swelled up like a toad's, as if ready to burst out at any moment, and his momentum was not ordinary.

His entire body was engulfed in green poisonous energy, and the surroundings were gradually melting away as the poisonous energy continued to converge.

-Sizzle sizzle sizzle!

Faced with their imposing auras, Mok Gyeong-un's subordinates held their breath and observed.

The confrontation was between one of the Eight Stars, who could be considered the top masters of the martial arts world, and a supreme master of poisonous arts from the Western Regions who was not inferior to him.

They couldn't take their eyes off them.

As the two supreme masters glared at each other, waiting for an opportunity, it was at that very moment.

-Swish!

-Thud!

Someone descended from the sky and landed where they were.

“My lord!”

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

At this sound, Tang In-hae, the Tang Clan patriarch, momentarily startled, involuntarily glanced in that direction.

‘!!!!!!’

However, Tang In-hae, who had turned his gaze, widened his eyes, unable to hide his bewilderment.

Not only was Mok Gyeong-un there, but also Moo-jin of the Yoo Clan, who could be considered the guardian of the Tang Clan, was beside him.

‘W-What is this?’

#### Chapter 339 – Mastermind (6)

Tang In-hae, the patriarch of the Sichuan Tang Clan, couldn't hide his bewilderment.

Since they were thoroughly opposed to each other, he had thought they would fight to the death, with only one of them surviving.

But why did the one known as the guardian of the Tang Clan appear alongside the person mentioned in the Holy Fire Priestess's prophecy?

Unable to comprehend the situation, Tang In-hae's mind was thrown into confusion.

What on earth was happening?

At that very moment...

“Foolish of you to be distracted in front of this old man!”

-Flinch!

Startled by the resounding rebuke, Tang In-hae turned his gaze.

At that instant, as if a toad had been waiting for its prey, the Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh unleashed a pair of palms imbued with tremendous momentum and poisonous energy.

‘Toad Poison Technique Secret Art: Eight Poisons Domination!’

-Boom!

‘Oh no!’

Tang In-hae’s eyes wavered as he realized he had been caught off guard and lost the initiative.

If he didn’t handle this carefully, he might lose his life not to the person from the prophecy but to this old man.

-Whoosh!

Despite the panic, Tang In-hae maintained his composure and tried to create distance by leaping backward.

Of course, Guyang Sa-oh had no intention of letting him escape and immediately pursued him.

‘Incredible.’

For a fleeting moment, Tang In-hae couldn’t help but marvel at the flawless and tremendous poison palm technique and its momentum.

Naturally, compared to before, Guyang Sa-oh's power had risen, and Tang In-hae could feel the increased sophistication of his techniques and the growth of his martial power.

However, he could tell that this move was thoroughly designed to target him.

Realizing that Guyang Sa-oh had taken all their previous duels as a stepping stone and honed this technique solely for this moment, Tang In-hae had no choice but to acknowledge it.

‘He created it solely to make me submit thoroughly.’

If it had been him just a few months ago, he would have had no way to block this technique.

But after a few real battles, he had nearly perfected it.

‘Formless Poison Technique. Nine Bereavements Dark Grievance!’

-Whoosh!

Tang In-hae, his entire body seeming to ripple like a mirage, stopped retreating and boldly leaped forward.

The foundation of the poisonous arts was to internalize poison within the body and emit it along with one's energy.

Therefore, the power and momentum of the poisonous arts varied depending on how strong and abundant the internalized poison was.

‘Old Guyang. I have no choice but to win this match.’

Until now, no one in the Tang Clan had ever internalized the Formless Poison as a poisonous art.

However, over three generations, they had systematized a way to internalize the Formless Poison, and based on that, he had perfected the Formless Poison Technique.

It was regrettable that there wasn't much Formless Poison left, but he was confident that this Formless Poison Technique was invincible.

‘Old man, this is the end!’

Seeing the resolve in Tang In-hae's eyes, Guyang Sa-oh steeled his determination.

From the moment the color of the poisonous energy turned colorless, he had suspected that Tang In-hae might have become capable of wielding the Formless Poison, so he had already prepared to risk his life.

‘It doesn't matter. Anyway, this was also within expectations. Even if I succumb to the Formless Poison, this old man will win the duel.’

Sacrificing flesh to gain the bone.

There was a saying about giving up one's flesh to obtain the bone.

Guyang Sa-oh was determined to sacrifice his own life and seize victory in this final duel.

To remain the undisputed master of poisonous arts in this era.

That was his final wish.

-Boom!

Thus, the two masters of poisonous arts were about to collide.

It was at that very moment.

-Slam!

Just as they were about to clash, someone intervened between them.

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

‘What?’

‘Young Master Mok?’

Mok Gyeong-un grabbed Guyang Sa-oh’s wrist as he unleashed the palms of the Toad Poison Technique and flung him upward.

-Crash!

“Ugh!”

No matter how much of a secret art it was, in an unexpected situation, Guyang Sa-oh’s body was sent flying up to five jang in height since his martial power was inherently inferior to Mok Gyeong-un’s.

-Slam!

At the same time, Mok Gyeong-un and Tang In-hae’s palms collided.

Upon impact, Tang In-hae's face turned red and blue, and he was sent flying backward.

Just like Guyang Sa-oh, since he was inferior in martial power, the moment their palms collided, internal pressure surged from within.

-Whoosh!

The repelled Tang In-hae was pushed back more than ten steps before he could stop.

Although it was just a single collision, his five viscera and six bowels were boiling, and it felt like blood would surge up at any moment.

‘That monster.’

Tang In-hae inwardly clicked his tongue.

He knew that Mok Gyeong-un had just fought against the Yoo Clan, who could be considered the guardians of the Tang Clan.

The depletion of his true energy must have been tremendous, yet he still had this much strength left.

However...

‘Ha!’

While suppressing his inner turmoil, the corners of Tang In-hae's mouth twitched.

An unexpected fortune had occurred.

Originally, that palm strike should have hit that old man Guyang Sa-oh, but Mok Gyeong-un had taken it instead.

He felt like cheering inwardly.

‘Hahaha! Foolish bastard.’

He didn’t know why Mok Gyeong-un had intervened, but since he had received the Formless Poison with his bare body, it was over.

His grandfather, the Thousand Poison Hands Tang Yeon-jong, had said that even if he were a supreme master who had reached the pinnacle of internal energy, if he were poisoned by the Formless Poison, he would not survive.

That’s how much the Formless Poison was the epitome of poison.

No matter how high a realm a supreme master had reached, if properly exposed to this poison, detoxification was impossible.

The only variable was that since this was the first time someone who had surpassed the wall’s wall and reached the realm of a great master had been afflicted by the Formless Poison, it was difficult to estimate how long they could endure.

-Thud!

At that moment, Guyang Sa-oh, who had soared into the air, landed on the ground.

Landing, Guyang Sa-oh spoke to Mok Gyeong-un with a perplexed expression, as if in protest.

“Young Master Mok. Isn’t this different from our agreement?”

The agreement he had received from Mok Gyeong-un was simple.

To let him have a final duel with Tang In-hae, the Tang Clan patriarch, without anyone's interference.

However, he had never anticipated that Mok Gyeong-un, who had made the agreement, would intervene midway.

In response, Mok Gyeong-un shrugged his shoulders and said,

“Well, what agreement did I violate?”

“No. Intervening during the duel...”

“If I hadn't intervened, you would have certainly lost your life.”

“It's a duel, Young Master!”

“Have you already forgotten the price you paid to make a deal with me? What did I say back then?”

“That's...”

Guyang Sa-oh couldn't bring himself to finish his sentence.

Thanks to Mok Gyeong-un, he had been able to lose his face instead of his life and escape the organization's attention by becoming a dead man.

Because he had become a dead man, his family would no longer be threatened.

As a result, Guyang Sa-oh had vowed to dedicate the rest of his life to Mok Gyeong-un if he could fulfill just one wish.

“Throwing away your life before paying the price is a violation, isn’t it?”

“...”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Guyang Sa-oh couldn’t give any response.

After all, it was unlikely that a supreme master who had reached the realm of a great master like Mok Gyeong-un would fail to read his intention of sacrificing his flesh to gain the bone.

That’s why he had intervened.

With this, Guyang Sa-oh’s gaze naturally shifted to Mok Gyeong-un’s hand.

Although he hadn’t seen it clearly, it seemed that Mok Gyeong-un had not only disrupted his secret art but also collided with Tang In-hae.

‘...Surely he didn’t directly collide?’

He thought that the person who had stepped in to save him wouldn’t have done something so reckless.

For every poison, there was an antidote, but the exception to that was the Formless Poison.

Since Young Master Mok also had some knowledge about poisons, he believed he would have noticed that Tang In-hae had internalized the Formless Poison to wield it as a poisonous art.

At that moment...

“May I call you Young Master Yu?”

Tang In-hae, with his arms crossed, called out to Moo-jin, who was observing the scene.

In response, Moo-jin spoke.

“I’m Moo-jin. Call me whatever you like.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Young Master Moo-jin. As you can see, given the situation, I couldn’t properly greet you, so I apologize for that.”

“There’s no need to mind such things.”

“Thank you for your understanding. Since the matter is urgent, I’ll get straight to the point. If I’m not mistaken, the Yoo Clan has been protecting our clan like a shadow for generations. Am I right?”

“…Let’s say that’s the case.”

The somewhat lukewarm tone made Tang In-hae inwardly puzzled.

Why was he showing such a half-hearted attitude?

As far as he knew, regardless of what he did, the Yoo Clan had a duty to protect him and the Tang Clan according to the dying wish of their ancestors.

Finding this strange, Tang In-hae continued with what he was saying.

“But why are you together with that vicious beast who is trying to threaten our clan? I’m asking just in case, but surely the Yoo Clan hasn’t abandoned the duty upheld by their ancestors, right?”

At these words, Moo-jin scoffed.

“Duty...”

“Young Master?”

“You seem to be misunderstanding something, Clan Leader.”

“Misunderstanding? What do you mean?”

“I find it quite unpleasant that you’re talking as if our Yoo Clan is some sort of subordinate to the Tang Clan. You seem to regard the fact that we protect you because of the ties with our ancestor’s wife and her dying wish as some kind of master-servant relationship.”

-Flinch!

At Moo-jin’s words, which carried a sharp undertone, Tang In-hae seemed to realize his mistake and waved his hands, saying,

“It’s a misunderstanding. A misunderstanding. I absolutely didn’t mean it that way. I was just perplexed that you were together with that vicious beast who was fighting against our clan, so I asked just in case. If I offended you, I, the Clan Leader, will apologize like this.”

-Clap!

Tang In-hae clasped his hands together and even performed a formal salute to appease Moo-jin.

Although Mok Gyeong-un had been exposed to the Formless Poison, the situation was still numerically disadvantageous, so he had to make sure to bring Moo-jin to his side.

At that moment, Moo-jin spoke.

“You said you were perplexed that we were together... Well, there’s something I’d like to ask the Tang Clan Leader.”

“Ask? What is it?”

“Is there any reason for me to interfere in the Tang Clan’s internal strife?”

‘!?’

At Moo-jin’s words, Tang In-hae furrowed his brows.

Now the mystery of why they had come here together was solved.

It seemed that when that monster couldn’t easily win against Moo-jin, he had deceived him with sweet words.

With this, Tang In-hae carefully spoke.

“Internal strife of the Tang Clan? It’s a misunderstanding. That person is not a member of our clan, so how can you characterize it as an internal strife?”

“Not a member of the Tang Clan? Hmm. From what I’ve heard, the one who raised him was from a branch family of the Tang Clan...”

“He can no longer be considered a branch family. How can someone who joined a cult group that incites the people be considered a member of our clan?”

“A cult group that incites the people?”

“You must have heard of the religious group called the Fire Faith Order. They teach strange doctrines to innocent people and lure them astray.”

“The Fire Faith Order? Ah.”

“You see. You know about them too, don’t you? And strictly speaking, that person is someone who was practically kidnapped and raised by someone unrelated to our clan because he fell into the Fire Faith Order and believed in some prophecy or whatnot.”

“Kidnapped, you say?”

“That’s right. A member of a cult group who hasn’t inherited a drop of the Tang Clan’s blood is maliciously targeting our clan for some unknown reason, so how can this be an internal strife?”

Would this be enough to bring Moo-jin back to his side?

At the very least, now that Moo-jin knew about the Fire Faith Order’s involvement, which was being oppressed as a cult group, he would develop some animosity as a resident of the Central Plains.

However, Moo-jin tilted his head and said,

“Clan Leader.”

“Has the misunderstanding been somewhat cleared now?”

“It’s strange. For someone who said he joined the Fire Faith Order and is no longer a member of the Tang Clan, you seem to know a lot about him.”

‘!?’

“You even confidently identified the specific person who raised him, even though I haven’t mentioned who it is yet.”

“...”

For a moment, Tang In-hae was at a loss for words.

What was this?

His intention was to inform Moo-jin that Mok Gyeong-un and Jang Mun-no, the elder of the Haeyeong Sect, were involved with the Fire Faith Order, in order to instill animosity in Moo-jin.

However, Moo-jin showed no interest in the Fire Faith Order at all.

“Young Master. What’s important is not that. This is about the Fire Faith Order...”

“Regardless of the Fire Faith Order, there are more than a couple of things that don’t add up.”

‘What the hell is wrong with this bastard?’

Faced with Moo-jin’s tone and gaze filled with suspicion, Tang In-hae’s mind became complicated.

It was a completely different reaction than he had intended.

Contrary to his expectation that Moo-jin would develop animosity and return to his side because of the Fire Faith Order, his suspicion toward Tang In-hae had grown even stronger.

Why was he focusing on other aspects instead of the Fire Faith Order?

‘I need to calm down.’

Tang In-hae, realizing that if he faltered here, he would be unable to handle the situation, tried to calmly resolve the matter.

“Young Master Moo-jin. I understand what you’re trying to say. There might be some parts of what I said that don’t make sense. But I can explain everything, so first...”

“Ah. Is that so? Then how will you explain this?”

“Explain what? I can explain as much as you want, so please tell me.”

With this, Moo-jin stared sharply at him and spoke in a meaningful voice.

“While I was risking my life fighting to protect the Tang Clan, why was the person known as the Tang Clan Leader secretly trying to run away alone?”

‘!!!!!!’

At that question, Tang In-hae’s expression froze like stone.

He might not know about other things, but this was something he absolutely couldn’t explain.

Surrounded on all sides, he realized he had no more room for choice.

‘…Damn it.’

The only way to escape this situation was to exhaust all the remaining Formless Poison and...

-Bam!

It was at that very moment.

Someone grabbed the back of Tang In-hae's head and slammed his face into the ground.

The force was so strong that not only his face but his entire head was buried in the ground.

The one pressing down on the back of his squirming head was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

“From now on, let me handle this.”

#### Chapter 340 – To Offer (1)

“From now on, let me handle this.”

The one pressing down on the back of the head of the squirming Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae, whose face was buried in the ground, was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

At his words, Moo-jin nodded and stepped back.

Anyway, since his trust in the Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae had fallen, he had no desire to continue the conversation.

Moreover...

‘I need to stabilize myself.’

Although Mok Gyeong-un had controlled the demonic energy, the strange evil nature remaining in his heart continued to hinder his recovery, and the wound in his heart hadn't healed yet, causing a stinging sensation with each breath.

It seemed he needed to urgently expel the evil nature from his body.

As Moo-jin stepped back, Mok Gyeong-un, who had been pressing down on Tang In-hae's head, signaled to someone with his eyes.

It was Seop Chun.

With quick wit, Seop Chun understood Mok Gyeong-un's intention with just a glance.

-Creak!

Approaching the carriage Tang In-hae had been riding, Seop Chun's eyes glinted as he opened the door.

Inside the carriage, along with several boxes containing weapons, hidden weapons, and poison materials, a woman with elegant features and short hair was sleeping.

-Swish!

‘She’s not asleep?’

Seop Chun, who checked her pulse, could tell that her acupuncture points had been suppressed.

He was about to release them immediately, but for now, he carried her out.

“My lord. There were weapons, poison materials, and this woman inside.”

“I see.”

“I don’t know who she is. Judging from the fact that she was put into a coma by suppressing her acupuncture points, it seems they didn’t have a very friendly relationship.”

“Acupuncture points...”

-Thud!

Soon, Mok Gyeong-un removed his hand from the head he had been pressing down on.

Wriggling and struggling, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae raised his head.

His face, covered in countless sand fragments and blood, gnashed his teeth and tried to twist his body.

However...

-Thud!

“Ugh!”

Mok Gyeong-un kicked his shoulder and pressed down on him, causing him to fail.

To the immobilized Tang In-hae, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“From what I heard earlier, it seems you roughly know who I am, so we can skip the introductions.”

“...”

At the calm voice, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae’s mind became complicated.

Where did things go wrong?

He had contemplated for a long time, so there were no flaws in his plan.

There were no disruptive factors, so why was this bastard still alive?

It was utterly incomprehensible.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un asked him,

“Who is she?”

“...”

“That woman you were trying to take with you, even suppressing her acupuncture points.”

“...”

“Keeping your mouth shut doesn’t seem like a good choice. There’s no one left to protect you anymore.”

‘Protect?’

-Gnash!

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae gnashed his teeth.

How did he end up being told about protection?

As one of the Eight Stars considered the top masters of the martial arts world and the leader of a martial clan, it was too humiliating to suffer such insults.

He wanted to tear this bastard's limbs apart and kill him for trampling on his pride.

However, he gritted his teeth even harder and suppressed his urge to vent his anger.

Getting angry here wouldn't solve the problem.

He had to maintain his composure as much as possible to create an opportunity.

Moreover...

'I still have that.'

The Formless Poison, the symbol of the Sichuan Tang Clan and considered the most perfect poison.

Not much of it remained, but there was still enough to use the secret technique.

Furthermore, this bastard had been exposed to the Formless Poison when he collided with Tang In-hae's palm.

Despite his profound internal energy, he hadn't directly detoxified it and seemed to be enduring it for now, but he would soon realize the true terror of the Formless Poison.

'Even Jang Mun-no, who raised you, died in agony.'

Do you think you'll be any different?

Soon, you'll be crawling on the ground, begging for your life.

Of course, there was no way to save him.

The Formless Poison was a lethal poison with no antidote, so once poisoned, it was the end.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“That’s right. It would have been quite disappointing if you had surrendered too easily.”

“...”

“I feel like I need to make my grandfather proud by making all sorts of sounds come out of that mouth of yours.”

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un turned his head and signaled with his eyes to the heretic monk Ja Geum-jeong, who was sitting on the driver’s seat of the carriage they had ridden.

“Heheh.”

Ja Geum-jeong took a sip from his gourd and opened the carriage door.

Then, someone stepped out from inside.

It was an elderly woman, none other than the Holy Fire Priestess.

‘!?’

At the Holy Fire Priestess’s appearance, the eyes of Tang In-hae, who had been keeping his mouth shut, wavered.

How was that woman here?

As far as he knew, the Holy Fire Priestess was supposed to be imprisoned in the Palace's Gold Jade Prison.

But why was she with them?

At that moment...

“Song, my Song-ah!”

the Holy Fire Priestess, upon spotting Ye Song-ah in Seop Chun's arms, shouted with teary eyes.

On the way here, she had only been thinking about her granddaughter.

But seeing her granddaughter unconscious, she was about to rush over with a worried heart.

However...

“Old nun, stay put.”

The heretic monk Ja Geum-jeong blocked her from going.

This was because Mok Gyeong-un had shaken his head.

the Holy Fire Priestess raised her voice and shouted.

“Young Master Mok! My granddaughter, why is my granddaughter like that? Could it be...”

“Her acupuncture points have been suppressed, so calm down.”

“Acupuncture points?”

“You can think of it as her being unconscious.”

Seop Chun informed her that her granddaughter was safe.

At those words, the Holy Fire Priestess turned her head with an incomprehensible expression and spoke to the Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae.

“Clan Leader Tang. What in the world is going on?”

At her question, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae gritted his teeth without answering.

He had heard that as a key figure of the Fire Faith Order, she would never be released from the Palace’s Gold Jade Prison until her death, but this bastard had even taken her out, so he seemed to have made up his mind.

Mok Gyeong-un said to him,

“I had a hunch, but she really was the Holy Fire Priestess’s granddaughter.”

“...”

“What a peculiar person you are. The one who abandoned his clan members and tried to flee as soon as I appeared thought of taking the Holy Fire Priestess’s granddaughter with him.”

“...”

“There must be a special reason for trying to take the granddaughter with you. What could that reason be?”

“...”

“Well, of course, you won’t say. And...”

As he looked at the Holy Fire Priestess, she also avoided eye contact with Mok Gyeong-un, her eyes trembling.

Seeing their attitudes, the corners of Mok Gyeong-un’s mouth twitched.

It was a simple gesture, but through this, Mok Gyeong-un could infer one fact.

“I already had a feeling that the Holy Fire Priestess was hiding something more from me. I was pondering what it could be, but I found the answer.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, the Holy Fire Priestess couldn’t help but feel restless.

She became anxious, wondering if he had noticed that.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“I don’t know if it’s because of bloodline or some other reason, but the foresight ability you lost... It seems your granddaughter inherited it.”

‘!!!!’

At those words, the Holy Fire Priestess was so surprised that she couldn’t hide her bewilderment.

She had desperately kept this hidden above all else.

In fact, among the members of the Fire Faith Order, no one knew that she had lost her ability and that it had been transferred to her granddaughter.

She had kept it hidden until the end, knowing that if it became known that the ability had been transferred, her granddaughter would become a target.

But this man was truly terrifying.

His insight to infer the truth from just a few circumstances was too outstanding.

“Young Master Mok. That’s...”

“Shh. Stay quiet.”

-Grip!

“Ugh!”

Mok Gyeong-un pressed down harder on Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae’s back and spoke.

“You abandoned your clan members, but you cherished the one with foresight ability enough to try to take her with you at any cost, right?”

“...”

“Impressive.”

‘What?’

“I’ve met quite a few people while coming down from the mountain to find the real culprit, but you’re the first one whose greed is so outstanding.”

“...”

“Originally, I was thinking of peeling off the skin of the Tang Clan’s family members one by one in front of you or the Holy Fire Priestess, neatly spreading their flesh, and then extracting their bones piece by piece and grinding them up...”

-Shudder!

“Y-You bastard, what nonsense are you spewing!”

Unable to keep his mouth shut any longer, Tang In-hae spoke out in disbelief.

How could such chilling words come out of a human’s mouth?

No matter how much of an enemy he was for killing the grandfather who raised him, it was hard to endure.

“Ah... I thought it might be a waste of time since you seem quite selfishly greedy, but I guess that’s not the case. I can give you enough suffering.”

“Are you truly insane? How can a human mouth utter such words that even beasts wouldn’t...”

-Crack!

“Aaargh!”

Before he could finish speaking, a scream burst out of Tang In-hae's mouth along with the sound of bones breaking.

It seemed that the right rib Mok Gyeong-un was stepping on had broken.

As he was suffering, Mok Gyeong-un removed his foot from Tang In-hae's back.

This caught Tang In-hae's attention.

‘What?’

Why did he take his foot off his back?

It was one of the main acupuncture points, and although he was being pressed down by overwhelming martial power, he had been enduring it intentionally, waiting for the Formless Poison to spread.

-Thud!

“Ugh!”

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un kicked him, and his body was involuntarily raised.

Holding the area around his broken rib, Tang In-hae straightened his posture and looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

‘Huh?’

Mok Gyeong-un was standing with his hands behind his back, looking very arrogant.

It was as if he was looking at a lowly being, no, a crawling insect.

Feeling extremely unpleasant, Mok Gyeong-un opened his mouth.

“Try it.”

“What?”

“I wasn’t pressing down that hard, but since you’ve been forcibly enduring it and constantly looking for an opportunity, consider this my last act of mercy.”

“Mercy?”

-Gnash!

At the mention of showing mercy, Tang In-hae’s face twisted terribly.

He was so infuriated.

Even though Mok Gyeong-un possessed martial arts comparable to the Six Heavens, to humiliate him like this...

Moreover, in front of the Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh, who could be considered his arch-rival.

-Clap! -Rumble!

Unable to endure any longer, Tang In-hae assumed a stance and drew upon the poisonous energy of the Formless Poison Technique.

The bastard would die from the Formless Poison soon, but he had changed his mind.

He would make that moment come even faster.

At that moment, Guyang Sa-oh, wearing the Human Skin Mask, shouted at Mok Gyeong-un,

“Young Master Mok! You must never collide with him! The Formless Poison has no antidote, so create some distance...”

“Too late!”

-Whoosh!

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae leaped forward.

The Formless Poison Technique wasn't simply about creating distance, as there were secret techniques to deal with distant enemies as well.

One of them was the Circular Luxuriant Poison Formation...

-Swish!

‘!?’

At that moment.

Tang In-hae's body suddenly fell forward.

Even though he wanted to regain his posture, he couldn't...

-Slice!

His thighs were split open, and his two legs were severed from his body.

With his legs cut off, Tang In-hae fell forward, and in his agony, he looked at Mok Gyeong-un with disbelief.

Just moments ago, he had talked about giving him a final chance to fight, even touching his pride, so what the hell was this?

But then, Tang In-hae's expression froze.

Through his eyes, he could see Mok Gyeong-un laughing with a chilling face.

“Y-You bastard?”

“Ah. Sorry about that. Seeing your dumbfounded expression made me laugh.”

“You clearly said you'd give me a chance...”

“A chance?”

“Yes. But why in this way...”

“You're asking why I suddenly cut off your legs? Don't tell me you're asking because you don't know.”

“What?”

Mok Gyeong-un stopped laughing and spoke in a cold voice.

“I’m toying with you right now.”