

Mayhem 341

Chapter 341 – To Offer (2)

“I’m toying with you right now.”

‘This... this bastard... toying with me?’

Pain and anger intertwined, causing Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae’s face to twist terribly.

No matter how much of an enemy Mok Gyeong-un was, since he had become a supreme master comparable to the Six Heavens, Tang In-hae thought he would keep his word.

At the very least, if he said he would give an opportunity, Tang In-hae believed he would follow through, but that was a miscalculation.

From the beginning, Mok Gyeong-un had humiliated him, so it was crystal clear what he would do.

Due to his thighs being severed and his legs cut off, the bleeding was so severe that dizziness threatened to overcome him in an instant.

-Grip!

Tang In-hae gritted his teeth and quickly applied pressure to his thighs to stop the bleeding.

As the blood slightly clotted from pressing on the acupuncture points, Tang In-hae shouted in a rage-filled voice,

“As a martial artist, can’t you even keep your own words?”

Due to past events, he wasn't in a position to argue about cowardice in the first place, so he knew there was a flaw in his statement.

This was simply to provoke Mok Gyeong-un.

With that level of martial arts after surpassing the wall, even without two legs, he could still confront an enemy with just his arms, but that was only possible against inferiors.

Since he was already at a disadvantage, he needed to lure Mok Gyeong-un to approach him.

“Cowardly bastard! You have no pride as a martial artist!”

Tang In-hae continued shouting while glaring at Mok Gyeong-un.

‘Come on! Come at me!’

It was at that very moment.

-Stab!

“Urgh!”

Something penetrated his severed thigh.

Even though he had stopped the bleeding, touching an already painful area was bound to be agonizing.

Unable to endure the pain, Tang In-hae twisted his entire body.

‘Damn it! What the hell did he do?’

Looking at the penetrated part above his thigh, there was a blood-soaked coin.

‘Finger Flicking Divine Technique?’

Finger Flicking Divine Technique.

It was a technique that utilized something like a hidden weapon by flicking it with one’s fingers.

Faced with Mok Gyeong-un’s response, not falling for his provocation at all, Tang In-hae gritted his teeth and tried to endure the agony somehow.

Mok Gyeong-un spoke to him,

“You’re already trapped prey, so you think I’ll listen to your babbling?”

-Flip!

With those words, Mok Gyeong-un flicked his fingers again.

-Stab!

“Urgh!”

Another coin penetrated the opposite side of Tang In-hae’s thigh.

Tang In-hae bit his lips tightly to endure the pain, but unable to withstand the agony, his body trembled.

Seeing his state, the Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh, who could be considered his lifelong rival, couldn't help but feel pity.

‘How did he end up like this?’

Although he was belligerent, the young Tang In-hae also had an ambitious side.

However, after losing his father, the previous Clan Leader, and taking over as the new leader, he gradually changed, and aspects that Guyang Sa-oh hadn't seen before emerged.

Was it the passage of time and various hardships that had changed him so?

Clicking his tongue, Guyang Sa-oh soon turned his head.

‘Anyway, Young Master Mok won't fall for Tang In-hae's provocation.’

Anger clouds the judgment of even the wisest sage.

But Mok Gyeong-un wasn't someone who would fall for such tricks, so there was no need to worry.

Except for one thing.

‘...It can't be, right?’

It was quite ambiguous when he intervened between them.

He only hoped that they hadn't exchanged a single palm strike at that time.

The Formless Poison was perfect among all existing poisons, so there was no antidote, and once poisoned, the situation was over.

-Stab! Stab! Stab!

“Aargh!”

Tang In-hae writhed in pain as Mok Gyeong-un’s Finger Flicking Divine Technique continued relentlessly.

For someone known as one of the Eight Stars, the top masters of the martial arts world, his state was utterly miserable.

‘What’s going on?’

Writhing in agony, Tang In-hae grew impatient.

That’s because he wondered when the reaction would come.

He had definitely received the Formless Poison Technique’s sweeping strike earlier.

Even if it wasn’t direct detoxification, once contact was made, the Formless Poison would quickly penetrate through the skin and invade the body.

But he couldn’t understand why there was still no reaction.

‘Is the Formless Poison also affected by internal energy?’

Even Jang Mun-no, the old man who could be considered almost on par with the Eight Stars, couldn’t withstand the Formless Poison despite reaching the realm of a poison master.

Even that bastard who had chased after him to interfere was the same.

Wasn't he even given the title of one of the Eight Stars?

Even those individuals couldn't endure for long, so if one had surpassed the wall's wall and reached a realm comparable to the Six Heavens, was it different?

'Could it be that he blocked the Formless Poison from invading his body with his profound true energy?'

Seeing no reaction until now, there was no other explanation.

Just how profound must one's true energy be to block the Formless Poison from invading?

-Gnash!

Then, enduring it like this wouldn't solve anything.

He had to somehow make the bastard directly detoxify the Formless Poison to turn the situation around.

Thus, Tang In-hae decided to take a risk, even if it was somewhat dangerous.

"Haa... haa... Jang Mun-no... that... old man... raised... a truly... trashy bastard..."

"..."

As soon as he finished speaking, Mok Gyeong-un, who had been flicking his fingers, stopped.

Thinking that he had nothing to lose, Tang In-hae immediately continued speaking when he saw a reaction.

“Why? Did the Clan Leader... haa... say something wrong? Well... a maggot... who coveted... our clan’s... martial arts... without knowing his place... and grew up... under him... is no different. A maggot and trash...”

-Whoosh!

-Shudder!

At that moment, the tremendous killing intent surging in all directions rendered Tang In-hae unable to continue speaking.

Although he had deliberately provoked him, what was this?

How could killing intent be this intense?

It felt like death was right beside him.

“Huff! Huff! Huff!”

Even breathing became difficult.

The bastard’s anger was palpable.

But then...

-Swish!

Tang In-hae’s body slowly floated upward due to Mok Gyeong-un’s true energy.

It was the Seizing Objects in Mid-Air technique.

Feeling the true energy constricting and pressuring his body, Tang In-hae momentarily unleashed his rebound energy to repel it.

-Boom!

-Thud!

Falling to the ground with a thud, Tang In-hae gritted his teeth.

Had he been enduring humiliation and simply taking the Finger Flicking Divine Technique all this time?

While waiting for the Formless Poison to spread, he also aimed to recover some of his true energy depleted from fighting Guyang Sa-oh.

‘Even if you’re a step above me, I’ve also surpassed the wall.’

Even if he tried to restrain him with true energy, he could break free to this extent.

If he truly wanted to capture him, he would have to come in person.

Just as he thought that...

-Tremble!

At that moment, Tang In-hae felt his entire skin, no, his flesh, trembling like crazy.

Was he going to use Seizing Objects in Mid-Air again?

He should know it's useless...

-Boom!

It was at that instant.

His body suddenly flew backward as if it were a cannonball.

It happened in the blink of an eye, and as soon as he felt his body flying, the surroundings he had seen passed by in a blur.

Then...

-Crash!

“Ugh!”

He collided with something with his back, and along with the sound of it shattering, numerous figures appeared around him.

Upon seeing those figures, Tang In-hae couldn't hide his bewilderment.

They were none other than the executives and warriors of the Tang Clan.

“Clan... Clan Leader!”

“Clan Leader!”

Calls for him resounded from all around.

Quickly scanning his surroundings, Tang In-hae realized that he had somehow arrived at the rear courtyard in front of the back gate of the Tang Clan.

‘He sent me flying here before I could even release my true energy?’

“Ha...”

He was truly a monster, enough to elicit exclamations, even if he was an enemy.

But then, an immense pressure was felt behind his back.

Tang In-hae instinctively knew that Mok Gyeong-un was standing behind him.

The distance wasn’t that close yet.

He needed to get within ten steps to unleash the secret technique that could definitively detoxify the Formless Poison.

‘I need to provoke him...’

Tang In-hae bit his lip tightly.

He hadn’t expected the bastard to send him flying to the Tang Clan.

He was already feeling guilty for not fulfilling his duties as the Clan Leader and attempting to flee by abandoning his clan members.

But being dropped in the midst of them, he couldn’t bring himself to open his mouth.

At that moment...

“H-How dare you do this to the Clan Leader?”

While everyone was rendered speechless by Mok Gyeong-un's immense pressure, someone shouted courageously.

It was none other than Tang Cheol-yong, the Deputy Clan Leader of the Tang Clan.

As Tang In-hae's right-hand man, Tang Cheol-yong was deeply loyal, so he barely suppressed his fear and spoke up.

With hundreds of people gathered, one person's courage was enough to ignite a small flame in the hearts of others.

-Swish! Swish! Clang! Clang!

The Tang Clan warriors soon assumed their stances and drew their weapons.

Having already witnessed Mok Gyeong-un's monstrous power with their own eyes, they couldn't shout arrogantly, but they could still muster the resolve to risk their lives in this way.

Seeing this, Tang In-hae's eyes and lips trembled.

‘...Damn it.’

He had ruthlessly abandoned them for his own greed.

Yet they were drawing their weapons and mustering courage for him without any suspicion.

No matter how selfish he was, he couldn't help but be shaken by that sight.

-Grip!

It would have been much easier if they had hated him.

But then, Mok Gyeong-un's voice reached his ears.

-Unlike someone, they are very loyal. Someone ran away with their tail between their legs, abandoning all their clan members to save themselves.

‘...’

-They've been together for so long, yet they don't even know what kind of person their Clan Leader is. How unfortunate.

-Gnash!

Tang In-hae gritted his teeth so hard that his molars nearly cracked.

The karmic consequences of his actions were coming back to him like fate, but he wanted to somehow stop it.

At the very least, he wanted to remain as the Sichuan Tang Clan Leader in their eyes, not in a humiliating state.

Thus...

-Rumble!

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae circulated his true energy throughout his body and drew upon the power of the Formless Poison Technique.

He decided not to wait for the bastard to approach him.

He was determined not to think about turning the tables or anything like that anymore.

He just wanted to kill this bastard...

-Swish!

‘!?’

At that moment, Tang In-hae’s eyes trembled.

Mok Gyeong-un was already standing behind Tang Cheol-yong, who could be considered his right-hand man.

-Gulp!

Deputy Clan Leader Tang Cheol-yong swallowed dry saliva.

No matter how vast the gap in martial arts, there was no way he couldn’t sense the overwhelming pressure from behind.

-Swish!

Then, Mok Gyeong-un lightly grasped the back of his neck.

Nevertheless, Tang Cheol-yong couldn’t move an inch from that spot.

Tang In-hae hurriedly shouted,

“Stop!”

“Stop what?”

“Please... please take your hand off Cheol-yong. I... I will pay any price... just don't do it this way.”

“What price do you have to pay?”

“...”

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae's face turned pale.

Was this bastard trying to make him confess everything with his own mouth?

-Grip!

Blood flowed from Tang In-hae's clenched fists as he applied more force.

The damn bastard was trying to send him to the depths of hell...

It was at that very moment.

“From now on, all the tragedies that befall the Tang Clan will be the fault of a single person.”

‘!?’

-Crack! Crunch!

“St-Stop... Aaaaargh!”

-Rip! Crunch!

The scream abruptly ceased as Deputy Clan Leader Tang Cheol-yong’s head was torn off along with his spine.

‘!!!!!!’

Chapter 342 – To Offer (3)

It was something no one had anticipated.

For a moment, the hall fell into silence at the sight of the Deputy Clan Leader Tang Cheol-yong’s head being torn off along with his spine.

Although injuries and deaths were commonplace in the martial arts world, there was at least a line that shouldn’t be crossed.

Most people couldn’t hide their shock at the cruel act that was too gruesome to witness with open eyes, and some even began vomiting, unable to endure it.

“Ah... Ahh...”

“Bleurgh!”

“This... this cruelty!”

The silence caused by the shock was broken, but the surroundings were in turmoil.

Seeing their reaction, Mok Gyeong-un smiled and swung Tang Cheol-yong's head, which had been ripped off along with his spine, like a toy, saying,

“You have weak stomachs, it seems. Vomiting at just this much.”

Speaking as if he had no emotion, the Tang Clan warriors couldn't help but click their tongues.

How could he do this while wearing a human mask?

At that moment, a Tang Clan warrior couldn't hold back and stepped forward, shouting,

“Stop this at once! I don't know what grudge you have against our clan, but how can you do this as a human being...”

-Swish!

‘...Huh?’

At that moment, the Tang Clan warrior couldn't finish his sentence.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had been in front of him, had suddenly disappeared, and he felt a touch on his shoulder.

“Why did you stop speaking? Please continue.”

It was said that it was difficult to even breathe when under extreme tension.

The Tang Clan warrior's breathing became rough, and he couldn't utter a single word.

The hand on his shoulder playfully moved towards his neck, and the image of Deputy Clan Leader Tang Cheol-yong's neck being ripped off repeatedly flashed in his mind.

'I... I'm going to die.'

As fear of death gripped him, his face gradually turned ashen.

"Huff... Huff..."

"You're wasting the courage you mustered."

Mok Gyeong-un's hand, shrugging his shoulders, soon reached for the warrior's neck.

-Whoosh!

At that moment, someone leaped behind Mok Gyeong-un to launch a sneak attack.

It was Tang Su-woo, one of the Tang Clan's executives and a supreme master of the transcendent realm, ranked among the top five within the clan.

Knowing that he couldn't do anything in a direct confrontation against this monster, he had been waiting for an opportunity to arise.

By chance, Mok Gyeong-un had approached within just eight steps.

He couldn't miss this opportunity.

'Die!'

Suppressing his presence to the maximum, Tang Su-woo unleashed his most powerful poisonous art technique.

‘Absolute Poison Eight Palms 7th Stance: Rising Domineering Poison Flash!’

The Sichuan Tang Clan had a poisonous martial art known as the Four Great Poison Techniques.

One of them was the Absolute Poison Eight Palms, and the last three stances were high-level techniques that could instantly subdue and kill the opponent.

-Swish swish swish!

Tang Su-woo’s hands swiftly targeted the vital acupuncture points on Mok Gyeong-un’s back, accompanied by afterimages.

Even when his hands were about to make contact, Mok Gyeong-un showed no signs of noticing.

Could he really kill a supreme master comparable to the Six Heavens with his own hands?

-Grab!

“Ack!”

Tang Su-woo’s eyes wavered.

Mok Gyeong-un was already looking at him and grasping his neck.

‘Wh-When?’

He was utterly bewildered.

He was so fast that Tang Su-woo couldn't even perceive his movements.

Was this the realm of extreme speed movement that only those who had reached the realm of lightness skill could achieve?

‘I need to break free first.’

He was in the midst of unleashing a sweeping strike, so regardless of his neck being grabbed, he just needed to continue...

-Grip!

“Ugh ugh.”

Coincidentally, the moment his neck was grabbed, like everyone else, the imprint left by Deputy Clan Leader Tang Cheol-yong's death made him prioritize breaking free.

“Let... let go!”

However...

“You're a nuisance.”

“What...”

-Slice!

“Ack!”

Mok Gyeong-un severed Tang Su-woo's right arm, which was trying to break free, with a sword hand strike imbued with predestined energy.

The same happened to his other left arm.

-Slice!

Tang Su-woo, with both arms severed, couldn't endure the pain and screamed like a madman.

“Aaaaargh!”

-Thud!

However, his scream didn't last long.

Mok Gyeong-un tightly grasped his neck, rendering him unable to scream.

“Urgh...”

“Why did you act recklessly when your turn would have come soon even without making a fuss?”

-Crunch!

At that moment, Tang Su-woo's neck, grasped by Mok Gyeong-un's hand, was torn off, and his head rolled on the ground.

Blood gushed like a fountain from his headless body, drenching Mok Gyeong-un's hair and face.

Mok Gyeong-un swept back his blood-soaked hair and licked his lips with his tongue.

-Slurp!

Did he find the taste of blood enjoyable?

The corners of Mok Gyeong-un's mouth curled up.

His appearance was so chilling that the Tang Clan warriors, who had mustered some courage, turned pale and lost their words.

Some couldn't even breathe properly due to the immense fear.

As he gazed at them one by one, they all lowered their heads, unable to make eye contact.

Mok Gyeong-un's overwhelming pressure had reached its peak.

"It seems no one else has the courage to step forward. Then, since doing it one by one might take all night, should I reduce the headcount a bit?"

-Swish!

Mok Gyeong-un grasped his sword fingers and raised his arm, causing everyone to be puzzled.

It was at that very moment.

-Rumble!

A vicious energy arose from his sword fingers, and a black sword energy formed the shape of a sword.

The length of the sword energy instantly soared to nearly four jang, and the eyes of the Tang Clan warriors trembled like crazy upon seeing it.

‘Impossible!’

‘Wh-What kind of energy is that?’

They were all martial artists, so they possessed energy perception.

Their shock stemmed from the fact that the energy flowing from that black sword was enough to astound the heavens and shake the earth.

How many among those present could block or withstand that sword energy?

Just a single swing of it would claim the lives of countless Tang Clan warriors.

“Then, starting from the east side...”

“Stoooooop!!!!!”

The moment Mok Gyeong-un was about to swing the sword energy, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae shouted at the top of his lungs.

Thanks to that, everyone’s attention was momentarily drawn to him.

Of course, Mok Gyeong-un was no exception.

“...Did you say to stop?”

“Please... Please stop.”

Tang In-hae spoke to Mok Gyeong-un in a pleading voice.

In response, Mok Gyeong-un sneered and replied,

“You should know that begging doesn’t hold much meaning. If you want me to stop, make me stop directly.”

With those words, Mok Gyeong-un pretended to swing the black sword energy towards the east side again.

“R-Run!”

“Aaah!”

The Tang Clan warriors within the range of the east side panicked and leaped away, trying to escape the radius.

Seeing that, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae shouted again,

“They... They are truly innocent. Please, if you are a strong one, show mercy to them with your magnanimity. All of this is something I alone have done. So end it with just me.”

Perhaps motivated by the sight of their Clan Leader crawling on the ground with his legs severed, begging, some of the frightened Tang Clan warriors cried out,

“Clan Leader!”

“How can you surrender to the enemy?”

“No matter what you have done, we believe in you, Clan Leader!”

“Warriors of the great Tang Clan! Do not fear and be prepared to die...”

At that moment...

-Thud!

Mok Gyeong-un suddenly stomped his foot.

The vibration spread from the point of impact to the surroundings.

-Rumble!

Just as they wondered what he had done...

The Tang Clan warriors, who had been trying to boost morale for their Clan Leader, suddenly started screaming in terror as if they had gone mad.

“Aaaaargh!”

“Stop! Please! Please stop!”

“Ahhh!!!!”

‘What, what’s happening?’

‘Why are they suddenly acting like this?’

Those around them tried to restrain them, wondering about the unknown abnormal symptoms...

At that moment...

“Aaaah!”

-Slice!

Suddenly, one of them drew a weapon and slit his own throat.

“What, what the hell!”

The Tang Clan warriors who had been trying to stop him were bewildered by his abnormal behavior.

However, he wasn't the only one.

-Stab!

One of those who had been screaming stabbed his own eye with his finger.

Someone else, as if he had gone insane, rolled his eyes back and started banging his head against the ground.

“Hahahaha!”

-Thud! Thud! Thud!

Even with several people trying to stop him, it was futile.

He banged his head so hard that it shattered, and brain matter flowed out.

“Eek!”

-Rip rip!

Some even clawed at their own flesh, tearing off their skin.

“Stop! I said stop! Please get these things off me!”

They acted as if something had attached to their entire body.

Although only about ten people displayed these abnormal behaviors, the Tang Clan warriors fell into chaos at the sight of them harming and killing themselves like mentally deranged individuals.

They weren’t even poisoned, so what kind of bizarre phenomenon was this?

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae shouted with trembling eyes,

“Wh-What have you done?”

“Well, from what I see, it looks like they are harming and killing themselves.”

“You... You!”

Does that even make sense?

It was clear that they suddenly changed like madmen after he stomped his foot.

What on earth did he do?

Then, a transmitted voice resonated in his ears.

-Ah! It would be fun to have the Tang Clan members kill each other in a bloodbath at this point. It would be a delightful sight to see blood relatives slaughtering one another.

‘!?’

Judging by his smiling face, he was genuinely enjoying this.

Was this bastard a demon who had ascended from hell?

How could he orchestrate something like this?

At most, he had only killed that damn old man who had raised him, yet he was on the verge of miserably annihilating the entire main clan.

Mok Gyeong-un smiled at him and slightly raised his foot, transmitting a message.

-Do you also want to see...

Before the message could even finish...

“Yes! I killed Jang Mun-no, the one who raised you!”

‘!!!!!’

As Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae's shout echoed throughout, the entire Tang Clan fell into silence.

The Tang Clan warriors looked at him with shocked expressions.

After all, there was no one among them who didn't know that Jang Mun-no was from a branch family of the Tang Clan.

But he killed him? What was this about?

As they wondered, Tang In-hae continued with a trembling voice,

"Ye Song-ah, the one with a special power... To obtain that child... I revealed the hidden location of the Holy Fire Priestess, no, that old woman of the Ye Clan from the Fire Faith Order, to have her captured by the palace. I killed Jang Mun-no with the Formless Poison, and I intended to kill you in the same way."

-Murmur murmur!

Soon, the hall that had been silent began to stir.

"Clan... Clan Leader!"

"Why are you doing this?"

"You're lying to save us..."

Some of the loyal executives and warriors of the Tang Clan tried to deny it, but...

"...No. It's all true. I even tried to abandon all the clan members here and flee to the Righteous Alliance with only Ye Song-ah when you appeared and fought against the supreme master of the Yoo Clan who was protecting our clan, fearing that I might die. The carriage outside is proof of that."

As soon as he finished speaking...

The eyes of the Tang Clan members, once filled with trust, gradually turned cold.

How could such words come out of the mouth of a martial clan leader?

-Grip!

Faced with their changing gazes, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae gritted his teeth and clenched his fists.

Isn't this what you really wanted, you bastard?

To reveal the ugly secrets I had hidden and walk the path of ruin.

Chapter 343 – To Offer (4)

Murmur murmur!

The hall of the Sichuan Tang Clan was in turmoil.

It was due to the sudden revelation of Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae's ugly secrets.

This truth, confessed by his own mouth, shocked the Tang Clan members, who trusted each other more than anyone else as a clan of a single bloodline.

Although everyone in the Tang Clan had kept silent due to the oppression against the Fire Faith Order and the unfavorable gaze of the Central Plains people, the Ye Clan was their branch family.

Therefore, even if they couldn't openly protect them, they had kept their secrets as a way to support their clan's branch family.

‘But the Clan Leader reported this?’

It was the Tang Clan that had arranged a hiding place for the surviving Ye Clan members.

That hiding place was a secret shelter secretly utilized by the Tang Clan.

However, upon hearing the news that the Ye Clan had been discovered and captured by the imperial army, they had been puzzled.

Moreover...

‘...Killing Jang Mun-no.’

Jang Mun-no of the Haeyeong Sect.

He was the one who had gained the greatest reputation among the branch family members.

Although not well-known to the people of the Central Plains, his talent in poison techniques was also remarkable, so he had received teachings from Tang Yeon-jong, the Thousand Poison Hands, the Clan Leader from two generations ago.

[What a pity. It would have been great if he were from the main family, not the branch family.]

Tang Yeon-jong, the Clan Leader from two generations ago, often expressed his regret that Jang Mun-no was from the branch family, not the main family, due to his outstanding talent in poisons.

Because of this, due to the jealousy of the previous Clan Leader and the main family members eligible for succession, not long after Tang Yeon-jong's passing, Jang Mun-no was expelled from the Tang Clan for an incomprehensible reason.

Knowing this fact...

‘He finally caused trouble.’

The Tang Clan members couldn't help but click their tongues at Jang Mun-no's death.

However, what disappointed them the most was...

“The Clan Leader tried to abandon us?”

“How could the Clan Leader do that?”

“How could a leader...”

The fact that he had tried to abandon all the Tang Clan members and flee alone.

If it had come from someone else's mouth, it might have been different, but since he had confessed it himself, the disappointment was indescribable.

Because of this, the gazes of the Tang Clan members towards Clan Leader Tang In-hae were growing cold.

However, not everyone agreed with this.

“Everyone, calm down! You don't really believe these words, do you?”

“That’s right! The Clan Leader is employing a desperate measure to save us.”

“Don’t fall for the enemy’s trick!”

There were also those who defended the Clan Leader until the end.

They were the direct descendants of the Tang Clan’s main family.

Unlike the branch families or side families, they were the ones with a closer blood relationship, so they believed this sudden confession by the Clan Leader was a desperate measure.

Therefore, they stepped forward to defend the Clan Leader in order to prevent the Tang Clan members from being divided.

It didn’t matter whether those words were true or not.

They had to prevent the division at all costs.

However...

“Then how do you explain the carriage?”

A warrior from the Tang Clan’s side family stepped forward and asked.

When the decisive evidence was brought up, some of those defending him were at a loss for words.

Everything else was just words, but there was no room for excuses when it came to the Clan Leader’s personal carriage being outside.

“That’s right. If the main family is in crisis, why did he ride the carriage and leave?”

“Exactly! If this is a desperate measure, how do you explain that?”

“How could the Clan Leader think of abandoning all the clan members and fleeing alone?”

Once it started, the complaints poured out like a flood.

Unable to refute the matter of the carriage, the direct descendants of the main family quickly changed the subject.

“Ha! Are you really going to fall for the enemy’s trick?”

“The truth of the Clan Leader’s words is not important right now.”

“That’s right! If we are divided, it will be as the enemy wants. Everyone, calm down.”

However, their words only fueled the anger.

“What do you mean the truth is not important!”

“The Clan Leader tried to abandon all the clan members and flee, so what trick did the enemy play here?”

“Ah. Come to think of it, most of the direct descendants, including the Young Clan Leader, are currently at the Righteous Alliance, aren’t they?”

“Ha! Seems like those from the branch families and side families are not part of the Tang Clan.”

As complaints and anger erupted from all around, the direct descendants were at a loss.

Coincidentally, the fact that a significant number of the direct descendants were dispatched to the Righteous Alliance only worsened the situation.

‘This... how...’

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae’s eyes wavered at the accelerating division.

Although it was true that he had tried to abandon them and flee, if he was going to die anyway, he had intended to sacrifice himself for the first time to save the Tang Clan members.

But how did it come to this?

The Tang Clan members, who had prided themselves on being closer than any other group as a martial clan consisting of a single bloodline, were divided into the main family, side families, and branch families.

-Gnash!

Clan Leader Tang In-hae bit his lip tightly and glared at Mok Gyeong-un.

Was this also intentional?

Or was it something that had been building up and erupted with this opportunity, regardless of his intentions?

Whatever it was, the confession he had made to sacrifice himself was leading to the worst situation.

At this rate, even after his death, the division within the Tang Clan might continue.

Just like a crack in a teacup gradually grows and eventually shatters.

‘What have I done?’

It seemed his decision was wrong.

He had thought he should do the right thing one last time, unable to bear witnessing the deaths of the Tang Clan members in front of his eyes, but his choice was wrong.

‘I should have fought the bastard to the end and died.’

Then none of this would have happened.

Even if the fact that he had tried to flee was revealed, in the end, he would have remained as the Clan Leader who had sacrificed himself for the clan members.

But it was too late.

‘Ahhh!’

He had confessed the secret with his own mouth, so what could he do now?

It wasn’t something that could be taken back just because he regretted it.

-Grip!

Clan Leader Tang In-hae clenched his fists and glared at Mok Gyeong-un, saying,

“...You must know that they are truly innocent. Since I have revealed all the faults I have committed as you wanted, end it with my life alone.”

Tang In-hae had resigned himself to everything.

Even if there were signs of division, he had no choice but to leave the rest to those who remained.

The only thing he could do for them was to sacrifice himself.

It was also the only way to wash away his faults, even if just a little.

-Step step!

Mok Gyeong-un walked towards him.

Tang In-hae used his arms to support himself on the ground and straightened his back, wanting to show a dignified appearance in his final moments.

However...

“When did I say I would end it with just you?”

‘!?’

For a moment, Tang In-hae couldn’t hide his bewilderment.

He had firmly believed that if he revealed that others were not involved and confessed his faults, he could end it with his sacrifice alone.

“You bastard, what...”

“I didn’t say anything, so I don’t know why you’re making judgments and doing things on your own.”

“How could you!”

“Did I ever force you to do anything?”

“...”

At that question, Tang In-hae was momentarily at a loss for words.

Come to think of it, Mok Gyeong-un had only said that a tragedy would occur due to someone’s fault, but he had never intentionally said or demanded anything afterward.

He had simply killed the Tang Clan members one by one.

To torment him.

Realizing this, Tang In-hae was suddenly seized by a sense of futility.

‘Damn it!’

He had revealed all his faults in the hope that Mok Gyeong-un would spare the lives of the Tang Clan members, so this situation felt even more miserable.

It was like playing the drum and gong alone.

Clan Leader Tang In-hae raised his head and glared at Mok Gyeong-un with a murderous gaze.

Realizing that all of this had been in vain, all the futility turned into anger, and it was directed at Mok Gyeong-un.

-Rumble!

Tang In-hae soon drew upon his energy.

What was the point of racking his brain and looking for opportunities at this point?

It was better to draw upon his remaining energy and confront the bastard with the resolve to die together.

‘I’ll kill you!’

He vowed to kill this bastard alone, even if it meant exhausting all the remaining Formless Poison.

-Simmer!

The air around Tang In-hae wavered like a mirage.

This occurred because the poisonous energy of the colorless and odorless Formless Poison had no special characteristics unlike other poisonous techniques.

-Thud!

Tang In-hae soon pushed the ground with both hands.

With that, his body soared nearly seven jang in an instant.

He had wanted to close the distance with the bastard as much as possible and seek an opportunity, but that was impossible anyway.

Then, even if it caused some damage, he had no choice but to use the sweeping strike that caused the widest range of damage to target the bastard.

‘Formless Poison Technique. Poison Origin Extreme!’

Tang In-hae rotated his body and scattered the poisonous energy of the Formless Poison in all directions, as if using the Tang Clan’s secret technique, Thousand Flowers Rain.

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

It was as if he was shooting projectile energy in all directions, and an invisible rippling something poured down like rain.

The radius reached nearly twenty jang.

Surprised by Clan Leader Tang In-hae’s sudden action, the Tang Clan warriors within that radius looked at him in disbelief.

‘Clan Leader?’

‘Is he really going to fight in that state?’

None of them had guessed that the Clan Leader would use a secret technique with the resolve to sacrifice them.

They simply thought that since the situation had come to this, he was going to fight until the end.

However...

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

The poisonous energy of the Formless Poison soon scattered like rain in all directions.

Although it was an invisible and odorless poison, there was one thing that could be detected.

It was the sound.

“What, what is that?”

“Take cover!”

The Tang Clan masters, sensing something flying towards them, shouted in panic.

But it was already too late by the time they noticed.

It was a secret technique unleashed with full power by Tang In-hae, the Thousand Poison Hands, known as one of the Eight Stars, the top masters of the martial arts world.

Its speed was much faster than launching hidden weapons with martial power, so it wasn't something that could be dodged even if noticed.

-Swish swish swish swish swish!

The invisible poisonous energy of the Formless Poison soon struck everyone within the radius.

“Ugh!”

“This, this is?”

The moment the poisonous energy touched them, the Tang Clan warriors instinctively realized that it was poison.

And when they realized that it was colorless and odorless...

“It’s the Formless Poison!”

“The Clan Leader unleashed the Formless Poison!”

“This is insane!”

“E-Everyone, back away!”

-Rumble!

With their shouts, chaos ensued in an instant.

The Tang Clan warriors, who knew the terror of the Formless Poison better than anyone else, simultaneously used lightness skills and retreated backward.

Since they had never properly witnessed the Tang Clan’s new secret technique, the Formless Poison Technique, they couldn’t estimate the range of this sweeping strike.

However, its true nature was soon revealed.

“Aaaaargh!”

“M-My body!”

Soon, red and black spots quickly appeared on the bodies of those poisoned by the Formless Poison, and they screamed in pain, unable to endure the agony.

But the skin rash didn't progress slowly.

Despite all of them being skilled in poison techniques, the skin began to melt away, starting from the areas where the rash had appeared.

-Sizzle!

“Ahhh!”

“S-Save me!”

The melting skin soon exposed the flesh, muscles, and even the bones.

The poisoning symptoms, progressing incomparably faster than any other poison, instantly turned the hall into a scene of hell.

-Thud!

“Haa... haa...”

Finally, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae, who had unleashed the ultimate secret technique of the Formless Poison Technique, landed on the ground.

His face, supporting his body with both arms, was utterly miserable.

Although it was solely to kill the bastard, even the dozens of Tang Clan members within the radius of the sweeping strike had been poisoned by the Formless Poison.

‘...Please understand.’

The only secret technique that possessed both range and speed was the Poison Origin Extreme, so there was no other way.

In the first place, this technique was created to confront even supreme masters of the great master level.

However, it had a fatal drawback: if there were allies within the radius, the damage couldn't be avoided.

But there was no other choice now.

If he could kill the bastard through this sacrifice, the Tang Clan could overcome the worst crisis...

‘!?’

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

While the ground turned black due to the aftermath of the Formless Poison and everyone's bodies were melting away, there was a single person unscathed in the center.

‘This... how?’

It was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

Chapter 344 – To Offer (5)

“Please... let me be close to my granddaughter. This old body begs you like this.”

The Holy Fire Priestess, with tears in her eyes, clasped her hands together and pleaded to the heretic monk Ja Geum-jeong, who was sitting on the driver's seat, sipping from a gourd filled with alcohol.

‘She’s crying quite a bit.’

Ja Geum-jeong showed no interest in her yearning for her flesh and blood, not even giving her a glance, but inwardly, his heart softened.

Although he was capricious and overflowing with madness, it would be strange not to be swayed by an old woman crying out for her granddaughter.

However, the masked Ma Ra-hyeon coldly stopped him.

“If you don’t want a bone broken somewhere, it’s best not to move a single step from there.”

“You’re quite strict. Heheh.”

Ja Geum-jeong clicked his tongue at this.

Unlike him, Ma Ra-hyeon still held a grudge against the Holy Fire Priestess.

That’s why he was even less likely to be swayed by emotions.

“What’s the harm in letting her get close?”

“I’m just following orders.”

“Oh my. What a loyal subject you are.”

“...”

“By the way, that guy is quite peculiar.”

“What do you mean?”

Ma Ra-hyeon looked puzzled and turned his gaze to where Ja Geum-jeong gestured with his head.

There, Moo-jin was sitting comfortably with his eyes closed.

He didn't seem to be practicing breathing techniques, so it was unclear what was so peculiar about him.

However, a glint flashed in Ma Ra-hyeon's eyes as he stared intently at Moo-jin.

That's because, despite his breathing not being as regular as when practicing breathing techniques, he could faintly feel energy gathering.

“Phew... Phew...”

As he had guessed, every time Moo-jin exhaled, natural energy was gathering little by little.

It was something that should be absolutely impossible according to the common sense of martial artists, but for him, who had inherited the bloodline of the Yoo Clan, it was like a natural constitution.

“Ahem.”

Moo-jin, who had been breathing, coughed.

Blood stained the corners of his mouth as he coughed.

Noticing this as he wiped it with the back of his hand, Moo-jin frowned.

‘What’s this? Why isn’t it resolving?’

His body was so sturdy that he rarely got injured from ordinary occurrences, but even if it happened, it would heal quickly due to his clan’s monstrous recovery ability.

However, judging by the stinging sensation, his heart hadn’t fully recovered.

He could tell that the cause was the strange evil nature felt around the wound, but it wasn’t dissipating as much as he had hoped.

‘Strange.’

Normally, if he rested for a bit, other energies that had entered his body would leave.

Even the energy that had flowed out from beneath the cliff had been expelled quickly.

However, this evil nature remained, continuing to aggravate the wound and hinder his recovery.

‘...Should I return to the valley?’

It seemed to be a problem he couldn’t solve on his own.

With a sigh, Moo-jin opened his eyes.

But then...

-Flinch!

Moo-jin looked towards the Tang Clan's estate with narrowed eyes.

He had tried to turn off his senses to focus on recovery, but the screams he had been hearing were now spreading like a scene from hell.

What on earth was happening?

‘Didn’t he clearly say he would clarify the relationship of grudges?’

But why were there so many people suffering?

Feeling uneasy at the sound, Moo-jin soon stood up.

How did this happen?

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae couldn’t hide his bewilderment.

He had clearly seen with his own eyes that Mok Gyeong-un couldn’t escape the range.

He had been certain that no matter how supreme a master was, they wouldn’t be able to avoid the Poison Origin Extreme, the ultimate secret technique of the Formless Poison Technique, due to its incredibly wide range and fast spreading speed.

But why was the bastard unaffected?

‘What’s going on?’

Was he enduring the poisonous energy of the Formless Poison with his profound true energy?

No matter how high a level of internal mastery one had, unless they reached the realm of a poison master, they couldn't withstand it to this extent.

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

"Is this the Formless Poison you used to kill my grandfather?"

Tang In-hae's eyes narrowed.

It was all a bluff.

If he had witnessed the tremendous power of this Formless Poison Technique, he should have moved to quickly deal with Tang In-hae, but he wasn't moving a single step from where he stood.

That meant he was definitely fighting against the Formless Poison.

"You're putting on a show."

"A show?"

"Do you think I don't know that you're barely enduring it with your internal energy?"

Perhaps this was an opportunity.

Tang In-hae tried to push the ground with both hands to launch himself towards Mok Gyeong-un.

However, when he tried to push with his hands...

-Thud! Thud!

His body didn't listen to him.

Not only had he used all his strength, but he had also drawn upon his remaining energy to unleash the secret technique Poison Origin Extreme, so perhaps due to the aftereffects, his remaining energy couldn't circulate properly.

‘No other choice.’

It didn't matter.

Even if it wasn't him, there were plenty of others to take his place.

This place was the Tang Clan's stronghold, after all.

Thus, Tang In-hae shouted towards the Tang Clan warriors.

“This is our chance! Strike him!”

However...

‘!?’

Despite his order as the Clan Leader, neither the Tang Clan executives nor any of the warriors showed any intention of moving.

“What are you doing! He's been afflicted by the Formless Poison and can't even move. Strike him now!”

“...”

There was no response to his urging.

Rather, the Tang Clan warriors were looking elsewhere with stiff expressions.

Seeing their reaction, Tang In-hae was dumbfounded.

Were they going to miss this golden opportunity?

Why wasn't anyone stepping forward...

-Clap clap clap!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un clapped his hands and spoke in an admiring tone.

“Impressive.”

“What?”

“Sacrificing so many clan members just to kill that one person. Isn't this what they call burning down the house to catch a flea?”

‘!!!!!!’

At Mok Gyeong-un's mocking words, Tang In-hae's eyes wavered.

He had unleashed the secret technique with the sole intention of killing Mok Gyeong-un, so he hadn't paid attention to anything else.

But the moment he heard Mok Gyeong-un's words, he suddenly became aware of his surroundings.

The Tang Clan members, melting away and dying miserably due to the Formless Poison.

The expressions and gazes of the other Tang Clan members watching them were changing from dejection to anger.

"I... I..."

Realizing the hateful gazes of the Tang Clan members directed at him at some point, Tang In-hae found it difficult to even know where to look.

'Why... Why are they looking at me like that...'

If they were disappointed because of those who were sacrificed, he could understand.

However, this was the only way.

This bastard would not spare anything related to Tang In-hae, who had killed Jang Mun-no of the Haeyeong Sect, who had raised him.

That's why if he could subdue the bastard with the deaths of a few, it would have been a valuable sacrifice.

But why did no one understand him?

Why couldn't they think rationally and see...

“The expression of feeling wronged is quite a sight. Are you expecting understanding after abandoning and killing your clan members with your own hands?”

“You!”

-Gnash!

Tang In-hae gritted his teeth and turned his head to glare at Mok Gyeong-un.

It was all because of that bastard.

None of this would have happened if that bastard hadn't appeared.

Driven to the edge by the hatred and resentment of the Tang Clan members, whom he had considered his blood relatives and family, all of Tang In-hae's anger was directed at Mok Gyeong-un.

“Yes. Everything happened because you showed up.”

“Now you're blaming me.”

“You bastard.”

Trembling with rage, Tang In-hae finally gathered his remaining energy.

And he launched himself towards Mok Gyeong-un.

-Whoosh!

“Die!”

The bastard who couldn't even move while enduring the Formless Poison dared to mock the Clan Leader?

Fine. Since it had come to this, I'll take you with me as my final companion.

It didn't matter if no one understood.

However...

-Thud!

Tang In-hae's body, which had launched forward, suddenly stopped in midair.

It was as if someone had grabbed him.

‘!?’

Tang In-hae's eyes widened.

What was happening?

He had thought that the bastard wouldn't be able to move while enduring the Formless Poison.

-Step!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un took a step forward.

-Step!

And he took another step.

No, he was continuously walking towards him.

Seeing Mok Gyeong-un walking casually, Tang In-hae couldn't believe it.

“H-How?”

“Now I understand.”

“What do you mean?”

“From a young age, my grandfather fed me various medicinal herbs and poisonous plants. At that time, I ate them without knowing any better, but at some point, he told me that my blood had become the epitome of deadly poison.”

“...Blood... becoming deadly poison?”

At those words, Tang In-hae displayed an expression of disbelief.

Naturally, the bodies of those who cultivated poisonous techniques had some accumulation of poisonous energy.

However, no matter how long one had cultivated poison and had talent in it, the human body was inherently incompatible with poison, so they also had to cultivate detoxifying energy to counteract it.

To avoid being consumed by the poison.

“Impossible. Blood possessing toxicity...”

[When poisonous techniques reach the ultimate level, and one can freely control poisonous energy, that state is called a poison master. But is that really the end? What do you all think?]

It was a question posed by Tang Yeon-jong, the Thousand Poison Hands, the Clan Leader from two generations ago, while giving his final teachings a few days before his duel with Baek-yu, the master of the Ten Thousand Poisons.

In response to this question, Tang In-hae’s father, the previous Clan Leader, answered.

[Isn’t the constitution that can internalize ten thousand poisons, the Ten Thousand Poison Pool Body, the true end?]

[That is literally a deformed constitution that may appear once in a thousand years. It’s not a realm that can be achieved through human effort.]

[...]

[Are there no other answers?]

[...]

No one could answer his question.

At that time, that guy, Jang Mun-no, stepped forward.

[Yes. What do you think?]

[Since resistance also requires opposition, if everything that constitutes the body gradually adapts and becomes close to poison, wouldn’t that be the real poison master?]

[Oh? The body's composition becoming close to poison?]

[For example, what if even the blood flowing in the body becomes poison?]

At his words, Tang In-hae and all the main family members eligible for succession in the Tang Clan sneered.

If that were possible, who wouldn't have done it?

The human body couldn't become poison itself.

It could become a structure that endured or adapted to poison, but becoming close to poison itself was an impossibility.

Until now, he had believed that.

However...

“That can't be. How can the flowing blood become poison itself? It's absolutely impossible...”

-Grip!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed his mouth.

Then, he spoke in a menacing voice.

“If it's hard to believe, it would be good to experience it once.”

“Wh... What...”

-Grip!

Mok Gyeong-un tightly clenched his fist, causing the flesh to sink in.

Then, thick blood flowed out.

“Wh... What are you doing?”

Mok Gyeong-un let the blood flowing from his clenched fist drip into Tang In-hae’s mouth, which he had forcibly opened.

The blood flowed into Tang In-hae’s mouth.

He wanted to spit it out, but he couldn’t stop it from flowing down his throat as Mok Gyeong-un was gripping his mouth.

As the blood flowed down his throat and entered his esophagus...

-Sizzle!

The pain of his esophagus burning came.

Tang In-hae’s eyes wavered crazily.

‘I-Impossible.’

It was really poison.

How did blood become poison itself?

He couldn't believe it.

But what shocked him even more was...

“Ack ack!”

He had prided himself on being immune to any poison after mastering the Formless Poison Technique.

However, the deadly poison that had entered through his esophagus rapidly induced poisoning symptoms in his body, and it was so agonizing that he couldn't endure it.

But then, a bizarre event occurred.

-Pop! Pop!

Starting from Tang In-hae's face, the blood vessels on his entire body swelled up and eventually burst.

It didn't end there.

A strange sound of bones snapping could be heard from inside his body.

-Crack! Crunch!

“Aaaaargh!”

It was so painful that Tang In-hae couldn't help but scream like a madman.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un released his grip on Tang In-hae's mouth and stepped back about three steps.

It was to observe his condition.

“Urgh...”

Tang In-hae's body, which had fallen to the ground, was twisting grotesquely.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un couldn't hide his bewilderment.

After mastering the Destructive Demon Poison Scripture, the poisonous energy in his body had indeed become stronger, but poisoning symptoms didn't occur in this manner.

However, Tang In-hae's blood vessels were bursting, and even his bones were twisting.

“Ack!”

-Crunch!

With his bones twisting to the point of protruding here and there, Tang In-hae looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

His eyes seemed to be pleading for his life.

Seeing him like this, Mok Gyeong-un curled the corners of his mouth bitterly.

“I thought it was my role to kill you, but it seems that's not the case.”

‘!?’

Wh-What are you saying now?

It’s not your role?

At that moment, Tang In-hae suddenly recalled the words Jang Mun-no had said.

[You won’t tell me where you hid it until the end?]

[Cough... Cough...]

[Do you think I won’t be able to find it even if you act like this?]

[Cough cough... For the sake of old times, I’m telling you. Don’t... touch... that child. All that... resentment... will eventually... come back to you.]

‘!!!!!’

At that time, he had dismissed it as a dying man spewing curses.

But those were not just empty words.

The poison contained in this bastard’s blood was in complete opposition to him.

That’s why his body was failing to endure it even more.

‘Jang... Mun-no!’

-Crunch! Crunch!

With his blood vessels bursting and bones twisting, Tang In-hae's neck finally snapped, and he breathed his last.

Watching his miserable end with a dispassionate gaze, Mok Gyeong-un looked up at the sky and muttered.

“You had it all planned out.”

Chapter 345 – To Offer (6)

It was a hideous and utterly miserable end.

The death of Clan Leader Tang In-hae.

When the head of a clan, the greatest elder and leader, dies, it would be common for the shock, grief, and anger to spread throughout the entire clan.

However, this death brought about a sense of dejection instead.

Despite the worst enemy threatening the Tang Clan's existence killing the Clan Leader, none of them could express their rage.

‘...’

There were two reasons for this.

The first was that the root of all this lay in Clan Leader Tang In-hae's hidden secrets.

Upon learning this truth, despite being a martial clan centered around blood relations, they couldn't hide their disappointment in the Clan Leader to the point where opinions were sharply divided between the main family, branch families, and side families.

And the second.

This was the most decisive factor. The Clan Leader had not only tried to abandon them and flee but had also driven the Tang Clan members to death even more than the enemy.

It was evident just by looking at the miserable scene in the rear courtyard.

As a result, none of the Tang Clan members stepped forward to avenge the Clan Leader's death.

Of course, there was a third reason that prevented them from taking action.

-Gulp!

The Tang Clan members looked at Mok Gyeong-un with tense expressions.

Thanks to Clan Leader Tang In-hae's confession, they knew why he had invaded the Tang Clan.

Therefore, they understood where his vengeance stemmed from and how great it was.

‘The killing intent... hasn't died out.’

‘This is ominous.’

The atmosphere surrounding Mok Gyeong-un, who had his eyes closed and was looking up at the sky, was unsettling.

Even though he had killed Clan Leader Tang In-hae, who could be considered the root cause, the killing intent emanating from him was still ominous, making it impossible for them to lower their guard.

-Swish!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un lowered his head and opened his eyes.

Seeing this, the Tang Clan members' hands naturally reached for their weapons and hidden weapons.

Until now, all the anger had been directed at the Clan Leader, but now that he was dead, there was no telling how Mok Gyeong-un would act.

The best-case scenario would be for him to stop his revenge here.

It was at that moment when they were tense with a glimmer of hope.

“Is there anyone here who was with the Clan Leader when he killed my grandfather or heard something about it?”

‘...’

At Mok Gyeong-un's question, everyone fell silent.

That's because they had also just learned that the Clan Leader had secretly committed such a brazen act behind the backs of the Tang Clan members.

Moreover, even if they had known this fact, who would dare to reveal it?

That would only provoke that monster's anger.

As everyone remained silent, Mok Gyeong-un clicked his tongue as if disappointed and spoke.

“I wanted to torment him a bit more since he had done something and hear directly from his mouth about the circumstances at that time, but I didn’t expect him to die so easily after drinking the Blood Poison.”

Mok Gyeong-un’s original plan was like that.

He had intended to torment Tang In-hae both physically and mentally until he begged to be killed.

However, whether intentionally or to protect Mok Gyeong-un, thanks to his grandfather’s arrangement, Tang In-hae’s breath had been cut off after drinking the Blood Poison.

Of course, he had experienced extreme agony, but Mok Gyeong-un inwardly felt it was insufficient.

“Does anyone know? Hmm. Well, even if you do, it’s unlikely you’ll open your mouth easily. I would keep my mouth shut too if I were you.”

The air grows heavy.

Although he speaks in a light tone while shrugging his shoulders, the atmosphere is far from it.

It feels like it could explode at any moment.

Then, as Mok Gyeong-un grasped his sword fingers, the two demonic swords, Fearsome Slaughter and Fearsome Killing, naturally emerged from his waist.

-Float float!

‘!!!!!’

Seeing the two demonic swords floating like swimming fish, the Tang Clan members' faces turned pale.

It was Sword Control with Energy.

Mok Gyeong-un looked at them with a smile and said,

“This is fortunate. I was just wanting to vent my anger a bit more. Let me offer a proper funeral song to my grandfather with your screams.”

-Shudder!

At those words, everyone felt a chill run down their spines, making their hair stand on end.

Was he determined to end things with the Tang Clan?

It was at that very moment.

-Thud!

Suddenly, something heavy fell from the sky.

Everyone's attention was simultaneously drawn there.

The one who had abruptly landed, bending one knee before standing up, was none other than...

“Yoo... Yoo Clan!”

It was Moo-jin.

Moo-jin's appearance brought a glimmer of relief to the faces of those who knew him.

They had been puzzled when they suddenly disappeared in the middle of their fight.

But now that he had appeared at this critical juncture, they couldn't help but have a flicker of hope.

However, Moo-jin's expression, receiving their expectation, was not very pleasant.

‘Ah...’

That's because the rear courtyard was a miserable sight, reminiscent of a hell painting, filled with blood and unrecognizable corpses.

Frowning as he looked at this, Moo-jin's gaze naturally turned to Mok Gyeong-un.

His appearance, smiling amidst this hellish bloodbath, was utterly chilling.

-Grip!

Seeing this, Moo-jin bit his lip tightly.

After learning the circumstances, he had considered it an internal matter of the Tang Clan and had decided not to interfere further.

Since the culprit was clear and there was some connection, he had no doubt that this person would end his revenge at an appropriate point.

However, that had led to the worst outcome.

Moo-jin regretted his own judgment and choice.

“My judgment was wrong.”

-Click click click!

Moo-jin turned the ratchet of the Force Suppressing Bracelet.

As the ratchet reached the fourth stage, his muscles swelled and turned red, and white steam rose from his skin.

-Whoosh!

Moo-jin intended to keep turning it without stopping.

However...

-Clank!

The ratchet wouldn't turn.

It seemed to be because the injury to his heart hadn't healed.

‘...No other way.’

He knew that just the fourth stage of the Force Suppressing Bracelet release was insufficient to deal with Mok Gyeong-un, but there was no other way for now.

Mok Gyeong-un spoke to him,

“I remember we agreed that you wouldn’t interfere.”

“If you had ended it at an appropriate point, that would be the case. But from what I see now, it seems you’ll have to kill all the Tang Clan members to end it.”

“Whether it will be all of them or not, who knows?”

“...I was stupid to trust you even a little. Regardless of whether you were related to the Tang Clan or not, I should have settled it somehow earlier.”

“If you had, you wouldn’t be breathing until now.”

‘...’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Moo-jin closed his mouth.

Indeed, if it hadn’t been about the Three-Eyed, he might have lost his life at Mok Gyeong-un’s hands.

So he had nothing to refute.

However, as long as he was alive, he couldn’t leave the Tang Clan members to be slaughtered.

-Crack! Creak!

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

In his current state, if Mok Gyeong-un used that technique of concentrating power into a single point, it would be difficult to block it properly, so he had no choice but to quickly decide the match with all his might.

-Rumble!

Watching him focus his strength into his right arm, Mok Gyeong-un spoke in a dispassionate voice,

“If you unleash your power without proper control like that, you’ll commit the same fault as the Tang Clan Leader.”

“The same fault?”

“You can see it, can’t you?”

Mok Gyeong-un swept his gaze around the surroundings.

Seeing this, Moo-jin’s eyes wavered.

“...What do you mean by that?”

“I haven’t done much yet, to be honest. Almost all the blood staining this place is the Tang Clan Leader’s work.”

‘!!!!’

At those words, Moo-jin displayed an expression of disbelief.

Why would the Tang Clan Leader do such a thing?

Moo-jin denied those words.

“Lies! No matter what, why would the Tang Clan Leader do that to his own clan members...?”

“He abandoned them all and tried to flee, so why would he make a fuss about some of them dying?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Moo-jin looked at the Tang Clan members.

He hoped at least one of them would deny it, but they all remained silent.

Thanks to that, Moo-jin realized it was the truth.

‘Ha...’

What an incredible guy.

To think he would do such a thing until the very end.

It made even the family precept of protecting them feel futile.

Should he say it made him lose motivation?

But then...

“Well, what’s important isn’t really who killed them, right? Since you came to stop me anyway, there’s no need to drag this out.”

-Rumble!

Moo-jin’s eyes moved.

He could feel energy gathering in Mok Gyeong-un's two demonic swords floating with Sword Control with Energy.

He was blatantly gathering power with the demonic swords.

This was a kind of threat.

But what surprised Moo-jin even more was...

‘...He has already recovered his energy to this extent?’

He clicked his tongue inwardly.

Unlike himself, Mok Gyeong-un had been moving without a moment's rest.

Yet he had recovered his energy to nearly half the level of when they had fought with all their might.

If they were to fight now, he would be defeated before long.

However, there was no choice.

If he left, they would all die.

It was at that very moment.

“Please stop.”

At that moment, a middle-aged man among the Tang Clan stepped forward.

Mok Gyeong-un, without taking his eyes off Moo-jin, asked,

“Who are you?”

“I am Tang In-hu, the commander of the Clan Leader’s guard.”

“The commander of the Clan Leader’s guard? Ah. Then you must be quite close to the Clan Leader.”

“...You could say that.”

“Then you must have always been by the Clan Leader’s side.”

“Not always. That’s why I only learned about everything the Clan Leader did now.”

“The Clan Leader’s guard commander only learned about what the Clan Leader did now?”

“...It may be hard to believe, but whenever the Clan Leader carried out something in secret, he didn’t trust anyone around him. So there were many things he hid even from me, the guard commander.”

Mok Gyeong-un scoffed.

“Then what do you even know?”

At that question, Guard Commander Tang In-hu hesitated for a moment before carefully speaking.

“I heard that the Clan Leader used the Formless Poison on Jang Mun-no.”

“...And?”

“The Clan Leader was a man of many secrets, but when practicing martial arts, he needed a training partner, so I had to watch over him.”

“...”

“That’s why I know that after the Clan Leader used the Formless Poison, perhaps due to the aftereffects, red spots would appear on his neck.”

‘!?’

-Swish!

As soon as he finished speaking, Mok Gyeong-un’s figure had already reached in front of him.

Suddenly appearing before his eyes, Guard Commander Tang In-hu flinched under the pressure, but he endured it and didn’t avoid his gaze.

“Please continue.”

“Before that... Please make an agreement first.”

“An agreement?”

“Yes. The Clan Leader’s actions were truly unknown to all the Tang Clan members.”

“So you’re not responsible?”

“If being of the same blood is a crime, it could be considered a crime, but we were practically abandoned by the Clan Leader. How distraught do you think we are? But if a supreme master of the great master level like you says you’ll kill us, we Tang Clan members have no choice but to fight for our

lives. However, to be honest, we don't want the entire clan to be sacrificed because of the Clan Leader's faults."

Mok Gyeong-un's eyes glinted at Tang In-hu's words, revealing his true feelings without deceit.

"Hmm."

With that, Mok Gyeong-un, who had been staring intently at him, looked at the Tang Clan members who were extremely tense.

They were genuinely terrified of Mok Gyeong-un.

He had considered killing the rest of them to offer as a funeral song for his grandfather, but he soon lost interest.

-Swish!

He withdrew the energy he had been gathering in the two demonic swords.

Noticing this first, Moo-jin let out a sigh of relief.

If Mok Gyeong-un had been determined to kill them to the end, a massive slaughter would have occurred, making it impossible for the Tang Clan to recover.

'Should I say it's fortunate?'

It was a strange feeling to be included in that fortune.

But then, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“Alright. If you tell me what you know, let’s wrap things up here. But...”

“But?”

“I don’t really like leaving loose ends.”

“Loose ends? What can we possibly do to make you say that...”

“There’s a saying that a gentleman’s revenge is not too late even after ten years. That’s how I came this far too.”

Less than half a year ago, Mok Gyeong-un hadn’t even practiced martial arts.

But now, he possessed tremendous martial prowess that could determine the fate of the entire Tang Clan.

With his own greatest example, he had no intention of taking this lightly.

“What exactly do you want us to do?”

“I learned something from somewhere. It seems like a good method.”

“...What is it?”

“Seal your gates. For about sixty years.”

‘!!!!!!!’

As soon as those words were spoken, the Tang Clan was in an uproar.

They had wondered what he would demand, but they never expected him to tell them to seal their gates.

Sealing the gates literally meant closing the gates, signifying that a sect or martial clan acknowledged their defeat and severed their activities with the outside world.

Moreover, sixty years meant a full cycle of the sexagenary cycle and nearly two generations.

Going this far was no different from severing all possible future repercussions.

‘H-How can he make such a demand...?’

Guard Commander Tang In-hu couldn’t hide his perplexity.

He had only been concerned about saving everyone’s lives from a supreme master of the Six Heavens level, even if he was just one person. Who would have imagined that he would make a demand as if they had fought and lost to an entire organization?

At Mok Gyeong-un’s tremendous demand, even Moo-jin was surprised and tried to speak...

‘...Ha.’

In the end, he closed his mouth.

If Mok Gyeong-un decided to kill them all right now, there was no way to stop him.

Pride might be hurt, but that wouldn’t substitute for their lives.

The decision was solely up to them.

-Swish!

At this moment, Guard Commander Tang In-hu, who had been perplexed by Mok Gyeong-un's words, looked at the Tang Clan executives with difficulty.

Their faces were twisted with humiliation and bitterness.

However, if they refused to accept this demand, the outcome was predetermined.

Thus, the executives nodded their heads.

“Ah!”

Sighs escaped from here and there.

How could the Sichuan Tang Clan, a part of the Righteous Alliance, one of the Seven Great Families, and known as the Overlord of Sichuan, suffer such humiliation?

Leaving behind their bitterness, Guard Commander Tang In-hu opened his mouth with difficulty.

It was hard for him to continue speaking, but as the current representative of the negotiation, he had to bring it to a conclusion.

“We will... accept your... demand... and conditions.”

“Then, make the declaration of defeat first.”

-Grip!

Tang In-hu bit his lip tightly and spoke again.

“We still... don’t know... who you are. So what should we call you?”

At his question, Mok Gyeong-un paused for a moment.

Should he say Jeong since this was a place to tie up the grudge with his grandfather?

Or should he use the name Mok Gyeong-un, which he used in the Heaven and Earth Society?

However, once the declaration of defeat was made, that name would quickly spread, so using both wouldn’t be appropriate.

Therefore...

“Heavenly Demon (Cheon-ma).”

He said Cheon-ma, just like at Shaolin.

At this, Tang In-hu took a deep breath with a bitter face and shouted loudly, infusing his internal energy.

“We, the Sichuan Tang Clan, acknowledge our defeat to Sir Heavenly Demon and declare that we will seal our clan for sixty years as the price!”

Chapter 346 – The Rumor (1)

The Sichuan Tang Clan’s declaration of seclusion.

It was an inevitable decision due to a lack of alternatives, but the clan sought to delay the news from spreading as much as possible to preserve their pride as a martial arts family.

However, despite their efforts, word of the Sichuan Tang Clan's seclusion spread rapidly throughout the Central Plains.

The Sichuan Tang Clan is a martial arts family composed of blood relatives.

Although they solidified their bloodline through connections with cadet branches and sub-clans, they did not completely exclude marriages with outsiders.

If a union greatly benefited the clan, they would establish blood alliances through marriage with renowned martial arts families.

As a result, there were some members within the Tang Clan who hailed from outside the family. No matter how much they tried to conceal it, some details of that day's events inevitably leaked out.

-Flap flap!

The carrier pigeons they sent arrived at the intelligence divisions of each martial arts clan.

Since the messages were delivered by birds, distance was meaningless. In less than a fortnight, the news reached even the Righteous Alliance, the heart of the orthodox martial arts world.

Military and Intelligence Division of the Righteous Alliance Headquarters.

The head of this division is Zhuge Do-yang, the Righteous Alliance's top military advisor.

Someone hurriedly entered his office.

Bang!

“Who dares... Oh! Vice Alliance Leader, it’s you!”

Zhuge Do-yang rose from his seat and cupped his hands in salute.

He wondered who would enter his office without permission, but it was the Righteous Alliance’s second-in-command, Vice Alliance Leader, Wae Tak-hyeon.

Considered one of the Eight Stars, the top masters of the current martial arts world, he was among the five most prominent experts within the Righteous Alliance.

Usually, he had an almost perpetual smile on his face, but his expression was far from pleasant at the moment.

“Is this true?”

Vice Alliance Leader Wae Tak-hyeon pushed a red scroll, a report, in front of Zhuge Do-yang.

Seeing this, Military Advisor Zhuge Do-yang sighed and spoke.

“Phew. I sent it as an urgent document, requesting swift action. Are you only reading it now?”

“Do you think this is the only urgent report I’ve received recently? If it’s something like this, you could have informed me directly.”

“I also had numerous matters to handle because of this. Moreover, I marked it as an urgent document that must be processed immediately, using a red scroll tied with a golden thread, did I not?”

“.....”

At Zhuge Do-yang’s words, Vice Alliance Leader Wae Tak-hyeon clicked his tongue and spoke in a conceding tone.

“...I understand. I understand. I failed to pay proper attention to it. But what is this shocking news? The Tang Clan has gone into seclusion?”

“It’s exactly as written in the report.”

“Exactly as written... Does it make sense for the Sichuan Tang Clan to admit defeat and go into seclusion because of a single person?”

Under normal circumstances, even an urgent report would not have reached the Intelligence Division.

However, this report could not be ignored.

The name mentioned in the report had appeared more than once.

There was one particular group affiliated with the Righteous Alliance that refrained from intervening in worldly affairs unless it was a special case.

It was none other than the Shaolin Temple of Mount Song.

The birthplace of orthodox martial arts and the center of the righteous martial arts world.

Shocking news arrived from Shaolin.

[Shaolin’s Hundred-and-Eight Arhat Formation defeated by a single martial artist.]

It was an extremely shocking piece of information.

Since the establishment of Shaolin, there had been only one instance of the Hundred-and-Eight Arhat Formation being defeated by a single person... or so he had heard, back in the Old Martial Arts Era.

However, that situation was different.

That individual was universally acknowledged as the Heaven's First Sword by all martial artists.

Yet, such an event had occurred for a second time.

Moreover, the current Hundred-and-Eight Arhat Formation was renowned for having its weaknesses rectified and its power greatly enhanced after learning from the previous incident.

“...Cheonma (Heavenly Demon).”

That was the name given to the person who single-handedly shattered the Hundred-and-Eight Arhat Formation.

It was uncertain if this was his real name.

Heavenly Demon?

Who would give someone such a title?

It was a moniker that only deranged individuals walking the path of evil would adopt.

“Who exactly is this person?”

“I don't know.”

“You don't know? Nothing at all?”

“I know nothing. Although it happened within Shaolin, the little information we have is thanks to the Embroidered Uniform Guards who entered.”

“No clues about his appearance, attire, or any hints about his affiliation with a particular group?”

“I heard he looks quite young.”

“Looks young?”

Vice Alliance Leader Wae Tak-hyeon clicked his tongue.

Once one reached a certain level of cultivation, outward appearance held no meaning.

Among those who had attained enlightenment, some underwent physical metamorphosis, regaining their youthful appearance.

The problem was the accurate description of his appearance.

“We must find him. This has gone beyond the point of simply ignoring it.”

Shattering Shaolin’s Hundred-and-Eight Arhat Formation with a single palm strike could be considered a display of his immense martial prowess.

However, the Sichuan Tang Clan’s seclusion was a different matter.

The Sichuan Tang Clan was a pillar of the Righteous Alliance and one of the Seven Great Clans of the martial arts world.

Their influence on the orthodox martial arts community was significant. They had declared a seclusion lasting a staggering sixty years.

The Tang Clan itself wielded considerable power, but now, the only group capable of countering the poisons and secret weapons of the evil sects was absent.

Military Advisor Zhuge Do-yang nodded in agreement.

“You are correct. From the moment he forced the Sichuan Tang Clan into seclusion, it became clear that this person is closer to an evil cult leader than a righteous martial artist.”

“Even his name or title, Cheonma, already suggests an evil cult leader. What’s more concerning is that there are already troublesome groups like the Heaven and Earth Society, the Four Evils Alliance, the Green Forest Faction, and the Janggang River Bandits...”

“This person’s emergence alone can disrupt the current balance of the martial arts world.”

“Disrupt the balance?”

In response to Vice Alliance Leader Wae Tak-hyeon’s question, Military Advisor Zhuge Do-yang spoke in a serious tone.

“The Heaven and Earth Society and the Four Evils Alliance have been quiet recently, and the evil sects lack a prominent central figure.”

“Central figure...”

“Yes. Any faction requires an exceptional leader. Such individuals are said to possess the qualities of a leader or the qualities of a hero.”

“Hero? Ha! Those wicked people from the evil sects, heroes?”

“At least to those who aspire to walk the path of evil, they will be perceived as heroes. He single-handedly shattered Shaolin’s reputation and forced the Sichuan Tang Clan into seclusion. Has there ever been someone so boldly brazen among the evil sects?”

“.....”

At Zhuge Do-yang’s words, Vice Alliance Leader Wae Tak-hyeon’s expression grew even more grave.

Indeed, among the evil sect members, there had never been anyone who had made such a striking impact with just two actions.

“Vice Alliance Leader, this is not a matter we can overlook. This person is truly dangerous.”

“I am aware of that much. I will convene a meeting immediately.”

“Yes. Please hurry. The martial artists who have already heard the rumors are hailing him as a new heaven.”

“A new heaven? Don’t tell me...”

“Yes. Not the Sixth Heaven, but the Seventh Heaven.”

‘!!!!!!!’

The emergence of a new heaven, close to evil.

It was an ill omen for the dominant righteous factions and a ray of hope for the somewhat suppressed evil sects.

[...Although he has passed away, he was the lord I served, so I hope you'll understand the way I address him.]

[I don't really care about such things. Just continue with your story.]

[Very well. When the clan leader returned, there were even more red spots on his neck than usual. Seeing this, I knew that the clan leader had used the Formless Poison Art. It wasn't something that would appear simply from training.]

The wounds visible on various parts of his body and the torn state of his clothing clearly indicated that he had been in a fierce battle.

[So?]

[At that time, I didn't know that the person he had fought was Medicine Immortal Hae Yeong Jang Mun-no.]

[Of course you wouldn't know, since he didn't say anything.]

[Rather than that, based on the description of the person's appearance provided by the clan leader, I thought it might have been Ghost Blade.]

‘!?’

Mok Gyeong-un's eyes flickered with surprise.

An unexpected individual had been mentioned.

[Ghost Blade? What do you mean?]

[...The clan leader who returned ordered all the bodyguards, except for a few, to search for a corpse downstream of the valley. Although I'm not sure if the body would be intact, based on the attire he described and the broken sword, it was undoubtedly Ghost Blade.]

Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin, his eyes slightly narrowed.

It was unexpected information.

Based on this, if he were to summarize, the first person his grandfather encountered was undoubtedly Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae.

That bastard had come to kill his grandfather from the beginning.

By killing his grandfather, he aimed to take possession of a woman named Ye Song-ah, who had inherited the ability of prophecy.

After poisoning his grandfather with the Formless Poison, Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae disappeared midway.

However, it seemed that the one who existed in that disappearance was none other than Ghost Blade.

[He was chasing someone.]

Those were the words spoken by Lee Gwang, the Second Realm of the Secret Society, who had dealt the final blow to his grandfather.

The person Ghost Blade was chasing was Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae.

The two of them fought, and if the words of Tang In-hu, the leader of the bodyguards, were true, the victor was Tang In-hae.

“Hmm.”

Based on the uncertainty about the state of the corpse and the aftereffects of the red spots on the neck, Tang In-hae had used the Formless Poison Art on Ghost Blade.

Up to this point, it seemed that Ghost Blade had been killed by Tang In-hae.

However, none of the individuals associated with the Secret Society believed that Ghost Blade was dead.

‘Nearly half a year since that incident.’

No matter how secretive the Secret Society was, it was inconceivable that they would fail to notice the death of one of their executives for a whole six months.

This meant that the likelihood of Ghost Blade being alive had significantly increased.

‘Does that mean he endured the Formless Poison?’

Unexpected.

Unlike himself, a Poison Man whose blood was poison itself, Ghost Blade had no means to counter the Formless Poison.

Yet, by what means did he survive?

The more he learned about this person, the more questions arose.

He could say that he had avenged those who had directly killed his grandfather, but he had yet to capture the ones behind them.

To catch them, he still needed Ghost Blade.

‘...Is the Society Leader the answer after all?’

The deceased Lee Gwang had said that the Society Leader of the Heaven and Earth Society was the only one who could summon Ghost Blade.

For now, the Society Leader was the only way to make contact with the Secret Society, so he had no choice but to return to the Heaven and Earth Society.

His revenge was not over yet.

It would only end when he killed all those behind it.

-Clatter! Clatter!

Mok Gyeong-un was sitting inside a carriage.

There were two carriages in total.

One of them was the carriage that Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae had tried to escape in, but Seop Chun and Mong Mu-yak had skillfully stolen it and were making good use of it.

They had divided the group into two. One carriage carried Ja Geum-jeong, Seop Chun, Mong Mu-yak, and Holy Fire Priestess, while the other carriage had Ma Ra-hyeon as the coachman, with Mok Gyeong-un, Ye Song-ah, who was still unconscious, and Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh inside.

The reason Guyang Sa-oh was riding in this carriage was simple.

It was to detoxify the delicate poison that had affected Ye Song-ah's brain.

Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae had not only blocked her blood vessels but had also administered a delicate drug to her brain to ensure she would not wake up for a while, in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

As a result, she had been unable to regain consciousness for nearly a week.

However, starting from half a day ago, she had shown improvement due to Guyang Sa-oh's detoxification efforts, and based on her occasional eye flutters, it seemed she would awaken soon.

Chapter 347 – The Rumor (2)

“Hmm.”

Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh carefully pulled out the long acupuncture needle from the head of Ye Song-ah, the granddaughter of Holy Fire Priestess, who lay motionless as if she were dead.

During the process of removing the needle, Ye Song-ah's head trembled slightly.

Soon, a black liquid oozed from the tip of the needle and seeped out through the hole in her head where the needle had been inserted.

Seeing this, Guyang Sa-oh breathed a sigh of relief.

“Phew.”

Mok Gyeong-un asked.

“Is it done?”

“Yes. Fortunately, I managed to extract all the delicate poison.”

“Excellent work.”

“Hohoho. It’s nothing.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s praise, Guyang Sa-oh shrugged his shoulders with a sense of pride.

When it came to poisons, Guyang Sa-oh was one of the top three experts across the Central Plains and the Western Regions.

Although Mok Gyeong-un had also learned about poisons from his grandfather, Medicine Immortal Hae Yeong, and the Island Poison King, Baek Sa-ha, and was proficient in their use, Guyang Sa-oh’s extensive experience gave him an edge in handling intricate details.

“Is she completely detoxified?”

“Yes. No matter how skilled the Tang Clan bastard is, this level of poison is not a problem.”

Although the Tang Clan Leader Tang In-hae had personally administered the poison, as long as it wasn’t the Formless Poison, Guyang Sa-oh was capable of detoxifying any type of poison.

However, the brain was one of the most delicate areas to handle, so it inevitably took some time.

“She will wake up soon.”

“It seems so.”

-Exhale... Exhale... Exhale...

As the delicate poison was expelled, her breathing changed.

This alone indicated that the blood circulation to her brain had returned to normal.

‘Blood circulation...’

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un suddenly thought of Yoo Moo-jin.

Through his confrontation with Yoo Moo-jin, Mok Gyeong-un had vaguely grasped how his strength manifested.

Yoo Moo-jin’s explosive power was achieved through the innate condensation of natural energy and the circulation of blood and expansion of muscles that were incomparable to ordinary people.

‘Can I do it?’

This technique was more intricate than manipulating energy.

Controlling muscles-

-Clench!

Mok Gyeong-un clenched his fist and tried to expand the muscles in his forearm and biceps.

Even ordinary people could slightly expand their muscles by applying force to their developed muscles through training.

However,

‘Is it impossible?’

The muscular expansion like Yoo Moo-jin’s seemed to be an entirely different matter.

It went beyond the scope of ordinary muscles.

It seemed that rather than being developed through training, it was greatly influenced by bloodline.

Instead, trying to expand his muscles only drained his strength unnecessarily.

‘Should I approach it differently?’

The method of infusing natural energy into the blood and rapidly circulating it seemed quite useful.

Mok Gyeong-un had a way to rapidly circulate blood, which he had grasped while becoming a Poison Man, so it seemed possible to try it out.

-Whoosh!

Soon, the skin on his clenched fist turned slightly red and felt hot.

‘I think it’s working.’

He tried to circulate it even faster.

As a result, his right hand turned even redder, and soon, white steam rose from his skin.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes flickered with surprise.

If done well, it might be possible.

However, as he circulated the blood even faster, the muscles in the area where the blood was rapidly circulating began to ache severely.

It felt as if the blood vessels and the muscles at their center had ruptured.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un stopped.

-Whoosh!

Witnessing this strange sight, Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh asked in astonishment.

“What did you just do?”

“I tried to circulate my blood rapidly.”

“Blood? Not internal energy, but is it possible to rapidly circulate blood?”

“Yes. It’s possible. It’s just a bit difficult to do it normally.”

At those words, Guyang Sa-oh frowned.

No matter how advanced an expert he was, freely controlling the blood flowing within one’s body was nearly impossible, even if he spoke of it casually.

“When the blood circulation speeds up, it puts a strain on the blood vessels and muscles.”

It made sense why Yoo Moo-jin's muscles were developed.

The thick, armor-like muscles protected his body from the rapid blood circulation.

This meant that either overwhelming muscles were needed to support it, or a method was required to protect the body from strain when circulating blood.

‘Hoh.’

If he circulated the blood while protecting the blood vessels with internal energy, it might be possible to maintain it to some extent.

In that case, it might be possible to stably amplify energy even more than when partially utilizing the Reverse Blood Flow Technique.

For example,

-Whoosh!

If he circulated the blood even faster while protecting the blood vessels with the Heavenly Demon Technique,

-Whoosh!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un's right hand and wrist turned dark red, no, a shade of brown, and steam rose from them.

Seeing this, Guyang Sa-oh spoke with wide eyes.

“Advancing Blood, Golden Body?”

“What?”

“Isn’t the technique you’re using right now the Advancing Blood, Golden Body?”

“What do you mean?”

“The technique Mok Gyeong-un is currently using closely resembles the Advancing Blood, Golden Body, the unique poison martial art of Hae Yeok-won, the second leader of the Four Evils Alliance.”

“Hae Yeok-won? Ah!”

At those words, Mok Gyeong-un recalled the conversation he had with Yoo Moo-jin before parting ways at the Tang Clan.

[Are you leaving?]

[Yes. Since you said there’s nothing that can be done about the demonic energy remaining in my heart, I have no choice but to return home and inquire about it.]

[I apologize for that.]

The demonic energy lingering in his heart was due to the curse of the Demon Sword, Plundering-killing Sword.

The wound inflicted by Plundering-killing Sword would not heal because of this demonic energy, which was no different from a curse.

If it were an ordinary person, being struck in the heart by Plundering-killing Sword would be considered a fatal condition, but thanks to the recovery power passed down through his bloodline, Yoo Moo-jin was able to maintain his life.

‘Demonic energy...’

In fact, Mok Gyeong-un had considered using his Fang Arts to treat Yoo Moo-jin’s demonic energy.

Of course, he couldn’t be certain that it would definitely work, but if this curse had arisen from a long-standing resentment, it might be possible to dispel it using Fang Arts.

However, he quickly dismissed the idea.

Although the Sichuan Tang Clan had agreed to a sixty-year seclusion due to the agreement, it was questionable whether they would continue to abide by it. If they decided to seek revenge, it was uncertain whether Yoo Moo-jin would offer to assist them.

Therefore, he judged that it was better to leave the demonic energy of Plundering-killing Sword intact, rendering Yoo Moo-jin unable to fully exert his power.

[Then, this is farewell. If you have nothing else to say...]

[May I make one request?]

At Yoo Moo-jin’s words just as they were about to part ways, Mok Gyeong-un looked at him with a puzzled expression.

[A request?]

[It’s nothing major. I’m a bit worried after observing you.]

[What do you mean?]

[There seem to be few who can stop a monster like you if you decide to go on a rampage. Our family has to continuously keep watch over 'that place,' so we can't venture too far. At most, we can only keep an eye on the nearby Tang Clan.]

[That place?]

What is he talking about, keeping watch over something?

It seems like they are guarding something.

Then, Yoo Moo-jin spoke.

[Should I say it's a family matter? It's a form of service. Service.]

[Hearing you say service makes me curious.]

[It's nothing special. In the distant past, the founder of our family defeated an extremely large and white ox. However, this ox possesses tremendous strength and refuses to die.]

Mok Gyeong-un tilted his head.

What is he talking about, suddenly mentioning a large ox?

[White Ox?]

[...Yes. Anyway, the important thing is not that. If you happen to encounter someone with the surname Hae while roaming the martial arts world for revenge, I ask that you show mercy to them at least once.]

[The surname Hae?]

[Yes. They can be considered closer relatives to our family than the Tang Clan. Of course, I've never met them personally.]

[...Is this a request?]

[Yes, it's a request. This is also a form of connection. Can't you grant me this much?]

[As long as they are not involved in my grandfather's death, I will do so.]

[That's enough for me.]

[But there must be more than one or two people with the surname Hae. How will I recognize them?]

[I heard there are fewer than you think. And you'll be able to tell at a glance. Even though they aren't born with the same innate abilities as our clan, I heard they know how to control their bodies to some extent.]

Right.

The person Yoo Moo-jin had mentioned must be that Hae Yeok-won.

The phrase "know how to control their bodies to some extent" seemed to imply that he had mastered the method of rapidly circulating blood to explosively increase his power.

They seemed to call it the Advancing Blood, Golden Body.

“Who is this Hae Yeok-won person?”

“He is the second leader of the Four Evils Alliance. He is known to possess martial prowess comparable to the Eight Stars.”

“I see.”

In any case, now that he knew the name and affiliation, there was no need to bother him unless he was entangled with the Secret Society.

But wasn't the Four Evils Alliance a group formed by the remnants of the annihilated Nine Blood Sect and other evil sect members?

Little by little, connections seemed to be forming, whether he knew it or not.

At that moment,

“Ugh.”

Along with a groan, Ye Song-ah, who had been asleep, opened her eyes.

After blinking a few times, she suddenly sat up in surprise and looked around.

“Who, who are you?”

In response to her question, Guyang Sa-oh scoffed and said,

“After all the effort I put into treating you and waking you up, that's the first thing you ask?”

“What?”

“You should be thanking this person.”

Guyang Sa-oh politely pointed at Mok Gyeong-un with his palm.

At this, her eyes widened.

‘!!!!!!’

Having just awakened, she was disoriented and couldn’t recognize who was who.

However, after staring intently, she finally recognized Mok Gyeong-un’s face, and her eyes were filled with joy.

“Ah ah ah!”

With tears welling up in her eyes, she immediately prostrated herself inside the carriage.

-Thud!

She even banged her forehead hard against the floor.

Surprised by her sudden action, Guyang Sa-oh couldn’t understand.

“No matter how much I told you to be grateful...”

“Only! Only for this moment have I been waiting!”

At her overwhelming voice, even Mok Gyeong-un couldn’t hide his confusion.

She was seeing him for the first time, so why was she acting this way?

As Mok Gyeong-un stared at her intently, he slightly moved his hand.

Then, her head, which was pressed against the floor, was lifted by the internal energy.

“Oh?”

As her head was raised against her will, her eyes trembled.

Mok Gyeong-un asked her,

“What have you been waiting for? Aren’t you seeing me for the first time today?”

“The sacred orb showed you to me.”

“Sacred orb? The... one that bestows the revelation of Holy Fire?”

“That’s right. The revelation told me that you would come to find me, the lowliest of the low, and pave the way for me.”

“...Pave the way?”

“Yes. You are the one who will purify this tainted world with sacred flames and lead the foolish beings to the demonic path!”

Chapter 348 – The Rumor (3)

“Yes. You are the one who will purify this tainted world with sacred flames and lead the foolish beings to the demonic path!”

“.....”

At her voice filled with joy, Mok Gyeong-un’s expression turned bland.

Although he had secured her because of the prophecy or whatever it was, she was rambling on about something he had little interest in.

So, Mok Gyeong-un coldly drew the line.

“I’m not interested.”

“What?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Ye Song-ah, the granddaughter of Holy Fire Priestess, couldn’t hide her bewilderment.

As a devout follower of the Fire Faith Order, although she had unintentionally inherited the ability of prophecy, she believed that everything she had seen through the sacred orb would happen in the future and that it was her duty to assist in it.

‘Why is he reacting this way?’

If what she had seen through the sacred orb was true, the person in front of her was undoubtedly the one from the prophecy.

But why was he showing such a cold reaction?

In fact, he was treating it as if it were someone else’s business from the beginning.

“The prophe...”

“Shh.”

“Huh?”

“What I’m curious about through you is not that. Is it true that you inherited the ability of prophecy?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, Ye Song-ah felt inwardly disappointed.

She had been waiting for him for a long time, but he was quite different from what she had expected.

However, her disappointment didn’t last long.

Through the sacred orb, she had seen all of his disappointment, pain, sorrow, and anger towards the world.

Therefore, she considered it natural for him to show such an indifferent attitude.

Moreover,

‘Ahura Mazda is a dual-natured deity, so he can be both a Spenta (good god) and an Ahriman, that is, an Angra (evil god).’

He was not absolute good.

He could be good to someone, but he could also be evil to someone else.

That's why he is called a dual-natured being.

"I..."

"Can't you answer my question?"

"...If you mean the ability to resonate with the sacred orb, then yes."

"Resonate with the sacred orb?"

"Yes. To be precise."

"Did you say that you can only receive revelations if you have the sacred orb?"

"That's correct."

"Hmm. I see. And you saw me through that sacred orb?"

"Yes. I saw you. That's why I ask you to lead us, the foolish beings, on the path you pave."

At her request, Mok Gyeong-un scoffed.

He didn't know what kind of revelation it was that drove him like some kind of savior.

He was far from being such a being.

"The path I walk is only stained with blood."

“If that is the process of purification, I can accept it to any extent.”

“Purification?”

“The current world is utterly tainted. In your absence...”

“Ah ah ah. Let’s stop talking about that.”

Mok Gyeong-un waved his hand in dismissal.

In the first place, he didn’t even know what the being inside him was.

However, both Holy Fire Priestess and this woman seemed to have high expectations of that being.

But he was too different from the being they knew.

The only thing that drove him was revenge.

“Enough of that. Let me ask you one thing.”

“...Command me.”

“Do you know anything about the Secret Society?”

At this question, Ye Song-ah’s eyes flickered with surprise.

It seemed she also knew something about the Secret Society.

Soon, she opened her mouth.

“I don’t know how long they have been with the Fire Faith Order, the main sect. But according to my grandmother, no, Holy Fire Priestess, they are known to be like a shadow to the main sect.”

“Shadow?”

“Yes. But as far as I know, they are not with them now.”

“I already know that from your grandmother.”

“Grandmother?”

Ye Song-ah’s eyes widened.

She thought her grandmother was imprisoned in the Golden Prison of the Imperial Palace.

At her reaction, Mok Gyeong-un spoke with narrowed eyes.

“As I thought.”

“Pardon?”

“I doubt that the revelation can be called a prophecy.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Exactly what I said. If the revelation is a prophecy, shouldn’t it have known that the Secret Society tried to manipulate the Fire Faith Order as they pleased and betrayed them?”

“That’s...”

“Moreover, it couldn’t even foresee that Holy Fire Priestess would be released. I don’t know what prophecy or revelation is.”

“Are you saying my grandmother has been released?”

At that question, Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh pointed to the back of the carriage with his thumb and said,

“She’s in the carriage following behind.”

At those words, Ye Song-ah’s eyes reddened.

It seemed she had no idea that her grandmother was so close to her.

Seeing her like this, Mok Gyeong-un judged that the credibility of the revelation and prophecy was diminishing.

What use was a power that couldn’t even read one step ahead?

‘It’s merely symbolic.’

He thought there might be some value in using the prophetic power since it had been transferred to the granddaughter, but it didn’t seem much different from the powerless Holy Fire Priestess.

With a disappointed gaze, Mok Gyeong-un spoke to her.

“I wanted to know what the leader of the Secret Society wants and where he is using the power of that revelation, but it seems that’s difficult for you as well.”

“Are you talking about what the leader of the Secret Society wants?”

“Yes. But I don’t particularly...”

“The leader of the Secret Society desires your death.”

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un flinched and looked into her eyes.

Her reddened eyes had suddenly become serious.

“He wants my death?...What do you mean?”

“I don’t know the exact reason, but if what I saw in the revelation is true, the leader of the Secret Society fears you. That’s why he seeks to kill you.”

“...I can’t understand. How can someone who has never seen me fear me?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, she frowned.

Then, she carefully parted her lips.

“Could it be...that the incarnation has no memory of him at all?”

“Incarnation?”

“Yes. As far as I know, you are his incarnation. Have you not accepted him who resides within you?”

“.....”

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un's expression turned somewhat bland.

At this, she spoke, sensing his mood.

“I thought you had stepped forward because you had regained the power you had lost.”

“I have no idea what you're talking about.”

“Ah...Ahhh. It's still too early.”

At her sighing reaction, Mok Gyeong-un spoke in a sharp voice.

“Please speak in a way that's easy to understand.”

“The revelation that comes through the sacred orb shows all the possibilities that may unfold in the future in fragments. That's why even I don't know when it will happen or if it will definitely happen.”

“Isn't a possibility just a prediction?”

“Prediction is imagination, but possibility is one of the many paths that can happen.”

“One of the paths?”

“Yes. This is a simple principle yet very complex. Although we met today, if by any chance my luck was bad and I had died at the hands of the Tang Clan Leader, there would have been a reality where I didn't meet you.”

“It’s a hypothesis.”

“It can be called a hypothesis, but it’s a possibility. Because in some path, the reality where I died and didn’t meet you can happen.”

“Hmm.”

No matter how intelligent Mok Gyeong-un was, it was difficult to fully understand what she was saying.

It was like trying to grasp a fleeting cloud.

“There are countless variables in the human world, so even a single discrepancy creates numerous branches of flow. Those chosen by the sacred orb read the possibility that comes closest among those branches of flow.”

“In other words, it’s not something that will definitely happen, but the possibility with the highest probability of happening.”

“That’s right.”

“So, in the possibility you saw, was I that being called ‘him’?”

“...That’s righ...”

-Flinch!

She couldn’t finish her words.

The moment their eyes met, her entire body froze, and it was difficult for her to even breathe.

Why was she reacting this way?

Unable to understand, Mok Gyeong-un said to her,

“I am myself. Don’t identify me with that being called ‘him.’ Of course, I have no intention of silently accepting what you call ‘him’ either.”

It was a kind of aversion.

Why were they projecting that being called ‘him’ onto him when he knew nothing?

Moreover, after learning the truth that even his grandfather had considered him to be that being called ‘him’ and had hidden it from him until now, he felt as if his existence as Jeong was being denied.

“I...absolutely...don’t think...like that...”

“You don’t think that way? Really?”

“It’s...true...I...even if...you...as an incarnation...don’t accept...yourself...I believe...that you...ugh...”

Seeing her suffering, Mok Gyeong-un suppressed the energy he was exuding.

Then, as if it became easier for her to breathe, she exhaled roughly and continued speaking.

“Haa...haa...I have no doubt that you are the one who will lead us. If you ask me to offer my life here, I will do so.”

At her blind devotion, Mok Gyeong-un snorted.

Although she said she would sacrifice her life for him, it didn't evoke any particular emotion in him.

Rather, it made him want to distance himself even more.

"Haa...haa..."

"Anyway, you're saying you don't know why the leader of the Secret Society fears me."

"That's right."

"...You're not helpful at all."

-Clench!

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, she bit her lip tightly.

It hadn't been long since she realized that the power to receive revelations had been passed down to her due to the misguided choice of her grandmother, the current Holy Fire Priestess.

And because there were those who sought to exploit that power, she had desperately tried to hide it.

But hearing such words from the one she had been waiting for made her feel overwhelmed.

"If you desire, I will resonate with the sacred orb and receive a revelation."

"Didn't you say it's just a possibility anyway?"

"Reading that close possibility is the duty of us Holy Fire Priestess. I will directly prove to you that I am a person you need."

“Oh. That’s very reassuring.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s sarcastic remark, she trembled.

‘Oh my.’

Watching this silently, Guyang Sa-oh scratched his head and smacked his lips.

It seemed like she would cry at this rate.

The lord he served in his later years seemed to have no hesitation regardless of whether it was a woman or not.

So, he carefully interjected.

“By the way, did you say your name is Song-ah?”

“Yes!”

“Where is that sacred orb? We already retrieved your belongings from the Tang Clan, but we couldn’t find anything that could be called a sacred orb.”

At his words, she answered.

“I don’t have it with me right now.”

“You don’t have it?”

“Yes. I couldn’t keep it with me because there was someone who coveted the power of the sacred orb.”

She thought of Tang In-hae, the Tang Clan Leader.

Reading his hidden greed, she had judged that she shouldn’t possess the sacred orb.

“Oh, so you hid it somewhere?”

“Yes.”

“Then where is it?”

“It’s in a cave on a cliff near Zaoyang in the northern part of Hubei Province.”

At those words, Guyang Sa-oh frowned.

Then, he exclaimed in surprise.

“Wait...If it’s a cliff near Zaoyang, isn’t that where the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary is located?”

“...That’s right.”

“Oh my.”

At Guyang Sa-oh’s reaction, Mok Gyeong-un asked curiously.

“Do you know that place?”

“Of course I do. The Spiritual Sword Sanctuary is known as the holy land of the sword.”

“The holy land of the sword?”

“It’s a place where countless sword masters who wield swords must visit to seek teachings.”

Chapter 349 – The Rumor (4)

“Of course I do. The Spiritual Sword Sanctuary is known as the holy land of the sword.”

“The holy land of the sword?”

“It’s a place where countless sword masters who wield swords must visit to seek teachings.”

“Is that so? It must be quite famous then.”

“…Hohoho.”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s bland reaction, Eight Poison Snake Staff Guyang Sa-oh instinctively knew that he had no knowledge of the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary.

The reputation of the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary was truly high.

There were two reasons for this. The first was that the majority of the famous swords in existence were made at this Spiritual Sword Sanctuary.

“The owner of the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary, Ou Cheonmu, is the greatest sword craftsman of our time.”

“A sword craftsman? Is he a blacksmith?”

“That’s right.”

“Is that so? Don’t people usually call them sword artisans?”

At this question, Guyang Sa-oh shook his head and said,

“Master Ou exclusively makes swords.”

“He only makes swords?”

“Yes. As far as I know, the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary has only made swords in that place for hundreds of years.”

“He doesn’t make any other weapons?”

“That’s what I understand.”

“It’s quite an interesting place. A place that only makes swords. But I don’t think it could have become famous just for that.”

“Indeed. That family is said to be descendants of Ou Yezi, who was called the greatest swordsmith of the Yue Kingdom during the Spring and Autumn period. They have created the finest swords. The famous sword Il-hwi, the exclusive weapon of Jeong Hyeon-mun, the leader of the Righteous Alliance, was also born from his hands.”

“Oh.”

At those words, Mok Gyeong-un showed a reaction for the first time.

If he was referring to the leader of the Righteous Alliance, he must be one of the heads of the three great powers in the martial arts world and one of the Six Heavens.

If he was a craftsman skilled enough to make a sword for a top master of that caliber, he was undoubtedly extraordinary.

“If he’s such an exceptional craftsman, it’s no wonder that sword masters would line up.”

“Indeed. However, Master Ou doesn’t make swords for just anyone.”

“That means it can’t be obtained by paying a price, right?”

“Hohoho. That’s correct. From what I’ve heard, Master Ou has great pride as a craftsman. Therefore, he only makes swords for those he acknowledges as true masters of the sword or those who pass his test.”

“Well, if he makes such extraordinary swords, it’s understandable for him to have that much pride.”

“That’s right. Since you also wield swords, perhaps...”

“No. I’m content with these two swords.”

Mok Gyeong-un tapped the two demon swords hanging from his waist with his palm.

Evil Commandment Sword and Plundering-killing Sword.

If there was a theory that the owner of the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary was a descendant of Ou Yezi, these swords were made by Ou Yezi himself using a rare mineral called Gwanya black iron.

“...Of course. You already possess the finest swords.”

He possessed swords that ordinary people couldn't even handle.

There was no need for him to be greedy for more swords.

Then, Mok Gyeong-un spoke.

“Anyway, it's fortunate. If it's just the territory of a group of craftsmen who make swords, there shouldn't be much difficulty in retrieving the sacred orb.”

At Mok Gyeong-un's words, Guyang Sa-oh showed a somewhat troubled expression.

When asked why,

“The Spiritual Sword Sanctuary is not simply a place that only makes swords.”

“If not, then what? Do they also cultivate martial arts?”

“It's as you said. They are sword craftsmen, but their knowledge of swords is also extremely high.”

“Their knowledge of swords is high?”

“Have you heard of the term ‘All Streams Return to One Source’?”

“ ‘All Streams Return to One Source’...? Doesn't it mean that ten thousand streams converge into one?”

“That's right.”

‘All Streams Return to One Source’.

It was a term originating from Buddhism, derived from the idea that no matter how one trained, the end was nirvana.

Those who cultivated martial arts also often mentioned ‘All Streams Return to One Source’.

This was because they believed that in the end, the path would converge into one.

“The Spiritual Sword Sanctuary believed that to make the finest swords, they had to fully understand the sword, and for that, they honed their swordsmanship. Coincidentally, that made them understand the sword better than anyone else.”

“They are sword craftsmen and exceptional swordsmen at the same time.”

“That’s right. But they’re not just exceptional.”

“Then?”

“The owner of the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary, Ou Cheonmu, is one of the Six Heavens, the pinnacle of the current martial arts world.”

‘!?’

At those words, one of Mok Gyeong-un’s eyebrows rose.

Ou Cheonmu, one of the Six Heavens and the Supreme Spiritual Sword Craftsman.

He was one of the six pinnacles of the current martial arts world and was considered the closest to the top when it came to knowledge of the sword, not just martial arts.

Mok Gyeong-un looked at Ye Song-ah, the granddaughter of Holy Fire Priestess, and asked,

“How did you even get into such a place?”

“That’s...”

Ye Song-ah hesitated to speak.

It wasn’t that she shouldn’t say something, but her reaction was peculiar.

Of course, Mok Gyeong-un paid no attention to this and said,

“Don’t waste your energy and just tell me.”

“...The third son of the owner of the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary is a follower of our Fire Faith Order.”

At those words, Guyang Sa-oh asked as if it were a coincidence.

“Are you saying that the third son of Master Ou is a follower of the Fire Faith Order?”

“...Yes.”

“Then did you hide the sacred orb through him?”

“Yes, yes.”

At her cautious attitude, Guyang Sa-oh's eyes narrowed.

It wasn't strange for someone to be drawn into the Fire Faith Order, even if a follower had come from a branch of the Sichuan Tang Clan.

But her unusually timid behavior was odd.

Moreover, come to think of it,

‘Even if he's a follower of the Fire Faith Order, the sacred orb is a treasure of the Fire Faith Order. For him to be trusted enough to be entrusted with such a precious item, he must be really trustworthy...’

“Could it be that he's your fiancé?”

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un abruptly asked.

At that question, Ye Song-ah's face instantly turned bright red.

Seeing her reaction, Guyang Sa-oh clicked his tongue.

His ability to read other people's emotions and thoughts was astounding.

By the way, it was quite a coincidence that he was her fiancé.

“Oh my. Is that true?”

“...”

Her face turning red as if it would burst, she couldn't answer out of embarrassment.

Seeing this, Guyang Sa-oh laughed with a chuckle.

It reminded him of his grandchildren.

This was exactly the kind of reaction one would see at this age.

On the other hand, Mok Gyeong-un couldn't understand her reaction.

He vaguely understood what the emotion of fondness was, but was it something to be embarrassed about to this extent?

As he was puzzled,

‘!?’

Suddenly, someone came to Mok Gyeong-un's mind as he looked at her.

It was none other than Cheong-ryeong.

He remembered Cheong-ryeong showing a similar reaction for some unknown reason.

‘She was embarrassed?’

The corners of Mok Gyeong-un's mouth curled up slightly.

Then, Guyang Sa-oh spoke.

“Then, Miss Song-ah's fiancé...”

“D-Don’t call him that. Just...just call him Ou Yeonwoo, a follower of the main sect.”

“Ou Yeonwoo?”

“Yes.”

Guyang Sa-oh smiled brightly.

It seemed she really liked him a lot.

Wasn’t this the most shining moment in life?

For him, who had entered his twilight years, the sight of someone liking another and being embarrassed was the epitome of youth, so just watching it made him feel satisfied.

“Ahem. Anyway, Young Master. Since the third son of Master Ou is a follower of the Fire Faith Order, it seems we can easily retrieve the sacred orb.”

“You think so?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s doubtful tone, Ye Song-ah answered with a determined voice.

“I can bring it.”

“I don’t know if bringing it will be of much help.”

Mok Gyeong-un already didn’t have much faith in the power of the sacred orb or the revelation.

At this, she became determined.

“If I find the sacred orb, I will receive a revelation of what you desire.”

“...I really hope so.”

If that happened, it could somewhat shorten the time.

There would be no need to go through the leader of the Heaven and Earth Society.

In the middle of a steep mountain range not far from Zaoyang in the north of Hubei Province.

At that high location, there was a manor with a few houses gathered together.

On the signboard at the entrance of the manor, it was written as follows:

Spiritual Sword Sanctuary

Smoke from the forge rose from various places in the manor, and among them, there was a basement in a building without a chimney.

And in that basement, there was a prison with iron bars, and inside, a young man with restraints on both arms was kneeling.

The young man, with a distorted face, opened his mouth.

“Brother. Please give it back. That’s really...”

“Shut up.”

A middle-aged man outside the iron bars reprimanded him.

He was a man in his early forties with dark skin and a well-developed upper body.

In the man’s hand was something that looked like a pouch.

“That’s really...”

“I told you to shut up. I wondered where you went every night, and you were worshipping and revering this thing.”

-Tak!

The man took out what was inside the pouch.

It was a sacred orb with an incomparably brilliant blue color.

-Clench!

Seeing this, the young man bit his lower lip so hard that it bled.

“Yeonwoo. I knew you were involved in a heretical religion that deceives people, but aren’t you ashamed? Your new mother thought you had come to your senses after returning. But you were doing this behind our backs.”

“...”

“Instead of paying respects to our ancestors, how can you show such a pathetic sight?”

“...Brother.”

“You won’t have anything to say even if you have ten mouths.”

“I...I have never been ashamed of my choice...”

“Gah!”

Before he could finish his words, the middle-aged man shouted in rebuke.

The young man, no, Ou Yeonwoo, whose blood vessels were blocked, suffered from the rebuke infused with internal energy.

‘More...His internal energy...has deepened.’

The middle-aged man in front of him was his eldest brother, Ou Woong-hwang.

He was the deputy owner of the Spiritual Sword Sanctuary and the best swordsman except for his father, the owner.

“Brother. Stop it.”

The one who spoke now was a man in his late thirties with slit eyes, Gu Ung-seok, the second brother who was born from the same mother as the eldest brother, Ou Woong-hwang.

Unlike them, Ou Yeonwoo was their half-brother and the youngest.

“You think I can stop now? Our youngest brother is doing this absurd thing, and you say nothing about it?”

“Brother. Whether we like it or not, he is a member of our Gu family, and even if we have different mothers, we are still brothers. Hate the sin, not the person.”

“You’re saying such nice things.”

“Moreover, with the massacre that occurred near the cliff and the Righteous Alliance sending people, it’s quite a mess. I think it’s time to stop this appropriately.”

“Phew.”

The eldest brother, Ou Woong-hwang, let out a sigh close to a lament.

He wanted to reprimand him more out of anger, but what his second brother said was right.

It was already a mess because the people from the Namgoong Clan who had visited the main sanctuary and were descending the mountain were all slaughtered, including the clan leader.

Because of this, the main sanctuary was also under suspicion, and the people sent by the Righteous Alliance were being troublesome.

With his father’s mood also unpleasant, he couldn’t keep the boy locked up any longer.

“Stay here for a while, cool your head, and reflect on your actions.”

“Brother!”

“If you don’t come to your senses, I’ll keep you locked up for the rest of your life. If you don’t want that, you better show some proper reflection.”

“B-Brother, please just give that back...”

“You fool!”

-Bang!

Ou Woong-hwang kicked the iron bars with his foot and went upstairs with an angry face.

As he went up, the second brother, Ou Woong-seong, clicked his tongue and spoke in a sarcastic voice.

“I told you not to come back, didn’t I? Why did you come back and make things worse? Tsk tsk.”

After reprimanding him once more, Ou Woong-seong waved his hand and went upstairs.

-Gnash!

Ou Yeonwoo gritted his teeth as he looked at the stairs leading to the upper floor.

Unlike the eldest brother, the deputy owner Ou Woong-hwang, the second brother Ou Woong-seong was a snake-like man.

Although he was the youngest, he had always envied and bullied him for his superior talent as a craftsman.

That’s why they had never gotten along since childhood.

Even now, it must have been that bastard who had followed him and told the eldest brother.

“Ah. What should I do?”

Being trapped here wasn't a big deal.

However, the sacred orb, which could be considered the embodiment of Holy Fire itself, had been taken away.

Putting aside his eldest brother, he couldn't guess what that Ou Woong-seong would do, knowing how much he cherished this.

-Clench!

‘Song-ah...’

He felt sorry for her.

She had trusted him and entrusted it to him, but he never thought he would be caught so absurdly like this.

Ou Yeonwoo mumbled with his mouth and finally spat something out.

“Ptui.”

-Clink!

It was a thin and long wire.

Even in his confusion, he had managed to secretly take it just in case.

‘I have to get it back somehow.’

The sacred orb was a precious treasure of the order.

Burly-looking men wearing leopard skin and fur clothing, with clubs and weapons on their shoulders, surrounded something.

It was a prison cart for transportation.

Inside the wooden cage was a woman whose clothes were half-torn, revealing her white flesh in various places.

The woman with half-white hair and a mysterious aura exuded a strange atmosphere, perhaps because of the clothes she was wearing.

Outside the prison cart where she was, there was an old woman leaning on a cane.

The old woman spoke to the woman.

“This much should be enough to deceive them, Lady Chunchu.”

“You think so? With this much, do you think they won’t be able to resist?”

“That’s right.”

“Men are always eager to act like a knight-errant even for trivial reasons if given a proper pretext.”

“Heh heh. Indeed. Moreover, if they see you, Lady Chunchu, so beautiful, captured by rough bandits, they absolutely won’t be able to resist.”

“Of course. Even if it seems like a simple and shallow trick, it unexpectedly works well. Hohoho.”

She shrugged her shoulders with a triumphant look.

They had prepared according to the carriage’s route, so now they just had to wait for him to come.

“In about half a shichen, he will pass by here...”

-Whoosh!

At that moment, a gust of wind blew as if a storm had rushed in.

The sudden wind made her subordinates, who were acting as rough bandits, flustered and confused.

But in that fleeting moment, Lady Chunchu and the old woman looked up.

-Swish!

Something passed above them at a tremendous speed.

It was only a brief moment, so it was very blurry, but it was clearly something riding on a sword.

‘!!!!!!’

Seeing this, Lady Chunchu spoke with a stiff face.

“...That just now, it was him, right?”

Chapter 350 – Spiritual Sword Sanctuary (1)

Slap!

Ye Song-ah, the granddaughter of the Holy Fire Priestess, was startled awake by a light slap to her face.

“Heuk!”

“Are you feeling better now?”

At this question, Ye Song-ah looked at Mok Gyeong-un with a pale face.

Then she,

“Ughk.”

Immediately ran behind a tree trunk and started retching.

-Tsk tsk. Should have gone a bit slower, huh?

At Cheong-ryeong’s tongue-clicking, Mok Gyeong-un shrugged his shoulders.

To avoid wasting time, he had told the others to follow and then picked her up, flying here using sword flight.

But because they flew at such a high speed, she couldn’t handle the strain on her breathing and ended up fainting.

And as soon as she woke up, she started vomiting like this.

-It's been a while since we've been here.

At Cheong-ryeong's words, Mok Gyeong-un's eyes glinted with interest.

-You say it's been a while?

-Yes. This place existed even in the era when I was active.

-Really? You didn't say anything earlier, so I had no idea.

-I was just surprised to hear that the master of this place is said to have knowledge of swords close to being the best in the world.

-Was it not like that before?

-Even back then, their level was quite high. But it seems they've finally reaped the fruits of their labor.

-What do you mean by finally reaping the fruits?

-It's because of their method.

-Is there some special method?

-Indeed, it's special. The reason their swords are called the best is because they craft them to fit the swordsman's physique, habits, and sword techniques.

-Physique, habits, that's... hm? Sword techniques?

Mok Gyeong-un raised one eyebrow as if something was strange.

Then she snorted and said:

-To commission a sword from them, you have to reveal your unique sword technique. That's one of the conditions for crafting.

-Ah.....

Now Mok Gyeong-un understood why she said they had reaped the fruits of their labor.

-If that's the basic condition, then they must know almost every sword technique out there.

-That's right. If they know all the sword techniques in the world, their insight into swords would naturally be higher than anyone else's.

-Did Cheong-ryeong also have a sword made here?

At that question, she nodded.

-As you guessed. They even know the early sword techniques of Yue.

-.....Interesting. But if they know so many sword techniques, it seems like a lot of interesting things must have happened.

-Well, I don't know what happened while I was sealed, but before that, nothing happened.

-Why not?

-Because they weren't told the qi circulation methods or mental techniques that pair with the sword techniques.

-Ah?

-All they know are the sword paths of the techniques. Of course, even with just this, one could say they know a lot, but strictly speaking, it's only half the picture.

-So that's why you said only their knowledge of swords.

-That's right. Even back then, their insight into swords was higher than mine. That knowledge must have accumulated over time, so I'm curious how advanced they are now.

-Now that you mention it, I'm curious too, but it doesn't seem like we'll have any reason to go inside.

-Well, I suppose not.

What they came to retrieve was the Fire Faith Order's treasure, the orb.

They didn't come to sightsee Spiritual Sword Sanctuary.

Meanwhile, Ye Song-ah, who had been retching for a while, seemed to have recovered somewhat and approached with a pale face.

"Are you feeling better now?"

"Y-yes."

"Do you know where we are?"

At Mok Gyeong-un's question, she nodded.

She couldn't not know, having visited this place once before.

To her, Mok Gyeong-un said:

“By the way, were there usually many people wandering around the manor?”

“Huh? What do you mean by that?”

-Sseuk!

“Mmph!”

Mok Gyeong-un suddenly covered Ye Song-ah's mouth.

She couldn't hide her bewilderment at his sudden action.

Then Mok Gyeong-un picked her up and with a light movement, jumped up onto a tree branch.

‘H-how?’

Her eyes widened.

Even though he was carrying her, this slender tree branch didn't break and remained intact.

As she was marveling at this, footsteps could be heard from below.

Soon, a group of about four warriors appeared, with “Justice” embroidered on their upper garments.

‘Justice?’

Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes glinted with interest at the sight of them wearing the same outfit.

Then, as they wandered around, they spoke:

“Strange. I could have sworn I heard something like a pig squealing around here.”

“A pig squealing?”

“You know, that ‘kwueok kwueok’ sound.”

At their conversation, Ye Song-ah’s face turned bright red.

To think they’d compare her retching sound to a pig squealing.

It was so embarrassing.

As they looked around, one warrior said:

“But do you think we can find the culprit or any traces by looking around here?”

“We have to do something.”

“There’s nothing else we can do.”

“That’s true. Anyway, the only person with the martial prowess to single-handedly kill that many people would be Master Ou.”

“Right. Staying here is just a waste of time.”

“But isn’t it strange to assume the culprit is Master Ou?”

“Why?”

“Master Ou was working when the incident occurred, wasn’t he? Besides, Master Ou is a swordsman, but all the wounds on the dead were from blade techniques.”

“That’s what makes it more suspicious. Everything seems to point away from the master too conveniently. What if the master is actually a hidden expert in blade techniques?”

“……Well, that’s true, but does it make sense to openly do something like this in their own territory?”

“It’s a matter of true and false. Who would think the master is the culprit when it’s right under their nose?”

“Hmm. It’s difficult. Very difficult.”

“That’s how investigations are. Once you start suspecting, everyone looks like a culprit. Anyway, if we keep loitering around here, the elders might say something, so let’s move.”

“Alright.”

After the warriors left, Mok Gyeong-un and Ye Song-ah descended to the ground shortly after.

-Tak!

As soon as they came down, Ye Song-ah said to Mok Gyeong-un:

“Those people just now were warriors from the Righteous Alliance.”

“The Righteous Alliance?”

“Yes.”

The Fire Faith Order had many enemies, so Ye Song-ah also remembered the attire of those who targeted them.

“Do people from the Righteous Alliance usually come and go here often?”

-How could that be possible?

“No.”

Cheong-ryeong and Ye Song-ah answered simultaneously to that question.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un stroked his chin.

He wasn't sure exactly what had happened, but based on their conversation, it seemed that an incident had occurred where many people were killed by a single person.

So the Righteous Alliance warriors were trying to find the culprit.

But they mentioned Master Ou as a prime suspect, which seemed to refer to the Master Ou of Spiritual Sword Sanctuary.

“Hmm.”

It was an incredible coincidence.

They had just come to find the orb, but it seemed a major incident had occurred, big enough to involve the Righteous Alliance.

However, Mok Gyeong-un soon decided to ignore it.

It wasn't related to him anyway, and all they needed to do was find the orb.

So Mok Gyeong-un said to Ye Song-ah:

“Where is this cave you mentioned?”

“It's.....”

“Don't say it out loud, just point with your finger. From now on, we need to move very discreetly.”

“Huh? You don't mean...?”

“Shh. I told you to keep quiet.”

-Pat!

Mok Gyeong-un moved while carrying her.

He judged that it would be easier to conceal their presence if he moved while carrying her, given his mastery of lightness techniques.

In front of a building in Spiritual Sword Sanctuary.

-Chang! Chang! Chang!

The crisp sound of hammering flowed out from the building.

Along with these metallic sounds and the heat-filled forge, there was a group of warriors in uniform standing in front.

The warriors' clothes were embroidered with the word "Justice".

They were warriors belonging to the Righteous Alliance.

There were two people who seemed to be leading these individuals.

One was a middle-aged Buddhist nun in Taoist attire, standing with her hands behind her back and a benevolent face. The other was a handsome man who appeared to be in his mid-thirties.

These were members of the Righteous Alliance. The nun was Elder Jeong Myeong Sa-tae of the Hangshan Sect.

And the man in his mid-thirties was Moyong Hak, the eldest son and heir of the Moyong family, one of the Seven Great Families.

"Heo. Amitabha."

Elder Jeong Myeong Sa-tae of the Hangshan Sect let out an exclamation.

It was no wonder, as the rhythmic hammering sounds were refreshing and invigorating, giving a feeling as if one's chest was being cleared.

‘Extraordinary.’

She had heard of the reputation, but even just the hammering was enough to leave her speechless.

It was so excellent that it made decades of study feel futile.

Unlike her, the interest of Moyong Hak, the heir of the Moyong family, was focused elsewhere.

‘Are those the failed swords made by the master?’

There were swords stuck in something like a large incense burner outside the building.

The large incense burner was engraved with the words “Broken Swords,” and it was said that swords that failed to properly form a sword core were stuck there before being destroyed.

However, for swords called “broken,” each one boasted an extraordinary appearance.

No, even these could almost be called famous swords.

-Gulp!

Moyong Hak unconsciously swallowed his saliva.

Originally, according to Spiritual Sword Sanctuary's rules, one could only come to the master's forge if they were particularly renowned as a swordsman or passed a test given by the master.

However, given the current situation, they were able to enter as special investigators from the Righteous Alliance.

-Creeeeak!

At that moment, the door of the forge opened and someone came out.

They instinctively knew it wasn't the master coming out because the hammering sound was still continuing.

-Chak!

The person who came out was none other than Ou Woong-hwang, the young master of Spiritual Sword Sanctuary.

He put his hands together and said in a respectful voice:

"I apologize. Master says he cannot meet you as he is at a crucial point in the birth of a new sword, and asks for your understanding."

'As expected.'

At these words, Moyong Hak clicked his tongue inwardly.

He had hoped to build some rapport with the master because of the incident, but he wasn't showing his face at all.

Yet it wasn't appropriate to force the issue.

Ou Cheonmu, the master of Spiritual Sword Sanctuary, was one of the Six Heavens, the pinnacle of the current martial world, and also belonged to the elder generation in terms of seniority, so he couldn't be treated carelessly.

“That’s unfortunate. I had hoped to at least pay my respects to the eldest, the master.”

“Ah ah. I’m very sorry. Once my father starts crafting a sword, due to his unique stubbornness as a craftsman, he won’t show his face even if the Alliance Leader were to come.”

“Amitabha. I understand. How could a craftsman stop his work? It’s just sad that we haven’t been able to see the master yet, even though we’ve been here for several days.”

Elder Jeong Myeong Sa-tae spoke in a gentle voice, as if to say it didn’t matter.

At this, Ou Woong-hwang cautiously asked:

“But how is the investigation progressing?”

“For now, our Alliance’s warriors have blocked all mountain paths in the surrounding area and are proceeding, but it seems difficult to find the culprit.”

“……I suppose it would be.”

It wasn’t just anyone, but Namgoong Jin, the Skyward Swordless of the Eight Stars, who had been killed.

Although not reaching the level of the Six Heavens, the Eight Stars were also among the greatest martial artists in the world.

He and the elites of the Namgoong family had all met their deaths.

What was astonishing was that the traces suggested it was the work of a single person, not multiple attackers.

“I’ve never seen blade marks like these before in my life.”

Elder Jeong Myeong Sa-tae clicked her tongue as she spoke.

She had been inwardly shocked when she first examined the bodies.

This was because the blade marks left on the bodies each contained trajectories that could not be performed by any existing blade techniques.

‘Blade marks that surpass the limits of joints... Is this really a blade wielded by a human?’

It even raised such doubts.

However, since the bodies were discovered, it was clear that they had died at someone’s hand.

And the most likely suspect was,

“.....As Elder Sa-tae knows, my father has known nothing but swords his entire life. That goes for our entire family... as well.”

For just a moment, so brief that it was hard for anyone to notice, Young Master Ou Woong-hwang hesitated in his speech.

It was because of the youngest member of the family, who was considered a troublemaker.

[Why must it be swords? Isn’t our stagnation due to our obsession with swords alone?]

That was what the brat used to say habitually before leaving home.

He didn't bend his stubbornness even after being scolded by his father, the master, and himself.

But it was truly questionable.

It was strange enough that he suddenly returned just when such a tremendous incident occurred, but he also brought a bizarre orb whose composition was difficult to determine.

Anyway, that wasn't the important thing right now.

"If all the traces left on the bodies are blade marks, shouldn't our family be excluded from suspicion, even if the deceased was one of the Eight Stars?"

Elder Jeong Myeong Sa-tae put her hands together and answered this somewhat emotional voice:

"Amitabha..... I apologize. As you know, that's difficult to do."

"....."

"Although there are a couple of guests at Spiritual Sword Sanctuary who could match patron Namgoong, it's absolutely impossible for them to have done this alone."

"Elder Sa-tae. But my father....."

"I know. There are plenty of people who can testify that he was still here at the time the incident occurred, and he's originally a swordsman. However, he's also the only one capable of causing such a massacre."

"Haa."

Young Master Ou Woong-hwang sighed in frustration.

Of course, it was true that if father, no, the master, were to make up his mind, he had the martial prowess to slaughter all the people from the Namgoong family who had visited the main hall.

It wasn't for nothing that he was called one of the Six Heavens.

However, crucially, father had never left this place and wasn't a blade user.

Yet there were two reasons why they still considered him a suspect.

One was, as mentioned earlier, due to his martial prowess, and the second was,

‘Rejecting Namgoong family head’s request was a big factor.’

Namgoong Jin, the head of the Namgoong family and one of the Eight Stars, known as the Skyward Swordless, had visited and offered to provide rare iron if a sword was crafted exclusively for him.

But this request wasn't just once; this was the third time.

Coincidentally, father had been dedicating himself to crafting a single sword for two years, and had been rejecting and postponing all recent requests from visitors.

However,

[No matter what rules Spiritual Sword Sanctuary has, refusing to even show one's face to a guest who has come three times is not the spirit of craftsmanship, but the height of arrogance.]

Namgoong Jin, the head of the Namgoong family, had shown signs of discomfort and left, unable to meet the master despite visiting each time, no matter how great a craftsman he might be. Some guests in the reception hall had witnessed him express the only negative emotions towards the father, and some testified to this, leading to the current situation.

It was truly a frustrating situation.

As if to soothe his state of mind, Moyong Hak said:

“We also don’t believe Master Ou would have done such a thing. However, as we’ve come as investigators, we must be certain and therefore must meet the master. I know it’s frustrating, but please understand.”

There was one thing they wanted to confirm.

Swords and blades are distinctly different.

Therefore, the calluses formed on the palm due to the gripping method would inevitably be different.

Moreover, what they learned from the blade marks was that the joints and muscles of the person who used this blade technique would be in a completely different form from ordinary people.

In conclusion, they couldn’t conclude the investigation until they met the master of Spiritual Sword Sanctuary.

A cliff cave not far from the mountainside where Spiritual Sword Sanctuary’s estate was located.

“T-this can’t be happening.”

Ye Song-ah was bewildered.

She had hurriedly searched inside the cave for the orb as soon as they arrived.

But it wasn't there.

Rather, as if something had happened here, the walls inside the cave were broken and the floor was cracked, leaving the place in a mess.

Mok Gyeong-un examined this closely.

‘Sword marks.’

Some of the messy traces were unmistakably sword marks.

It seemed that two swordsmen who were quite skilled with swords had fought here.

However, one side had overwhelmingly superior sword skills.

Because of this, it appeared they had been subdued in just a few moves.

‘The subdued side had their back to the inner part of the cave, and despite being clearly outmatched in sword skills, they still tried to move forward. That means.....’

It was someone trying to protect something.

They desperately tried to prevent the opponent from coming inside.

To this, Mok Gyeong-un said:

“Did you hide the orb in the innermost part of the cave?”

“Yes. I’m sure I did.....”

“It seems someone fought in here. One side was desperately trying to protect the entrance, while the other was trying to get inside.”

“I-it’s Yeonwoo!”

“I don’t know who Yeonwoo is, but what’s interesting is that despite being outmatched in skill, they didn’t retreat a single step and desperately tried to stop the opponent.”

Ye Song-ah’s eyes welled up at these words.

From Mok Gyeong-un’s words, she was certain that the one who desperately blocked was Ou Yeonwoo.

Then, as Mok Gyeong-un was examining the traces, he spoke as if he had realized something:

“It seems the opponents knew each other well.”

“What?”

“They’re using very similar sword techniques. And the one trying to enter the inner part of the cave.....”

-Woowoong!

Opening the power of the Three Eyes with his right eye, Mok Gyeong-un could see the trajectories of the sword swings more clearly in his vision.

It was the residual thoughts of true qi remaining after unleashing the sword techniques.

Seeing this made it even more certain.

The one trying to enter the inner part of the cave was using techniques that avoided fatal moves as much as possible, aiming to subdue rather than kill the opponent.

“Rather than enemies, it’s more likely they’re from the same school, brothers, or blood relatives. Didn’t you say Ou Yeonwoo was the third son of Spiritual Sword Sanctuary? Then we have our answer.”

‘!!!!!!’

Ye Song-ah was dumbfounded at Mok Gyeong-un’s deduction.

Was it possible to display such insight from just these messy traces?