

## Mayhem 441

### Chapter 441 – Ghost Blade (5)

-Whoosh!

The Demonic Beast Heumwon was flapping its massive wings, looking for a place to land the carriage.

Originally, Heumwon couldn't fly due to a torn wing, but thanks to the power of Chunchu, the First Realm member of the Secret Society, it was able to recover in less than half a shichen.

Chunchu's blood possessed a strange power that could heal spiritual beasts, which allowed them to save time.

"Hehe. Are you going to just jump down?"

"...We're neither our lord nor that monster woman. What do you think would happen if we jumped from here?"

At the words of the fallen monk Ja Geum-jeong, Seop-chun clicked his tongue.

No matter how exceptional their martial arts were, they hadn't reached the level where they could perform lightness technique like their lord, so they needed to descend further to land safely.

But then, the Right Guardian Ma Ra-hyeon pointed somewhere and said.

"Look over there."

"Hmm."

Guyang Sa-oh, the Eight Poison Snake Staff, frowned as he looked in that direction.

And for good reason – there were about three hundred people marching towards the bamboo forest.

All of them were wearing masks, clearly enemies.

Mong Mu-yak looked towards the bamboo forest.

Though it was hard to see clearly from afar, Mok Gyeong-un seemed to be holding someone presumed to be the Ghost Blade, and for some unknown reason, Chunchu was fighting something.

“We should hurry down.”

It seemed they needed to help prevent those people from interfering with their lord.

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“Fortunately, it didn’t take long to regain control of my body after handing over the Moon Vein’s secret manual like that. However, when I went back there, one baby had already disappeared...”

“Wait.”

Mok Gyeong-un interrupted, stopping the Ghost Blade’s story.

The Ghost Blade looked at Mok Gyeong-un with confusion.

“Why are you interrupting?”

“...What do you mean the Moon Vein’s secret manual could persuade the Incarnation?”

His mind was already complicated by all the stories the Ghost Blade was telling, from the Incarnation prophesied by the Fire Faith Order turning into a human.

But Mok Gyeong-un couldn't help but question the sudden mention of the Moon Vein's secret manual in his past story.

From the moment the Yeon Mok Sword Manor was mentioned, Mok Gyeong-un instantly realized what the Moon Vein's secret manual referred to.

It was undoubtedly the secret manual in which Cheong-ryeong had been sealed.

What on earth did that have to do with the Incarnation, and how were they planning to persuade with it?

To this, the Ghost Blade furrowed his brow and answered.

"You say you haven't realized who you are yet, but wasn't it you who released Ryu So-wol?"

"...How did you know that?"

Mok Gyeong-un's expression hardened further.

The Moon Vein's secret manual that had sealed Ryu So-wol, or Cheong-ryeong, was what he had accidentally obtained while looking for the Yeon Mok Sword Manor's secret manual and official seal hidden by Manor Master Mok In-dan.

The secret manual that no one in the Heaven and Earth Society could open, called the cursed secret manual, Mok Gyeong-un had opened and was able to release Cheong-ryeong's seal.

It was nothing more than a series of coincidences.

But what is he saying now?

“Releasing Cheong-ryeong, no, Ryu So-wol...”

-Flinch!

Mok Gyeong-un stopped mid-sentence and looked towards the east.

He could feel numerous presences gathering there.

He wasn't the only one who sensed it.

The Ghost Blade and Chunchu felt it too.

-Clang clang clang!

Chunchu, who had been fighting the formless sword to stop what she perceived as a threat to the Ghost Blade, her father, hurriedly shouted.

“It's them.”

“.....”

“Are you going to keep this up?”

At this, Mok Gyeong-un withdrew the formless swords he had been operating while dispersing his mind.

-Swish swish swish!

As the formless swords disappeared, Chunchu, looking somewhat tired, inwardly clicked her tongue.

She had thought she could break through the formless swords quickly since she was almost entirely focused on the Ghost Blade, but in the end, she couldn't.

He really is a monstrous human.

'Well, I suppose that's why he could wound Mok Gan even if it wasn't his true form.'

Just then, about three hundred masked individuals could be seen approaching from the east as if marching.

They were no ordinary people.

Each of them seemed to be at least a peak-level master.

Among them were even some transcendent masters.

Looking at them, Chunchu said.

"Not just the Third Realm, but even the Second Realm is mixed in. Looks like Mok Gan was in a hurry too. It seems he's mobilized all the Secret Society's forces in the vicinity."

"....."

"Are you going to keep this up?"

At these words, the Ghost Blade looked up at Mok Gyeong-un, who still hadn't withdrawn the formless sword aimed at him, and said.

“I’ll tell you everything I couldn’t finish. So please withdraw this for a moment.”

“No. Keep talking.”

“Their target isn’t us. We don’t have time for this.”

The Ghost Blade subtly turned his eyes towards the bamboo forest.

The fact that Mok Gan had sent so many Secret Society masters after Destruction Emperor meant that the forbidden technique to unite spirit and soul into one was absolutely necessary for him too.

“My Lord!”

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un’s subordinates also arrived at their location.

It was Eight Poison Snake Staff, Guyang Sa-oh, the masked Ma Ra-hyeon, the fallen monk Ja Geum-jeong, Seop-chun, Mong Mu-yak, and others.

Of course, they weren’t all.

The Demonic Beast Heumwon, who had descended to the ground and adjusted its size, was also there.

“Alyu.”

-Clap clap clap!

At Mok Gyeong-un’s call, from the southeast direction’s undergrowth, a diabolic beast that looked like a mix between a dog and an ox, with horns on its head resembling a dragon’s face and red fur all over its body, appeared.

It was the Diabolic Beast Alyu, which had been sent ahead to track Cheong-ryeong.

Mok Gyeong-un gave orders to them.

“Guard this place. I’ll be back soon after clearing things up.”

At his order, the fallen monk Ja Geum-jeong was dumbfounded.

“Hehe, isn’t it usually the other way around?”

Of course, Mok Gyeong-un was the strongest force here, so if he set his mind to it, he could clear out the enemies faster than them.

Wasn’t he even specialized in dealing with multiple opponents?

But then,

-Bang!

Suddenly, with a loud boom from somewhere, the ground shook and trembled.

At this, everyone’s gaze turned simultaneously to the source of the tremor.

It was the bamboo forest.

‘!?’

The bamboo forest shook, and from its center, a cloud of dust rose and billowed.

Seeing this, the Ghost Blade shouted with a perplexed expression.

“It’s Destruction Emperor.”

“What?”

“He must have entered the bamboo forest through the ground.”

He thought Destruction Emperor had retreated temporarily because it would be troublesome to face both the peerless warrior Mok Gyeong-un and himself simultaneously, but it seems he had let his guard down.

He thought Destruction Emperor wouldn’t approach carelessly since it was made of battle formations, but it seems he forced his way in, perhaps conscious of them.

“We must stop him immediately. Do you intend to let the forbidden technique be stolen?”

At this, Mok Gyeong-un stared at the Ghost Blade.

He had wanted to quickly hear the rest of the extremely important story that had been interrupted.

But then,

-Kiriririk! Master. It would be better to do as that guy says.

“What?”

-Kirik kirik! That high-ranking vengeful spirit you told me to follow entered the bamboo forest and hasn’t come out.

“What are you saying?”

Mok Gyeong-un turned his head with a terrifyingly hardened face to look at the Diabolic Beast Alyu.

He had sent it alone to track Cheong-ryeong heading towards the northern edge of Shaanxi Province.

-It’s exactly as I said. That vengeful spirit followed the human beneath your feet into there, but suddenly disappeared, and only that guy walked out of the bamboo forest.

-Grr!

At that moment, an enormous killing intent burst forth as Mok Gyeong-un glared at the Ghost Blade.

If the Diabolic Beast Alyu’s report was correct, it was one of two things.

Either something happened inside the extremely complex battle formation, or the Ghost Blade and Cheong-ryeong fought and something went wrong.

“Cheong-ryeong... No, what did you do to Ryu So-wol?”

At these words from Mok Gyeong-un, the Ghost Blade hurriedly explained.

“It’s a misunderstanding! I came here to prevent that technique from falling into his hands. How could I do anything to someone precious to you?”

“...You.”

Mok Gyeong-un looked down at him intently.

Only Cheong-ryeong herself knows his feelings.

So how could this person gauge and be confident about whether someone was precious to him or not?

Glaring at the Ghost Blade, Mok Gyeong-un then withdrew the formless sword.

-Swish swish swish!

Then, after looking at the bamboo forest, he spoke to his subordinates and spirit beasts.

"I will enter the bamboo forest with the Ghost Blade. Stop them."

"As you command!"

"We receive your order!"

-Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

As soon as the order fell, his subordinates and spirit beasts, as if they had been waiting, accepted the command and rushed towards the enemies presumed to be from the Secret Society who were advancing towards the bamboo forest.

The Ghost Blade looked at his daughter Chunchu and said.

"It will be difficult with just them. Please help."

At his request, Chunchu stomped her foot on the ground and snorted.

"Hmph! You only ask at times like this."

Although she expressed dissatisfaction, currently, Mok Gyeong-un's subordinates alone lacked the strength to hold off those enemies.

So Chunchu shook her head and flew off.

As she too went to stop the enemies, Mok Gyeong-un said to the Ghost Blade.

"Lead the way."

"Understood."

-Whoosh!

They simultaneously flew towards the bamboo forest.

Matching their speed almost perfectly, the Ghost Blade spoke to Mok Gyeong-un.

"I don't know what happened inside, but I definitely entered this place. However, that memory has disappeared."

"Was that why you sent the same messenger pigeon to the Heaven and Earth Society Leader so many times?"

"What?"

"They said you sent the messenger pigeon twelve times repeatedly."

'!?'

At these words from Mok Gyeong-un, the Ghost Blade's expression darkened.

Thanks to the wound left on his palm, he had realized that he had entered this place and encountered something, but there was a problem with his memory.

But if what Mok Gyeong-un said was true, it means he had entered and exited not just once, but more than twelve times, and those memories had disappeared.

What on earth could be hidden inside that formation to cause such a thing?

-Bang bang bang bang!

Then, another series of loud noises erupted from inside the bamboo forest.

At this, the Ghost Blade was about to say something but stopped and increased his speed towards that location.

Eventually, a clearing-like center where bamboo didn't grow in the forest came into view.

There, unlike before, someone covered in white scale armor from head to toe could be seen.

It was Destruction Emperor.

-Woong woong woong!

Countless energy orbs were floating around Destruction Emperor, too many to count.

The bamboo forming complex formations around him was bent, and parts were broken and burning.

Seeing this, the Ghost Blade urged.

“Stop!”

No matter how urgent it was, if he tried to forcibly break the formation with power instead of the proper method, not only would he fail to find the entrance, but it might disappear forever.

Despite the Ghost Blade’s attempt to stop him, Destruction Emperor snorted and shouted.

“Try to stop me if you can.”

Destruction Emperor had no intention of stopping.

But right at that moment.

-You’re quite a troublesome fellow.

‘!?’

At the voice resonating around them, Destruction Emperor scanned the surroundings.

It was difficult to pinpoint exactly where the sound was coming from.

The same was true for Mok Gyeong-un.

Even with his Eye Power activated, he couldn’t determine where the voice was coming from, and the energies created through the surrounding formations were gradually changing.

“I don’t know who you are or where you’re hiding, but if you’re the guardian of the forbidden technique, it would be best to show yourself immediately.”

-Swish!

With those words, Destruction Emperor was about to release hundreds of energy orbs.

But at that very moment.

Before the energy orbs could move, the bamboo began to bend inward and the surrounding space started to distort.

At this strange phenomenon, Destruction Emperor tried to launch the energy orbs and burrow into the ground.

However,

-Swoosh!

At that instant, a hand stretched out from the distorting space and grabbed Destruction Emperor's head, then,

"Huh?"

-Slurp!

His body was sucked into the distorted space.

As the space was about to close again in that state, Mok Gyeong-un, not missing that fleeting moment, extended his sword-controlling finger.

Then,

-Stab!

An incredibly transparent formless sword flew in front of the distorting space and stuck there.

In that state, as Mok Gyeong-un twisted his sword-controlling finger in a spiral direction.

-Crack crack crack!

Cracks spread in the distorting area, and that part expanded.

-Oh no?

A voice of bewilderment could be heard from within the spreading cracks.

-Whoosh!

At this, Mok Gyeong-un flew towards the crack.

-Swoop!

As his body passed through the crack, everything went dark for a moment, then with a bright light, a green meadow spread out before his eyes.

And in the middle of that meadow, a beautiful woman with blue-black hair and cat-like eyes could be seen gripping Destruction Emperor's head.

Chapter 442 – Wicked Heart Granny (1)

-Let me go. If you're leaving this place soon, there's no need to keep holding onto me, is there?

Cheong-ryeong, gradually weakening due to the talismans forming a formation with the silver wood, spoke with a strained voice to the woman with blue-black hair who had identified herself as Wicked Granny, a legendary great villain from the old martial arts world.

Of course, her plea fell on deaf ears.

Instead, an irrelevant answer came.

“It’s been so long. No matter how willingly I accepted my karma and protected that person’s arrangements, spending this long time alone hasn’t been easy.”

-.....

“Kekeke. Well, I’ve been able to endure thanks to fools like you who enter this place trying to gain something.”

Cheong-ryeong was inwardly disgusted by her attitude of only saying what she wanted to say.

She was anxious as time was running out for her.

Given that he was also after the forbidden technique to unite souls, if she remained trapped here, she might be annihilated rather than perishing together with him.

If that happened, he might unleash all his anger and madness on the world and him in his berserk state.

‘...Mortal.’

Before being an enemy, she had tried to reap everything she had sown for his sake.

She thought that was right, and that Mortal could live his own life.

But nothing was going as planned.

Why is heaven so indifferent?

Why does it block even this one wish she's trying to fulfill by giving up even her new connection, when she has already lost everything?

Is all of this really predetermined fate that cannot be changed?

-Grip!

Cheong-ryeong endured the pain of her spirit body burning and stood up.

'No. No. I can't... give up here.'

She had endured for a full hundred years.

She had lost all the Moon Vein clan members and everyone she held dear, and even parted from her beloved.

But is her will for revenge only this much?

If she were to be annihilated like this, who would avenge the resentment of those wandering in the nine heavens?

Rather than waiting for annihilation doing nothing, it was right to try everything possible.

So Cheong-ryeong shouted at Wicked Granny.

-I hear that person who told you to guard this place said not to kill anyone, but is it okay to imprison and torment even a vengeful spirit like this?

At her cry, Wicked Granny snorted.

“You’re already a dead vengeful spirit, what’s there to torment?”

-Isn’t imprisoning me like this tormenting? Then I wonder if that person would approve of someone like you.

-Grrrrr!

No sooner had those words finished.

Wicked Granny’s expression twisted terribly and an enormous killing intent flowed from her.

It seemed something had touched a nerve.

Of course, this was the intended aim, so it was welcome.

-Why, did I hit a sore spot?

“A sore spot? You, a vengeful spirit steeped in resentment, dare to speak about that person in such a manner?”

‘So that was it?’

It seemed the part that touched the nerve of this old monster called Wicked Granny was the mention of ‘that person’.

She seemed particularly bothered by the mention of 'that person' rather than the insult to herself.

To confirm this, Cheong-ryeong said.

-Isn't that right? Didn't that person lock you, an old monster, in a place like this and abandon you for a long time because they couldn't trust you...

-Swish!

Before she could finish speaking.

As Wicked Granny flicked her index finger,

-Thud!

Cheong-ryeong's spirit body, which had been trapped in the silver wood, floated up and was forcibly slammed against the silver wood.

-Sizzle!

She had been experiencing the pain of burning even without directly touching the silver wood bars.

But when it touched her spirit body, the pain was indescribable.

Moreover, her spirit body was burning and decomposing.

-Urgh.

Though she should have screamed in pain, Cheong-ryeong only glared at Wicked Granny with bitter eyes while suffering.

At this sight, a glint appeared in Wicked Granny's eyes.

She had intended to teach this foolish vengeful spirit a lesson for running her mouth, but she was showing terrible endurance even as her spirit body burned against the silver wood.

As a master of all sorts of magic arts, forbidden techniques, and spells, she had lived for a long time and seen countless spirits, souls, and vengeful spirits, but this was a first for her.

'Well, well.'

At a glance, the spell imprisoning this vengeful spirit seemed simple, but it was something she had created through long experience. Regardless of its rank, it wasn't something a soul trapped in resentment could endure.

At this, Wicked Granny flicked her finger downward.

Then Cheong-ryeong's spirit body detached from the silver wood bars.

-Haa... Haa...

Cheong-ryeong staggered and stood up straight.

Her spirit body had burned, causing a great loss of spirit energy, and she should have collapsed, but she was enduring through sheer will.

Wicked Granny clicked her tongue at her and said.

"For a vengeful spirit, your tenacity is quite something."

-Haa... Haa...

"I see you're trying to provoke me to create some opening, but it's useless. No matter what you do, there's no way to escape from here, so give up."

-Haa... Haa...

Because of the great consumption of spirit energy, Cheong-ryeong still couldn't answer.

Looking at her, Wicked Granny smirked and then said.

"Well, trying to provoke me through that person isn't wrong. That person is a benefactor who made me, who was cursed to be blind and unable to bear children, be reborn, and an unparalleled hero in this world."

'Hero?'

If she, who was infamous as a great villain in the old martial arts world, spoke so highly of someone, who on earth could it be?

She hadn't heard of many figures related to the old martial arts world.

At this, she suddenly became curious.

This old monster's martial arts were monstrous, and even her skill in magic arts was truly terrifying.

If it was someone this supposedly dead woman respected to such an extent, who on earth could it be?

... You spoke as if... you would soon... meet that person... Who exactly is that? Is it someone still alive like you?

“Alive? Hmm. What an ambiguous question.”

Wicked Granny muttered while stroking her chin.

Cheong-ryeong was puzzled by her reaction.

If they’re dead, they’re dead, and if they’re alive, they’re alive, so why such an ambiguous response?

Then Wicked Granny, resting her chin on her interlocked hands on the table, spoke with a nostalgic expression.

“That person was quite affectionate for a hero.”

What?

Is she giving an irrelevant answer again?

“Having learned immortal arts and realized the immortal way, they could have forcibly suppressed themselves to remain in the world according to the natural order, but they couldn’t do that.”

-Natural order... No way...

“What? Vengeful spirit, you know about the natural order too? This is unexpected.”

Natural order.

It could be said to be the flow that constitutes the world.

She had learned many truths while being with Mok Gyeong-un, more than when she was alone.

Thus, she came to know that ascending to immortality wasn't simply going to the world of immortals through enlightenment.

She had heard that those who transcend the natural order of this world through enlightenment cross over to the other side of the boundary.

Is the person Wicked Granny calls 'that person' such a being?

Then she said.

"That's good. It's better than preaching to deaf ears. In fact, I know better than anyone the suffering that person went through."

-What do you mean?

"What do you think? Do you think it's easy to watch everyone except me grow old and die?"

-.....

The death of loved ones due to aging.

That could be said to be the worst misfortune experienced by those who live for a long time.

"Even if there are some who gain enlightenment and live long lives, not everyone does. That person, being deeply affectionate, found it hard to endure. So in the end, they left, taking only those who had been by their side for a long time."

-To the other side of the boundary?

Is it possible if one leaves the natural order?

Can one guide others besides oneself to the other side of the boundary?

To her puzzlement, Wicked Granny shook her head and answered.

“No. Of course not. I thought you knew better, but I guess not. Tsk tsk. Only those who transcend the natural order can enter there. Do you think such beings come about easily? Even I, who have honed myself for hundreds of years, haven’t been able to do so yet.”

-Then what exactly...

“I don’t know. According to that person, there’s a hidden place like paradise between the natural order and the other side of the boundary. When the time comes, I too will...”

-... It seems you don’t know properly either.

-Bang!

At Cheong-ryeong’s sarcastic words, Wicked Granny slammed the table with an unsatisfied expression.

“Soon!”

-.....

“I will go soon. It won’t be long now. Although I have accumulated karma during this time, it’s nothing compared to guarding this place on behalf of that person’s concerns. Hmph... I don’t know how I ended up having this conversation with a mere vengeful spirit like you, but...”

-Boom!

‘!?’

-Rumble!

At that moment, with a loud noise, the pillar erected in the center of the thatched house shook violently.

Wicked Granny’s head turned at this sudden phenomenon.

“Huh?”

-Bang! Bang! Bang!

Following that, more loud noises erupted in succession, and cracks began to appear in part of the pillar’s center.

Wicked Granny’s expression twisted terribly as she watched this.

From her reaction, Cheong-ryeong could guess that something had definitely exploded.

So, hoping against hope, she shouted.

-I’m sure I warned you. That troublesome things would keep happening from the moment I was trapped here.

“...Are you saying this is happening because of you?”

-What else could it be?

“Oh? So you’re saying it’s because of you. Well then, let’s find out. Let’s see what fool is causing this trouble.”

-Thud!

Wicked Granny grabbed the staff with a ring that she had set aside and stomped out.

Cheong-ryeong’s gaze, watching this, then turned to the pillar in the middle of the thatched house.

It was certain now.

That pillar was undoubtedly the center of the formation maintaining this space.

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Wicked Granny, who had come outside, immediately struck the ground with her ringed staff.

Then, in the middle of the meadow, the space distorted and a human figure appeared there.

Seeing numerous energies floating around that figure, it seemed this person was the cause of the commotion.

So,

“You’re quite a troublesome fellow.”

Wicked Granny said this towards the distorted space, and then,

-Swoop!

She reached her hand in and grabbed the figure's head.

The energy felt as it resisted was considerable, but no match for her own.

She gripped the fellow's head and pulled.

-Swish!

"Ugh!"

Along with this, a man wearing white scale armor, his head gripped, appeared.

'Hm?'

A glint appeared in Wicked Granny's eyes.

She had naturally assumed it would be a human, but the mixed energy she sensed from the man made her furrow her brow.

This was no ordinary human.

With demonic energy and true qi mixed together, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say he was half spirit beast.

Puzzled by this, she first tried to close the open formation.

But at that moment,

-Thud!

Something flew in, piercing through the distorted space she was trying to close.

“Oh no?”

It was,

‘A formless sword?’

This transparent form with true qi gathered to form a sharp blade was undoubtedly a formless sword.

Then the formless sword began to rotate in a spiral direction.

-Whirl!

Along with this, cracks formed in the distorted space that was about to close, and instead, the space opened even wider.

-Thud!

At this, Wicked Granny struck the ground once more with her ringed staff, trying to forcibly close the formation.

But at that moment,

-Swoop!

Something entered through the crack.

An exclamation involuntarily escaped Wicked Granny's lips as she saw that being.

'Ah!'

Though she had lived for hundreds of years, she had never seen such a beautiful man before.

But that wasn't the only surprising thing.

Judging by his face, he looked like a youth not yet twenty, but the energy he exuded was almost on par with her own.

She could intuitively be certain.

It's him.

He is undoubtedly,

'The pinnacle of the current martial arts world.'

Wicked Granny's lips, which had been displeased due to the intruder causing a disturbance just moments ago, twitched and rose with a competitive spirit.

Chapter 443 – Wicked Heart Granny (2)

Sizzle!

-Urgh.

From the moment Wicked Granny left her seat, Cheong-ryeong had been straining with all her might to somehow escape from this prison made of silver wood.

However, due to the talisman formation and prolonged exposure to the silver wood, her spirit body had taken too much damage.

Her spirit energy was almost completely depleted, and she had now reached a dangerous state.

-Haa... Haa...

This was the only chance to escape from that old monster's hands, but what could she do?

She hadn't given up, but if she tried to forcibly break the silver wood again, she might truly reach the worst-case scenario.

It was at that moment.

-Bang! Rumble!

Once again, the pillar supporting the center of the thatched house shook violently, and along with it, everything inside the house trembled as if an earthquake had struck.

Then,

-Crack!

Part of the table split, and the talismans attached to it were torn off.

With this, a tiny gap formed in the energy that had completely blocked her from the outside, preventing her from recovering spirit energy.

-Swish swish!

Because of this, Cheong-ryeong could feel a little spirit energy seeping into her burning spirit body.

-Ah!

Though it was faint, the difference between recovering spirit energy and not was significant.

Her face, which had been becoming increasingly transparent, began to regain some color.

It was at this moment.

-Blue Spiriiiiit!!!!

‘!?’

At the resounding voice, her eyes reddened.

She had tried so hard to cut off her emotions and erase all traces to prevent him from following her, yet how did he come all the way here?

‘Mortal...’

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Wicked Granny could intuitively be certain.

The skill to wield even a formless sword, which could be considered the pinnacle of swordsmanship.

And an energy on par with her own.

This fellow was undoubtedly the pinnacle of the current martial arts world.

Wicked Granny's lips, which had been displeased due to the intruder causing a disturbance just moments ago, twitched and burned with a competitive spirit.

Finally, she opened her mouth towards the intruder, that is, Mok Gyeong-un.

"You... The current martial arts world's..."

Before she could finish speaking.

Mok Gyeong-un took a deep breath and then shouted in a voice so loud it resonated throughout the vast meadow.

"Cheong-ryeong!!!"

At this cry from Mok Gyeong-un, Wicked Granny, who had been showing a competitive spirit, raised one eyebrow in puzzlement.

"Cheong-ryeong?"

What is that, shouting it so suddenly?

As she wondered, she saw Mok Gyeong-un, who had shouted at the top of his lungs enough to make her eardrums ring, looking towards the thatched house.

At this, Wicked Granny snorted and said.

“Before being the pinnacle of the current martial arts world, you’re a strange one. What is this Cheong-ryeong that you’re shouting about so loudly?”

At this question, Mok Gyeong-un gripped his sword-controlling finger and extended it towards her.

Though it was his first time seeing her, from the moment he saw her, he had instinctively known she was no ordinary enemy due to her extraordinary aura.

Therefore, he judged that he needed to give it his all from the start.

So he tried to summon a formless sword, but,

-Woong woong!

A glint appeared in Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes.

And for good reason,

‘The energy is moving on its own.’

Mok Gyeong-un, who had surpassed the wall of walls, could be said to have reached the highest realm in handling true qi.

But because the surrounding energies were moving so fluidly, it was difficult to condense true qi.

It was at that moment.

-Bang!

Mok Gyeong-un hurriedly stepped half a step to the side, stimulated by the energy sensing danger.

Then, an invisible intense energy brushed past where he had been standing, and the grass in the meadow parted left and right as the air shook.

Seeing this, Mok Gyeong-un turned his head again to look at Wicked Granny.

He saw her pointing her staff towards him.

“Kekeke. Good. Incompetent ones wouldn’t have even been able to avoid that.”

“Who are you?”

“Well. That’s not something you should be asking me, having barged into someone else’s dwelling...”

-Thud!

Before Wicked Granny could finish speaking.

At that moment, Destruction Emperor, whose head was gripped in her hand, grabbed her wrist and launched a kick towards her face.

Of course, she easily avoided it by tilting her head slightly to the side.

Then she tried to inflict more pain by gripping Destruction Emperor’s head harder, but,

-Whoosh!

At that instant, Wicked Granny's body flipped upside down and shot upwards due to a strange force.

Because of this, Destruction Emperor's head slipped from her grasp.

Not missing this chance, Destruction Emperor hurriedly created distance.

-Tap tap tap tap!

Destruction Emperor's complexion didn't look good as he distanced himself.

He had succeeded in detaching himself from this unidentified woman through direct contact, but the demonic energy in his body was moving erratically and hard to control.

It was difficult to understand what kind of phenomenon this was.

Meanwhile,

-Tap!

Wicked Granny, who had been flipped upside down, lightly somersaulted and landed on the ground.

She looked at Destruction Emperor with interest and said.

"Oh? You have quite an interesting skill. I've experienced techniques like the Thousand Jin Hammer, but to make my body light as a feather..."

At these words, Destruction Emperor's gaze sharpened.

It was because the opponent had roughly figured out what kind of ability his technique possessed.

Destruction Emperor's mind became complicated.

Although he had forcibly entered this place, he hadn't expected such a monstrous being to be here.

It was better to avoid a direct confrontation with such a person in a situation where the energy in his body was moving erratically.

-Swish!

Destruction Emperor's eyes moved back and forth.

Then he spotted a distorted space in the air.

It was the part where the formation hadn't recovered due to Mok Gyeong-un's formless sword.

'I need to get out.'

As Destruction Emperor tried to fly towards that place,

-Swoosh!

At that moment, a faint shadow shot up, grabbed his face, and slammed him down towards the ground.

-Bang!

"Gah!"

“Where do you think you’re going? Everything you’ve seen...”

-Swish!

At that moment, Wicked Granny, sensing a sharp blade flying towards her, raised her staff and swept it.

-Clang!

The blade was split in half and scattered in the air.

The one who had launched it was none other than Mok Gyeong-un.

Wicked Granny raised the corner of her mouth in a sneer and said.

“Were you allies with this fellow?”

“No.”

“Then why are you interfering with my...”

-Woong woong woong!

-Flinch!

At that moment, Wicked Granny hurriedly threw Destruction Emperor, whose face she had been gripping, backwards due to a strange force pulling at her abdomen.

-Thud! Crash bang bang!

Destruction Emperor, thrown backwards, rolled several times before finally regaining his balance.

A blue energy that looked like true qi could be seen gathered into a fist-sized sphere in his right palm.

-Crackle! Crackle!

The space around the sphere was bending.

However, because the energy forming it was moving so erratically, Destruction Emperor couldn't maintain it to the end.

Eventually, the sphere simply dissipated.

'Damn it!'

Watching this, Wicked Granny smirked and said.

"Well, well. You're neither human nor spiritual beast, but such a being. That's why you've learned such an unusual technique."

At these words, Destruction Emperor's pupils shook.

It was the same inside this strange formation, but this woman was truly dangerous.

She was uncovering a lot just from exchanging a few moves with him.

As he was bewildered,

"Where do you think you're going!"

At that moment, Wicked Granny twisted her body and extended her ringed staff towards someone.

An enormous gust of wind swept through, and because of this, Mok Gyeong-un, who had been trying to run towards the thatched house, had to fly backwards to avoid it.

Mok Gyeong-un, who had to distance himself nearly thirty paces before escaping it, exhaled lightly and looked at Wicked Granny.

“Kekeke. I suppose you thought the enemy of my enemy is my friend and tried to gain some advantage by helping this fellow, but it’s useless. Child. You’re all in the palm of my hand.”

At her cry, Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes narrowed.

It seemed that the only one who could move freely in this space was that unidentified woman.

Not only was the energy in his body moving erratically, but even the surrounding energies were moving without regularity, making it impossible to release true qi externally.

Yet she was freely doing so.

Regardless of her original martial prowess, within this space, she was practically invincible.

At this, Mok Gyeong-un became cautious and spoke.

“What did you do with the vengeful spirit that entered here?”

‘Vengeful spirit?’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s question, curiosity filled Wicked Granny’s eyes.

Unlike this being who was neither human nor spiritual beast, this fellow's eyes had been focused on something else other than this place from the start.

Recently, all the intruders had been causing a commotion demanding the forbidden technique to handle souls, but this fellow was showing interest in a mere vengeful spirit.

Intrigued by this, she opened her mouth.

"Ah. You must be talking about that arrogant vengeful spirit with the completely red appearance."

"What did you do to her?"

To this question, Wicked Granny shrugged her shoulders and answered glibly.

"What should I do? That vengeful spirit you're looking for paid the price for entering this place uninvited."

"Price...?"

"There's no point in desperately searching here for a vengeful spirit that's already been annihilated..."

-Whoosh!

-Flinch!

At that moment, Wicked Granny couldn't continue her words.

As soon as she said the vengeful spirit had been annihilated, a ferocious and terribly intense killing intent from him pressed down on all directions.

A glint appeared in her eyes.

She had seen countless individuals over the years, but this was the first time she had encountered such a primordial and overwhelming killing intent.

‘This is something else.’

It was enough to make her whole body break out in goosebumps.

Usually, those who have reached such a level have deep cultivation and don’t lose their reason even when angered, knowing how to control themselves.

But from this fellow, a completely raw scent was emanating.

‘Yes. This is it.’

It’s a sensation she hadn’t felt in a long time.

Living here with the thought of repaying her karma, she had almost forgotten those blood-soaked days.

But encountering this killing intent that seemed to pierce her lungs, she longed for those times again.

Indeed, no matter how many years one trains, is it impossible to change this unique temperament?

‘Ah, what a shame.’

She would have liked to properly face him outside the formation and taste his skill, but being in a position where she couldn’t leave this place, that seemed impossible.

But if it was someone who had surpassed the wall of walls, even if he couldn't properly handle energy, wouldn't he be able to entertain her to some extent?

As she was about to face Mok Gyeong-un, who was emanating tremendous killing intent towards her,

-Boom!

It was at that very moment.

Along with a thunderous sound, the entire meadow shook violently as if an earthquake had struck.

It wasn't just the ground.

The blue sky rippled and cracks began to form in all directions.

At this, Wicked Granny glared at the thatched house with a terribly distorted expression.

'No way?'

It couldn't be.

Surely that vengeful spirit woman was trapped in the silver wood prison and couldn't do anything.

But why had an anomaly occurred in the entire formation?

This could only happen if there was a problem with the pillar that could be called the center...

It was at that moment.

-Woong! Swish!

‘Oh no!’

At that instant, Wicked Granny hurriedly dropped the staff she was holding and stretched out her hand towards the formless sword flying at her like lightning.

\*\*\*

-Haa... Haa...

Cheong-ryeong, having almost completely depleted her spirit energy, was pointing her index finger towards the pillar with an extremely faint spirit body.

The Void Stabilizing Breath[1] of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques, which she had used on the off chance it might work.

It was a supreme technique that transcended simple laws, and she had used it with the sole thought of somehow helping Mok Gyeong-un, and that slim chance had worked.

-Aah!

Although it was the Void Stabilizing Breath performed with diminished and weakened spirit energy, part of the pillar was sucked into space and fell off, causing an anomaly in the formation.

Chapter 444 – Wicked Heart Granny (3)

-Rumble!

The meadow shook violently as if an earthquake had struck, accompanied by a thunderous sound.

It wasn't just the ground.

The previously clear sky rippled like waves, and cracks began to form everywhere in sight.

-Crack!

In that fleeting moment, Mok Gyeong-un sensed it.

Along with the cracks, the energy that had been moving erratically until now was suddenly stabilizing.

He absolutely did not miss this moment.

Mok Gyeong-un extended his sword-controlling finger towards Wicked Granny, who had turned her head towards the thatched house.

-Swish!

Then, an incredibly transparent formless sword rushed fiercely towards her.

At that moment, Wicked Granny hurriedly turned her head, dropped her staff, and stretched out her hand.

One might wonder if it was possible to block a formless sword, which could be considered the pinnacle of swordsmanship, with bare hands, but at that instant, something transparent appeared in a shape similar to her hand.

-Woong!

It was,

'A formless claw?'

-Clash clash clash clash!

The moment the formless sword and formless claw collided, sparks flew and everything in sight brightened.

A glint appeared in Mok Gyeong-un's eyes, who had tried to subdue Wicked Granny in one go at the moment he could properly handle energy again for some unknown reason.

He knew she was no ordinary person, but he hadn't predicted at all that she could unleash not just a formless sword, but a formless claw.

Meanwhile,

"Hmph!"

Wicked Granny, having blocked the formless sword with her formless claw, was about to fly towards Mok Gyeong-un.

At that moment,

-Grrr!

She looked up, stimulated by a strange energy sensing danger.

There, she saw a huge blue sphere the size of a bull floating, and looking closely, its interior was rotating rapidly.

-Thud thud thud thud!

At that moment, the grass on the meadow floor was uprooted and floated upwards.

Then, as they were drawn into the blue light, they burned and oxidized the moment they touched it.

-Sizzle!

The sphere had tremendous gravitational pull, and as its interior began to rotate even faster, no, more fiercely, an even wider surrounding area began to be sucked in.

It was enough to make even the ground break apart and rise.

-Whoosh!

Due to the tremendous gravitational force, Wicked Granny's body was also drawn towards the sphere and showed signs of floating up.

Destruction Emperor raised the corner of his mouth in a sneer as he watched this.

'Now that I've regained my strength, I won't be dragged around by the likes of you anymore...'

-Grrr!

'!?'

At that moment, Destruction Emperor's eyes widened.

And for good reason – Wicked Granny, who was about to be drawn in by the sphere's tremendous gravitational force, snorted and stretched out her hand, creating an even larger formless claw.

And the moment Wicked Granny made a grasping motion,

-Crack crack crack crack!

The formless claw that had appeared in mid-air grasped the sphere and crushed it.

The energy inside was crushed in that state and spread in all directions causing other repercussions, but Wicked Granny, who had been underneath it, had disappeared.

‘Oh no!’

Destruction Emperor, realizing this, tried to move hurriedly, but,

-Thud!

He couldn’t help but feel someone grasping the back of his head.

-Bang!

In that state, Destruction Emperor fell forward and his face was buried in the ground.

It was so strong that the ground where he hit sank in, creating a pit nearly ten feet deep.

Nevertheless, Destruction Emperor didn’t die.

Wicked Granny smirked and said to Destruction Emperor, who was writhing in pain.

“Did you mistakenly think something would greatly change just because the flow of energy returned to normal?”

-Clash clash clash!

At that moment, the white scale armor Destruction Emperor was wearing began to move on its own, covering his entire body and trying to transform into something else.

However,

-Thud! Boom!

As Wicked Granny lifted Destruction Emperor’s head again and slammed it to the ground, the white scales that had been trying to change on their own as if alive stopped transforming.

Destruction Emperor’s body no longer moved.

“It’s good that you’re sturdy, not being human.”

Wicked Granny, still gripping his head, muttered something softly as if chanting a spell.

Meanwhile,

-Flinch!

-Swish!

In a fleeting moment, a black line crossed the space of the meadow, trying to pass by Wicked Granny.

However, at that instant, she moved so quickly that her body appeared in multiple layers, and she grabbed the black line with both hands.

-Thud!

-Whoosh!

In that state, Wicked Granny's figure was pushed back nearly twenty paces.

And at the end of those twenty paces, as Wicked Granny's hands turned completely white, the black line gradually began to take shape.

It was Mok Gyeong-un's demonic sword, Evil Commandment Sword.

‘.....’

Mok Gyeong-un's gaze, holding the hilt of Evil Commandment Sword, became even more serious.

He had faced numerous enemies until now, but this was the first time someone had caught – not avoided – a single strike that concentrated all his power into one point, launched as a surprise attack, with both hands.

Wicked Granny's lips twitched as she opened her mouth.

“This is quite surprising. You... Did you know how to concentrate all your power into one? At this level, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say you've nearly reached the extreme. And...”

-Thud!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un moved his left sword-controlling finger.

The sword-controlling finger tried to pierce between Wicked Granny's eyebrows, who was gripping the blade.

However, in that instant, Wicked Granny slightly twisted both palms that were gripping the blade.

Then,

-Thud!

Mok Gyeong-un's figure, holding the sword, also twisted and his body rose.

Wicked Granny launched a palm strike towards Mok Gyeong-un's abdomen with her whitened hand like lightning.

-Thud!

Mok Gyeong-un's body, hit by the palm strike, created ripples in the air as he flew over ten jang away.

-Whoosh!

Wicked Granny, who had sent Mok Gyeong-un flying, raised one eyebrow.

Her figure had already been pushed back quite a bit, and she then looked at her palm.

She too had reached the level where she could concentrate all her power into one, having surpassed the wall of walls, and at the moment she accurately struck his abdomen,

'He dissipated the force and partially deflected it.'

Wicked Granny, raising her head, opened her mouth.

“The subtlety of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi.”

It was a technique beyond the subtlety of grafting flowers, not only returning the opponent’s power as it is but also able to mix in one’s own power.

It seemed like it had been quite, no, extremely long since she had seen this.

‘I heard from those who entered that the level of the current martial arts world had greatly degenerated, but it doesn’t seem to be the case.’

Wicked Granny’s lips twitched with satisfaction.

The anger about the damaged formation had already disappeared from her mind.

Rather, she was feeling joy at meeting an opponent with whom she could properly demonstrate her skills after a long time.

On the other hand,

-Drip!

Mok Gyeong-un, who had barely managed to dissipate her force and stop, was wiping the blood flowing from his mouth.

Although he had employed the subtlety of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi in an instant, he couldn’t completely deflect the force and suffered internal injuries.

However, this wasn’t very important.

More concerning was the single move Wicked Granny had just demonstrated.

Clearly, this was,

‘She concentrated all her power into one point.’

She demonstrated a technique like the single strike that concentrates all power into one point, which could be considered the final move and subtlety of the demonic sword technique I use, through a palm strike.

Because of this, Mok Gyeong-un couldn’t help but be surprised.

Moreover, its form was quite natural.

As if unleashing an ordinary move, she launched a palm strike, but all her power was concentrated in that single move.

‘She’s strong.’

Certainly, this woman was by far the strongest among all the enemies he had met so far.

An enemy at a level where they could imbue all their power even in a light move was a monster who could drive their opponent to death with just a single moment of carelessness.

Mok Gyeong-un, whose reason had half flown away due to great anger at hearing Cheong-ryeong had been annihilated, regained his composure when he judged that the opponent was not someone he could easily kill.

At that moment, Wicked Granny,

-Swish!

Stretched out her hand and sucked in the demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword through air-walking.

Evil Commandment Sword, touched by her hand, shook its blade violently as if resisting being held by someone other than its owner.

At this, she smirked and said.

“It’s resisting strongly because it’s not its master.”

As expected of a peerless master who had surpassed the wall of walls, Wicked Granny was not affected at all by the demonic sword.

Rather, she lightly suppressed the demonic sword with her true qi.

When she applied true qi, the violent shaking of the demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword stopped.

Aiming this Evil Commandment Sword at Mok Gyeong-un, she said.

“You’re truly a peculiar fellow. I thought you were just the pinnacle of the current martial arts world, but you’re reeking strongly of our era.”

“.....”

“It seems you’ve become quite cautious, able to control your killing intent well. Yes. That’s how it should be. Killing intent might become fighting spirit, but in a battle between those who have reached the extreme, it only becomes a hindrance. And killing intent isn’t used like that, but...”

-Swoosh!

Wicked Granny's figure blurred and disappeared.

She began to move at ultra-high speed, employing her lightness technique.

Mok Gyeong-un could see her clearly.

But then her figure, moving like this, split into two.

-Swoosh swoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Her figure, split into two sides, was approaching Mok Gyeong-un simultaneously with a terrifying momentum.

Even without a special lightness technique, she had reached a level where she could split her figure into two with just her own footwork, having reached such a realm.

-Whoosh!

From the Wicked Granny flying in from the right, a very strong killing intent was felt.

The will to kill the opponent was very strong.

Seeing this, one would likely think that the figure on the left was either a feint or had a high probability of being support, and the real attack was probably more likely to come from the right.

Normally, one would think so, but,

[Killing intent isn't used like that, but...]

Mok Gyeong-un was mindful of what Wicked Granny had said to him.

If this was true, it meant she was trying to show something utilizing killing intent.

If so, it was no different from intentionally making the opponent recognize this.

It didn't matter which of the two was the real attack.

'Both are real attacks.'

So Mok Gyeong-un spread his left and right hands, summoned formless swords in both hands, and grasped them.

-Woong!

Wicked Granny, who had dispersed her figure into two and was flying in, was almost within reach.

Mok Gyeong-un was about to face her with the technique of right sword left sword.

But at that moment,

-Flinch!

Mok Gyeong-un hurriedly swung the formless sword in his left hand upwards.

-Clash clash clash clash!

The formless claw and formless sword collided as it suddenly struck down from above, and white light flashed.

He had managed to block the formless claw trying to crush him from above in an instant, but the weight of its power was so strong that his knees bent, and,

-Thud thud thud thud!

The ground couldn't withstand it and collapsed, shaking his figure.

In that fleeting moment, her figure, split in two, suddenly flew in simultaneously as if jointly attacking Mok Gyeong-un from left and right.

-Whoosh!

At this, Mok Gyeong-un realized.

She had first caused confusion through words, and deliberately revealed strong killing intent to make him unaware of her formless claw's energy, even if just for a moment.

This was a strategy that was possible only with long experience, beyond excellent combat sense.

'This is what experience is, child.'

It was already over.

He was quite good, but the difference in experience was vast.

She didn't intend to kill, but she thought to take an arm as payment.

But at that very moment.

-Clash clash clash clash!

Then Mok Gyeong-un relaxed part of the blade of the formless sword he was holding.

As he did so, the force of the pressing formless claw shifted towards the relaxed part,

-Thud!

Mok Gyeong-un changed the direction of the force and sent it towards Wicked Granny's figure flying in from the right, and at the same time, towards her figure flying in from the left,

-Clash!

He unleashed a single strike concentrating all his power into one point to block the sword.

'Huh?'

At this, Wicked Granny was genuinely surprised.

She had thought he absolutely couldn't block it, but she hadn't imagined at all that he would use the formless sword to employ a flower-grafting technique to deflect the formless claw.

This was no different from deflecting true qi with true qi.

He was compensating for the unbridgeable realm of experience with unimaginable, excellent combat sense.

'This fellow is truly something.'

But that wasn't the end.

As her left figure and the strikes concentrating all power collided, causing a huge aftermath, in that fleeting moment, Mok Gyeong-un used the Scripture of Transferring True Qi technique to create rippling waves, accepting her power while simultaneously,

-Bang!

Stomping the ground with his foot,

-Whirl!

He imbued both his and her power into the sword at the same time and twisted the sword tip in a spiral.

Along with this, accompanied by the sound of space tearing, the sword energy imbued with both powers created a whirlwind like a storm.

-Swish swish swish swish swish swish!

At that moment, Wicked Granny's eyes widened.

'T-This is?'

Chapter 445 – Wicked Heart Granny (4)

It was a sensation closer to instinct than reason.

He was capable of colder and more rational judgment than anyone else, as he was nearly emotionless compared to ordinary humans.

For the first time in his life, he had come to like someone, and the sense of loss from that person's annihilation aroused great anger in him.

Usually, we say that we are swept away by anger.

However, for Mok Gyeong-un, anger brought about a single-minded focus.

It was a single will to desperately kill someone, and because of it, all other unnecessary calculations and thoughts disappeared.

-Swish! Clash clash clash!

The idea of deflecting true qi with true qi.

And the bold gamble of deflecting the power of a strike concentrating all power into one point through the subtlety of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi while adding his own power.

-Crack!

This placed a tremendous overload on his body.

However, Mok Gyeong-un instinctively found the most effective way to unleash this power.

It was the Chasing Whirlwind Sword, one of the ultimate techniques of Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin.

-Bang!

A foot stomp that crushed the ground.

Along with it, the sword energy of two powers rotating in a spiral.

-Crack!

With the sound of space tearing, the sword energy imbued with two powers created a whirlwind like a storm.

-Swish swish swish swish swish swish!

By rotating the powers that didn't mix and could strain the body in a spiral, he made them naturally combine without forcibly mixing them into one.

Thus, the whirlwind created by the two powers caused a massive sword energy storm that enveloped Wicked Granny.

-Boom boom boom boom boom boom!

As even the air was torn apart, dozens of jang were instantly devastated, and within its center, another strange event was unfolding.

-Whoosh!

Within the storm of sword energy, two formless claws overlapped as if interlocking, wrapping around someone – none other than Wicked Granny.

She thought this was the best way to block it since she couldn't avoid it, but that wasn't all.

In that state, Wicked Granny inside the two formless claws began to rotate fiercely in the opposite spiral direction.

-Clash clash clash clash clash clash!

Because of this, as the spiral and counter-spiral overlapped,

-Swish!

The whirlwind combining the two powers gradually subsided.

And finally, the momentum completely dissipated.

-Thud!

Wicked Granny, who had blocked this with an exquisite move, staggered and then coughed up black blood.

No matter how much she surpassed Mok Gyeong-un in internal energy or power, it was difficult to completely withstand the spiral sword technique that combined her own power concentrated into a single point with Mok Gyeong-un's sword energy.

After staggering two steps, she regained her balance and wiped the blood with her sleeve.

"Huu... Huu..."

Her pupils shook as she steadied her breathing.

This wasn't because of Mok Gyeong-un's innate combat sense and response.

It was because of the sword technique Mok Gyeong-un had just demonstrated.

'Without a doubt.'

This was that person's sword technique.

Was this the reason for the scent of the old days emanating from this fellow?

She raised her head and looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

-Sizzle! Sizzle!

Mok Gyeong-un was standing with his formless sword extended, but his arm was trembling, and blood was spurting from some acupoints that couldn't withstand the strain.

Although reaching the realm of life and death meant that the subtlety of concentrating power was no longer a technique beyond his limits, it was inevitably straining to also imbue the opponent's power.

'My right arm won't move.'

But it didn't matter.

He needed to expel the overloaded energy tormenting his body and move other body parts.

He expanded his senses by focusing on each part again, starting from the tips of his toes.

This incredible concentration of Mok Gyeong-un quickly regained control over his body that wasn't moving due to trembling from overload.

As sensation returned to his entire body,

-Whoosh!

Mok Gyeong-un immediately flew towards Wicked Granny.

-Tap tap!

As he flew after kicking off the ground twice, Mok Gyeong-un's figure split into three.

It was the subtlety of creating clones from the Wind God Step he had stolen and learned from the masked Ma Ra-hyeon.

Seeing Mok Gyeong-un's figure split into three along with the rushing wind, Wicked Granny raised the corner of her mouth.

'It's certain.'

The man before her eyes had clearly inherited that person's legacy.

If so,

-Thud!

Wicked Granny immediately knelt on one knee, clasped her hands in a salute, and cried out.

"Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon pays respects to the blood descendant who inherited that person's legacy."

'!?'

A glint flashed in Mok Gyeong-un's eyes for an instant at her sudden action.

But that was the end of it.

He didn't know why she was reacting like this, but it didn't matter whether it was a misunderstanding or anything else.

The original purpose of coming here was just one thing.

It was to retrieve the forbidden technique that could unite souls and help Cheong-ryeong.

But at the point where she had been annihilated, all of that became meaningless, so Mok Gyeong-un had only one thought – to kill Wicked Granny.

-Flinch!

Wicked Granny furrowed her brow as Mok Gyeong-un didn't stop his attack despite her paying respects, and she tried to create distance by employing her lightness technique.

'Why?'

If he was that person's blood relative, he should know her.

But why isn't he withdrawing his killing intent and attacking like this?

-Whoosh!

As she wondered, she immediately summoned three formless claws to block the sword techniques unleashed by Mok Gyeong-un's figures flying in from three directions.

-Clash clash clash clash clash!

-Boom boom boom boom!

Each move, with power concentrated into it, caused tremendous repercussions every time they clashed.

The meadow around where they were fighting had already lost its shape and was becoming devastated.

Wicked Granny, blocking Mok Gyeong-un's attacks, shouted.

"Please stop. I am not your enemy."

Despite her cry, Mok Gyeong-un had no intention of stopping.

Rather, he was pressuring her with increasingly sharp and precise sword techniques.

This couldn't help but inwardly surprise Wicked Granny as well.

'Even though I'm focusing on defense, his sword techniques are becoming increasingly precise. Truly monstrous talent.'

It was talent that couldn't be measured by simply calling it exceptional.

Given enough time, he was the kind of talent that could even surpass the experience she had accumulated.

However, this was no time to be surprised.

-Clash clash clash clash clash!

Wicked Granny, blocking Mok Gyeong-un's formless sword, shouted.

"I serve your ancestor. There's no reason to fight any..."

“Nonsense!”

-Swish!

Wicked Granny hurriedly tilted her head to the side, but her cheek was cut and she ended up bleeding.

Her gaze sharpened.

The sword techniques were becoming increasingly precise, surpassing a level that could be blocked by defense alone.

It was an unbelievably rapid rate of improvement.

‘This won’t do.’

It seemed she needed to mix offense and defense appropriately.

It was truly perplexing.

She kept talking about her relationship with that person, but why was he attacking her so fiercely as if to kill her?

‘!?’

Could it be that he really doesn’t know anything?

Her expression became subtle.

Among those who had intruded here, there were occasionally some who said that everything in the old martial arts world had disappeared after the day of the great calamity, but even so, it was a place that once dominated the martial arts world.

How could a place once called the greatest under heaven easily disappear?

-Clash clash clash clash clash!

As she blocked Mok Gyeong-un's full-power sword techniques, she thought she needed to change her approach.

He kept trying to kill her with tremendous killing intent, so it seemed better to subdue him first and then attempt conversation.

So she stopped just defending and gathered her power to launch a strike with her formless claw towards Mok Gyeong-un's chest.

But at that moment,

-Swish!

The formless sword, which had been evenly matched until now because they were in the same realm, pierced through and partially cut the formless claw.

‘!!!!’

Her pupils shook for a moment.

‘He cut the formless claw?’

Wicked Granny couldn't hide her bewilderment.

Of course, even formless energy can be superior depending on one's power.

However, because this was basically a realm of enlightenment possible only after reaching the extreme, it was difficult to break with the same formless energy.

But now, Mok Gyeong-un had cut through the formless claw, though not completely.

-Tremble!

What on earth was this?

Wicked Granny hurriedly tried to create distance due to the aftermath of the sharp energy penetrating as the formless claw was cut.

She could instinctively understand.

Beyond becoming more precise, the sword was gradually becoming sharper.

What this meant was one thing.

'...He's moving towards a higher realm in the midst of our confrontation.'

She truly couldn't hide her surprise.

Killing intent.

The single-minded focus to kill someone was a path that moved away from principle and the Way, so it couldn't lead to entering a higher realm.

This was something one could know through long years of mental and physical cultivation.

But why was this person's sword continually becoming stronger the more they clashed?

-Clash!

As the formless sword and formless claw collided, their figures crossed for an instant.

-Swish!

The formless claw was split even more than before, and Wicked Granny's left shoulder became soaked in blood from a sword wound.

Her gaze narrowed as she looked at Mok Gyeong-un.

'Single-minded focus...'

She could now understand the reason.

Although it was killing intent, this was pure single-minded focus.

Due to the single-minded focus of only wanting to kill her, the sword was becoming closer to its inherent role, to the point of purity.

-Throb!

She felt pain from the blade energy penetrating her shoulder.

Feeling pain after such a long time, any thoughts about this being before her being someone's descendant or anything like that completely disappeared from her mind.

A strengthening opponent, a worthy adversary met after a long time.

All of this gradually increased her competitive spirit and fighting spirit even more.

Since it had come to this, she wanted to properly fight with full power, throwing away all the karma she had accumulated and the shackles towards that person.

-Grrr!

As she fully unleashed her true qi, strong wind pressure swept around her due to her energy.

Having lived for many years, she far surpassed Mok Gyeong-un in pure internal energy.

Even Mok Gyeong-un, who had been focusing only on the single-minded thought of killing her, seemed to judge that everything would be decided in a single move given her changed energy, and he properly took his stance.

-Swish!

It was the moment when these two peerless masters were about to compete with their ultimate techniques.

-Whoosh!

At that moment, someone entered through the distorted gap in the formation torn by Mok Gyeong-un's formless sword.

Then that someone hurriedly shouted.

“Stop!!!”

Despite the ear-splitting shout, neither Mok Gyeong-un nor Wicked Granny took their eyes off each other at all.

It was a crucial moment.

The match would be decided the instant one took their eyes off the opponent.

Seeing this, the person who had shouted at them, thinking this wouldn't do, this time flew between them, squeezing in.

She was,

‘So Ye-rin?’

It was Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin.

However, Wicked Granny, who had no idea who she was, had already made up her mind to settle the match and urged.

“Don't interfere, woman.”

“I can't do that, Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon.”

‘!?’

When she accurately stated her title and name despite seeing her for the first time, one of Wicked Granny's eyebrows raised.

“You... Who are you?”

At this question, a chilling, ominous energy surged from Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin.

Along with this, her black hair turned blood-red.

Wicked Granny’s eyes widened as she watched this.

To her, Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin, whose hair had completely turned the color of blood, clasped her hands in a salute and said.

“Jin Ye-rin, daughter of Jin Yeong-in, the last young sect leader of Mushang Fortress, pays respects to Master Cheol Su-ryeon, who served that person!”

‘!!!!!!’

#### Chapter 446 – Wicked Heart Granny (5)

Just half a quarter-hour earlier.

When Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin arrived near the bamboo forest, a fierce battle was already underway.

The situation was a clash between those trying to prevent entry into the bamboo forest and those attempting to break through.

However, one side numbered in the hundreds while the other was just a small group.

Yet the smaller group consisted entirely of extraordinary masters who had surpassed the peak realm, so the battle was somewhat evenly matched.

'Am I too late?'

Watching their conflict, she couldn't understand what was going on.

She had hurried here as fast as she could, but had the Secret Society been even faster than her?

Just then, her eyes caught sight of someone.

It was the masked Ma Ra-hyeon, who had assisted her in the Embroidered Uniform Guards.

[Ma Ra-hyeon!]

[Six Offices Commander!]

He too spotted her and called out.

At this, she instantly swept away the enemies rushing towards Ma Ra-hyeon with the Four Shadow Fist and Kick, one of the ultimate techniques of the Wind Shadow Eight Forms.

-Thud thud thud thud thud!

[Gah!]

[Urgh!]

After instantly defeating over ten peak masters with her ultimate technique, she immediately asked Ma Ra-hyeon.

[Has Master Dam Baek-ha arrived already?]

She had asked Dam Baek-ha, the Blood Saint of the Nine Blood Sect, to deliver the information she had discovered to Mok Gyeong-un.

However, unlike herself who had headed straight for the bamboo forest, she had predicted it would naturally take some time for Dam Baek-ha to receive that information.

But seeing Ma Ra-hyeon and familiar faces like Seop-chun and Mong Mu-yak, it clearly meant that Mok Gyeong-un had also arrived here.

Yet,

[Master Dam Baek-ha? What do you mean?]

[Didn't you receive my message from Master Dam Baek-ha?]

At her words, Ma Ra-hyeon replied with a puzzled expression.

[No, that's not it. We came here with our lord to prevent that dangerous forbidden technique from falling into the hands of the Secret Society.]

[Ah...]

At his answer, So Ye-rin nodded as if relieved and was inwardly surprised.

It seemed Mok Gyeong-un had already discovered the information she had obtained and had even moved first.

If they hadn't arrived first, that important forbidden technique might have fallen into their hands.

In any case, the issue now wasn't who arrived first.

'That mustn't fall into their hands.'

So she scanned the surroundings and asked.

[Where is Young Master Mok?]

[He entered the bamboo forest to stop an enemy who had gone in ahead.]

[There was someone who entered first?]

[Yes. Judging by how much quieter the bamboo forest has become compared to earlier, our lord may have subdued that person... Oh no!]

At that moment, Ma Ra-hyeon spotted masked individuals from the Secret Society breaking through their defense line and rushing towards the bamboo forest.

As he was about to move, Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin held out her hand telling him not to intervene and flew off.

-Whoosh!

[I'll take care of them, you protect this place!]

[Understood.]

Although Mok Gyeong-un's forces overwhelmed in terms of skill, there were so many enemies that they couldn't prevent some from breaking through in time.

However, Ma Ra-hyeon thought it fortunate.

The best ally had arrived at the perfect moment.

So Ye-rin, who had flown off, created clones with her Wind Shadow Step and instantly caught up with those using lightness techniques to rush towards the bamboo forest, subduing them.

-Swish! Swish! Swish swish swish swish!

It took her only the time to count to three to subdue five masked individuals.

After swiftly subduing them, she was about to help Ma Ra-hyeon and the others again when she turned her ear to the sounds coming from inside the bamboo forest.

-Clang! Clang!

The sounds of fighting could be heard from inside.

-Kekekeke!

-Kagh! Kagh!

'That is?'

At this, she entered the bamboo forest and discovered a swordsman fighting against grotesque spiritual beasts.

It was none other than the Ghost Blade.

The Ghost Blade, who had tried to enter through the distorted space gap following Mok Gyeong-un, was blocking the spiritual beasts that were springing out from the hole created by Destruction Emperor.

Seeing the Ghost Blade for the first time, So Ye-rin couldn't help but be inwardly surprised.

This was because, despite seeming injured, he was easily handling quite strong-looking spiritual beasts alone with remarkable swordsmanship.

'His flower grafting has reached the extreme.'

Flower grafting is a technique for facing strong enemies with little strength.

The Ghost Blade was demonstrating high-level subtleties, such as deflecting even the grotesque attacks of non-human spiritual beasts with his sword to attack other spiritual beasts.

However, the spiritual beasts were no ordinary foes, and as they kept coming up through the hole, it seemed too much for him to block alone.

So she flew towards them to attack the spiritual beasts and help him.

[I'll help too!]

-Whoosh!

Then,

[Huu... Huu... I don't know who you are, but if you serve him, help the one who went inside.]

The Ghost Blade rejected this and pointed at the distorted space gap with his left hand.

At his words, Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin thought,

‘One who serves him?’

What on earth did that mean?

Had he mistaken her for one of Mok Gyeong-un’s subordinates?

Rather, she had thought he was an acquaintance of Mok Gyeong-un or someone related to him.

As she wondered, the Ghost Blade shouted at her.

[The highest executive of the Secret Society is inside. If the forbidden technique falls into his hands, everything is over.]

[The Secret Society?]

So they hadn’t completely blocked them?

At the Ghost Blade’s cry, So Ye-rin finally changed direction and flew into the distorted space gap.

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The first thing that caught Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin’s eye upon entering was none other than the devastated meadow and an unconscious man wearing white scale armor.

However, her gaze didn’t linger on him for long.

This was because of two peerless masters facing off with an extraordinary aura.

‘...Is this possible?’

Seeing this, she couldn’t help but be inwardly astonished.

This was because the aura emanating from them was so tremendous that it surpassed even Gu Seong-baek, the Northern Blade King and also Southern Pacification Commissioner, one of the Six Heavens, no, Seven Heavens, called the pinnacle of the current martial arts world.

She truly couldn’t help but be surprised.

‘Is that really Young Master Mok?’

She knew better than anyone that he possessed monstrous talent, having faced him directly.

But this was hard to believe.

It had barely been two months since they parted at the Imperial Palace?

Although she too had developed her martial arts further in the meantime, gaining enlightenment through her confrontation with the Northern Blade King, this was truly astonishing.

What Mok Gyeong-un held in his hand was undoubtedly a formless sword, said to be possible only after reaching the pinnacle of swordsmanship.

That meant,

‘Has he surpassed the wall of walls?’

He was truly a monster who had transcended human limits.

How could such a monster exist?

After being at a loss for words for a moment, she then looked at the opponent facing off against Mok Gyeong-un.

While Mok Gyeong-un's rapid increase in power was remarkable, that woman was no pushover either.

She looked to be barely in her early twenties on the outside, but how had she reached such a level of martial arts?

Looking at them, the titles for the pinnacle of the current martial arts world would have to change.

But Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin's eyes widened as she looked at the woman facing off against Mok Gyeong-un.

'No way?'

She remembered a story her father, Jin Yeong-in, had told her long ago.

He had told her anecdotes of their ancestors as if telling old folk tales, and there were people who appeared in those legends.

Her father had described their appearances in detail.

So she remembered exactly.

'It can't be. Has she been alive all this time?'

She was so surprised that she covered her mouth with her palm.

It was hard to believe, but she soon came to her senses.

Thinking about it, even the Elder and Dam Baek-ha of the Nine Blood Sect had lived this long, so there was no reason she couldn't either.

Moreover, wasn't she the person who had lived the longest even in those days?

So she thought she couldn't just stand by.

'I must stop their fight.'

-Whoosh!

So Ye-rin flew towards them as they faced off and shouted.

"Stop!!!"

Despite her ear-splitting cry, neither Mok Gyeong-un nor Wicked Granny took their eyes off each other at all.

Thinking this wouldn't do, she flew between them, squeezing in.

Wicked Granny urged her.

"Don't interfere, woman."

"I can't do that, Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon."

“You... Who are you?”

At this question, Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin employed the Grand Blood Expansive All-Overseeing Heavens Art[1].

-Grrr!

Then her black hair turned blood-red.

Wicked Granny’s eyes widened as she watched this.

To her, Six Offices Commander So Ye-rin, whose hair had completely turned the color of blood, clasped her hands in a salute and said.

“Jin Ye-rin, daughter of Jin Yeong-in, the last young sect leader of Mushang Fortress, pays respects to Master Cheol Su-ryeon, who served that person!”

‘!?’

In an instant, Wicked Granny’s expression, which had been at the peak of fighting spirit, completely softened.

This woman before her eyes was that person’s blood descendant?

Just looking at her blood-red hair, she was undeniably that person’s blood relative.

Then who was the one facing off against her?

She had naturally assumed he was a blood descendant because he could use the Luminous Star Sword Art[2], one of that person’s ultimate techniques, and the lightness technique of the Wind Shadow Eight Forms[3].

As if reading her thoughts, So Ye-rin, no, Jin Ye-rin turned her head and said to Mok Gyeong-un.

“Young Master Mok. This person is not an enemy. Please stop. And Master Cheol Su-ryeon. Young Master Mok here is not unrelated to our Jin family. he is the Four...”

-Shiver!

Before she could finish speaking.

‘!!!!!’

Jin Ye-rin had naturally thought they would stop fighting once she informed them they were allies.

But something completely unexpected happened.

Mok Gyeong-un moved with tremendous killing intent.

“Young Master Mo...”

-Thud!

“Ah!”

As Mok Gyeong-un waved his hand, Jin Ye-rin’s body was flung to the side by a ferocious energy.

Along with this, Mok Gyeong-un’s figure blurred and became a black line that cut through the air.

‘Oh no!’

At this, Wicked Granny, whose fighting spirit had subsided due to Jin Ye-rin's appearance, hurriedly tried to grab the single strike concentrating all power into one point with her two hands wrapped in formless claws.

Unlike the early stages of their confrontation, she thought she couldn't just block Mok Gyeong-un's sword that had become even sharper.

She had to use all her strength to block it.

-Clash clash clash clash clash!

The moment the two hands wrapped in formless claws and the formless sword collided, blue flames burst out in all directions along with a flash of light, and the ground cracked and caved in from the aftermath.

-Rumble!

-Tremble!

Wicked Granny's two hands and arms shook violently.

Her expression contorted.

Although her fighting spirit had subsided, this single strike was distinctly different from all the power until now.

The sword contained only a persistent single-minded focus to kill her and...

-Creep!

‘What is this?’

The formless sword was becoming tinged with a ferocious black energy, and,

-Thud! Thud!

“Hnngh!”

Gradually, her figure began to be pushed back.

Moreover,

-Crack!

Cracks were also forming near the palms of the two formless claws gripping the formless sword.

Because of this, she could understand.

It wasn’t a matter of fighting spirit.

At this moment, this man was overwhelming her.

If she let go of her hands and was pushed back further, she would be cut in half like this.

-Grr!

As her life was in danger, she gathered all her true qi into her two hands, beyond her limits.

Her formless claws also became tinged with an even whiter light.

Meanwhile, someone approached, barely breaking through this tremendous aftermath, and shouted.

-Whoosh!

“Young... Master... Mok... Stop...”

Even though she was protecting her body with blood-red strong energy, she was having difficulty even breathing due to the tremendous aftermath.

At this, Wicked Granny, seeming worried about her, spoke with difficulty.

“Wh-Why... are you doing this? If... you have a connection... with the Jin family’s blood relative... there’s no reason... to fight... like this... risking your life...”

“This is retribution for annihilating her.”

“Her? What...”

‘!?’

Suddenly, Wicked Granny’s expression contorted.

She wondered who “her” could be, but because of the word “annihilation,” she thought of something.

Wicked Granny asked, hoping it wasn’t true.

“Wait... You don’t mean... that... vengeful spirit?”

“Your life is the price.”

“Huh?”

Wicked Granny was genuinely dumbfounded.

Was he really trying to kill her like this because of one vengeful spirit?

What on earth was she that he would do this?

How could a mere soul filled with resentment cause such anger and killing intent?

It made no sense at all, but she soon revealed the truth.

“She... wasn’t... annihilated.”

“...What?”

“That... vengeful spirit... woman... is trapped... in that thatched house... over there.”

No sooner had those words finished.

-Whoosh!

“Huh?”

Mok Gyeong-un, who had been pressing in with his sword as if to kill, suddenly withdrew his strength and deflected it.

Because of this, Wicked Granny, who had been holding the formless sword, couldn't withstand the force and fell forward.

-Boom!

As she fell forward and couldn't withdraw her strength, the ground touched by the formless claws shattered and caved in.

Regardless, Mok Gyeong-un was flying towards the thatched house.

'!?'

Watching his retreating figure, even Jin Ye-rin stared blankly, not understanding what was happening.

'His expression?'

It changed suddenly.

That cold and indifferent face that had been full of terrible killing intent just moments ago brightened in an instant.

Chapter 447 – Wicked Heart Granny (6)

Haa... Haa...

Cheong-ryeong's spirit body trapped in the silver wood prison was incredibly faint.

She was already weakened due to the talisman formation and silver wood, but after using the Void Stabilizing Breath, which consumed the most energy among the subtleties of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques, she had reached a dangerous state.

She tried to endure with all her might, but even her consciousness was gradually becoming hazy.

‘Mortal... I wonder if Mortal is alright?’

Though she was on the verge of annihilation trying to save him, she didn’t regret it.

Even if she couldn’t achieve her revenge, if she could save Mortal at this moment, she would be satisfied with that.

That was her honest feeling.

There was just one thing she regretted.

‘...It’s a shame... that I can’t... see you... before I go.’

Beyond death, complete annihilation.

The demise of a being without an afterlife, that’s what she regretted so much.

As she grew faint, it became difficult even to keep her eyes open, and her eyelids began to close slowly.

It was at that moment.

-Bang!

The door shattered and someone entered the thatched house.

As she looked towards it with half-closed eyes,

“Cheong-ryeong!”

The voice she had longed to hear so much reached her ears.

Her eyes, which had been about to disappear after consuming all her spirit energy, suddenly widened.

Mok Gyeong-un, who approached where she was, ruthlessly tore off the talismans on the floor and then,

-Crack!

He shattered even the silver wood with his bare hands.

The moment the talismans and silver wood were all broken, as the connection with the outside energy was fully restored, her body that had shrunk instantly returned to its original size.

-Swish swish swish!

However, even though her size returned to normal, Cheong-ryeong’s spirit body was still incredibly faint due to the significant damage to her spirit energy.

Seeing Mok Gyeong-un, Cheong-ryeong’s eyes reddened and she barely held back the tears that were about to pour out.

-You... How did you...

She had tried to detach him from her karma in every way possible.

She didn't want him to be hurt and suffer because of her, who would ultimately be annihilated no matter what.

That's why she had tried to shoulder everything herself somehow.

But why was he still trying to approach her like this to the very end?

-Thud!

At that moment, Mok Gyeong-un grabbed both of Cheong-ryeong's shoulders, and she could see the relief on his face.

Seeing Mok Gyeong-un looking at her affectionately with a brightened face, Cheong-ryeong finally burst into tears.

-Sob.

Mok Gyeong-un hugged her tightly.

Overwhelmed with emotion, she cried as she spoke to Mok Gyeong-un.

-I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I should stay away... but the moment I see you... I hate myself for being so happy and relieved.

"It's okay. Everything's okay."

Mok Gyeong-un comforted her, stroking her head while holding her.

In his embrace, she couldn't stop her tears and continued to cry pitifully.

Although she thought she was prepared to shoulder everything, the moment she saw Mok Gyeong-un, it was difficult to control the emotions welling up from within.

To her like this, Mok Gyeong-un said.

“You told me to trust someone else. Now you trust me too.”

-I... I...

“I’ll protect you. So don’t ever leave my side.”

-Swish!

At these words from Mok Gyeong-un, Cheong-ryeong, who had been crying, embraced his body with both arms.

She could no longer deny it.

That the part he occupied within her had grown too large.

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“Master Cheol Su-ryeon!”

“Haa... Haa... I’ve shown an unsightly appearance. To that person’s blood relative.”

Wicked Granny clicked her tongue, looking at her hands covered in wounds.

If Mok Gyeong-un hadn’t deflected his power and stopped midway, her body might have really been cut in two.

At this, she felt a thrill rather than anger.

She had naturally thought that the greatest martial arts talent she had seen so far was that person.

But this was truly indescribable.

He was simply a monster incarnate.

There were plenty of people who grew stronger while fighting, but that usually happened at more basic stages. he was reaching for an even higher dimension of swordsmanship at this level of realm.

‘A sword that surpasses the pinnacle of swordsmanship... What should I call this?’

It was a sword that seemed to approach the very essence of swordsmanship.

He stopped midway, but if he had completed this single strike full of killing intent’s single-minded focus, he would truly surpass the pinnacle of swordsmanship.

Perhaps there would be nothing that sword couldn’t cut.

As she kept marveling, Jin Ye-rin asked her.

“Are you alright?”

“Yes, I’m fine. Such wounds will heal quickly.”

As she said, the blood flowing from her torn palms was gradually stopping.

Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon showed this and then asked.

“But who exactly is that fellow?”

“He’s someone who received teachings from Master Moon Evil Sword[1].”

“Moon Evil Sword? Huh?”

She wore an expression of disbelief.

So this was why each of his sword techniques had felt somehow familiar.

Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon clicked her tongue and said.

“That old... no, I didn’t know Moon Evil Sword was still alive. When that person invited him to come along, he said he would live according to the natural order and whatnot.”

“Ah...”

“Ah, I apologize.”

Thinking about it, if Jin Ye-rin was that person’s blood relative, she wasn’t unrelated to Moon Evil Sword.

He was that person’s father-in-law, after all.

Feeling like she had made a slip of the tongue, Cheol Su-ryeon apologized.

“No, no. It’s alright.”

Jin Ye-rin shook her head at this.

She had heard from her father that Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon had lived even longer than the Elder.

But that wasn't important right now.

"More importantly, I apologize for being discourteous as soon as we met, Master Cheol Su-ryeon."

-Thud!

Jin Ye-rin clasped her hands in a salute to her.

At this, Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon waved her hands, trying to undo her salute.

"No, you don't need to mind such things. I am that person's faithful servant. You, being that person's blood relative, don't need to show such a gesture."

"No. Even if you served that person, what I'm about to say will be disrespectful to you, Master Cheol Su-ryeon."

"Disrespectful?"

-Thud!

Jin Ye-rin knelt on both knees on the ground, not satisfied with just a salute.

"No, what are you doing? Please get up quickly."

"No. I can't do that."

At this, a flustered Cheol Su-ryeon tried to make her stand up, but she was immovable.

“How can you do this? If you do this, I won’t be able to face that person. Please stand up.”

“I can’t until Master Cheol Su-ryeon agrees to help.”

“What?”

At her words asking for help, Cheol Su-ryeon furrowed her brow.

She had guessed there was some reason they had come to this hidden place, but she didn’t expect such an earnest attitude.

“Young miss...”

“My father, the last young sect leader, along with Mushang Fortress, the Blood Sect... even numerous martial arts sects were annihilated and sacrificed on the day of the great calamity.”

“.....”

At these words from Jin Ye-rin, Cheol Su-ryeon’s expression froze.

She had heard about the day of the great calamity from those who had intruded here.

They had said that the level of the martial arts world had greatly declined since then.

However, she never imagined this story would include Mushang Fortress and the Blood Sect.

Even if they weren't as great as during that person's time, she thought Mushang Fortress and the Blood Sect would still be solid due to the descendants who had continued the lineage.

'Aah.'

Cheol Su-ryeon then looked up at the sky, which had cracks due to the damaged formation.

'...Has that person's concern become reality?'

That person had said.

Everything that exists will decay, and that would be no different for Mushang Fortress or the Blood Sect.

Had it really come to pass?

Even though it had been a long time since that person left, it was truly hard to believe.

To her, who was feeling bitter, Jin Ye-rin continued speaking in an earnest voice.

"On the day of the great calamity, numerous spiritual beasts and even spirit beasts went berserk and tried to destroy the human world. At that time, many heroes of the Central Plains, including my grandfather, came forward and sacrificed themselves to stop it."

"....."

"However, this was not a natural occurrence. My father, the last young sect leader, discovered that it was caused by certain individuals. That organization is still intact and again..."

-Swish!

At that moment, before she could finish speaking, Cheol Su-ryeon raised her hand.

Jin Ye-rin looked at her puzzled by her incomprehensible attitude.

Then Cheol Su-ryeon,

-Thud!

Knelt on both knees like her, clasped her hands in a salute, and opened her mouth.

"I apologize. I understand what you want to ask, young miss, but I cannot leave this place."

"What?"

Jin Ye-rin, who hadn't yet made any request, couldn't hide her bewilderment.

She had thought that if this woman, who had achieved great fame even in the old martial arts world and possessed martial arts surpassing the Seven Heavens called the pinnacle of the current martial arts world, helped them, they could more easily eliminate the enemies behind the scenes.

But to be rejected before even making the request, she couldn't help but feel deflated.

Moreover, wasn't she that person's loyal servant?

How could she reject so coldly without even listening to everything?

"Master Cheol Su-ryeon."

"I have already received punishment from that person to guard this place and cleanse my karma."

“Cleanse your karma?”

“Although all martial artists accumulate much karma, I killed numerous innocent women and children to save my blind eyes and this womb.”

“.....”

At Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon’s words, spoken calmly as if confessing, Jin Ye-rin was momentarily at a loss for words.

Although she had heard old stories from her father, she didn’t properly know the specific reasons why she was called a great villain.

However, unexpectedly, the karma she bore was incomparably stronger than ordinary people.

Seeing her surprised look, Cheol Su-ryeon spoke in a bitter voice.

“I was accumulating merit to cleanse my karma here, and I swore to that person on my life. That no matter what happened, I would not leave this place.”

“Ah...”

A sigh escaped Jin Ye-rin’s lips.

She had thought this was an opportunity to gain not only the forbidden technique but also the best ally.

But that expectation was crumbling so hopelessly.

Then Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon said to her, who couldn’t hide her disappointment.

“However, the reason that person left me here was not just to cleanse my karma.”

“What do you mean?”

“Please follow me.”

Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon stood up and guided her towards the thatched house.

As they entered the thatched house,

‘!?’

Mok Gyeong-un was there alone.

At this, Cheol Su-ryeon looked at the broken silver wood bars with wary eyes.

Could it be that the vengeful spirit couldn’t endure in the end and was annihilated?

If that was the case, she might have to fight this man again.

But then,

“Do you know about the forbidden technique?”

Mok Gyeong-un wasn’t angry at all.

Rather, he was extremely calm.

Puzzled by this, Cheol Su-ryeon asked, hoping it might be the case.

“...Where did that vengeful spirit go?”

“That’s none of your business, old monster.”

“You!”

For a moment her voice almost rose, but Cheol Su-ryeon soon calmed her anger.

There was no point in fighting this guy again; she would only be at a disadvantage.

From the moment she took the vow not to kill, those with equal or greater power than her became enemies she couldn’t face.

-Did you really defeat that old monster?

Cheong-ryeong’s voice reached Mok Gyeong-un’s ears.

Cheong-ryeong, whose spirit body had been damaged to the brink of annihilation while trapped in the silver wood, had voluntarily entered the wooden puppet to recover her spirit energy.

Cheong-ryeong couldn’t hide her surprise seeing Wicked Granny somewhat overwhelmed in aura.

To think she could do this even to a great villain of the old martial arts world, she wondered where the limit of this Mortal fellow was.

Meanwhile, Jin Ye-rin, who was behind them, sighed and said.

“Young Master Mok. I don’t know what happened, but if the misunderstanding is cleared up, please stop now.”

At her words, Mok Gyeong-un lightly shrugged his shoulders.

Then Cheol Su-ryeon glared at Mok Gyeong-un with a displeased expression, then brought a wooden box that had been in the corner of the thatched house and placed it on the table.

At this, Jin Ye-rin asked in a puzzled voice.

“What is this?”

“It’s the arrangement that person left behind.”

“That person left it?”

“Yes. Please open it yourself.”

As Cheol Su-ryeon urged, holding out her hand, Jin Ye-rin hesitated for a moment before opening the lid of the wooden box with a tense expression.

-Click!

When she opened it, there was an old wooden slip and a book inside.

Jin Ye-rin’s eyes shook as she saw the writing on the cover of the book.

天遁 星明劍法

[Heavenly Concealed Luminous Star Sword Art]

## Chapter 448 – Arrangement (1)

[Heavenly Concealed Luminous Star Sword Art]

Jin Ye-rin's eyes widened as she saw the characters written on the cover of the book, one of the two items revealed when the wooden box's lid opened.

The Luminous Star Sword Art could be considered the exclusive martial art of her family, the Jin clan.

Such Luminous Star Sword Arts existed in various forms, and it was said that the Divine Path Luminous Star Sword Art, known to possess the most perfect sword path and attainable only by reaching the highest realm, was abruptly cut off when the lord of Mushang Fortress, her grandfather, passed away.

But what on earth was this?

‘Heavenly Concealed Luminous Star Sword Art?’

This was a name she had never heard of, even from her father, the Minor Fortress Lord Jin Yeong-in.

Could it be a new Luminous Star Sword Art that he had created?

As she stood there, unable to easily reach out and touch it, Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon spoke with a gentle smile, apparently relieved after a long wait.

“This is what that person left for you.”

“For me? But that person has already...”

“Yes, that person is no longer here. However, he said long ago that when he had cleansed all his karma, his blood descendants would visit this place.”

“...He foresaw that I would come here?”

“Yes, he said that in his later years, he had awakened to the Taoist path and thus became able to read some of the heavenly secrets. he foresaw that great calamities might befall the Central Plains someday, but lamented that he could not intervene as it was a matter of the distant future.”

“So he arranged this?”

Cheol Su-ryeon nodded in response to her question.

“That’s right. This...”

“Arrangement...”

“!?”

Before she could finish her sentence, Jin Ye-rin cut her off.

Then, with a voice tinged with slight disappointment, she spoke.

“...is what you said, but why did he just leave the day of the great calamity alone?”

“The day of the great calamity...”

“On that day, Mushang Fortress and the Blood Sect... Everything crumbled, and his descendants lost their lives miserably. Now you speak of arrangement...”

“Young miss.”

“No. Please listen to me first.”

“...”

Her voice, which had been extremely calm, was gradually rising.

As Cheol Su-ryeon closed her mouth, she continued her words.

“Everyone died on the day of the great calamity, and at best, I’m the only surviving blood relative. What exactly did he intend to protect by leaving this arrangement? If he could read the heavenly secrets, shouldn’t he have at least prevented the destruction of Mushang Fortress and our clan, even if not the worst calamity?”

“...”

-Pak!

She roughly grabbed the secret manual of the Heavenly Concealed Luminous Star Sword Art and shook it, speaking with reddened eyes.

“This can never be called an arrangement. After losing everything, passing on something like this now – how is it any different from urging revenge? This isn’t an arrangement, it’s...”

“The day of the great calamity... Those who came from outside spoke of that day. They said a calamity struck where all sorts of monstrous beings ran wild, causing numerous sects and martial artists to lose their lives.”

This time, Cheol Su-ryeon interrupted her words.

Then, with a deep sigh, she continued.

“Haa. It was truly heartbreaking. While His blood relatives were losing their lives outside, the reality that we knew nothing inside here was so frustrating.”

“That’s...”

“I don’t misunderstand your feelings. You said you lost your blood relatives and survived alone, so how could anyone put that pain into words?”

“...”

“I too am sincerely grieved beyond measure. But on the other hand, it’s like this. How much more should he have done for his descendants to be satisfied?”

“...What?”

“He already left his blood relatives the most powerful martial organization in the murim, passed down the highest martial arts of the era, and even bequeathed outstanding talents as an inheritance.”

“That’s...”

“Yet despite this, did his blood relatives want Him to violate the natural order, remain in the world forever, protect his descendants, watch over them until they grew old and died, and care for them like children?”

“...”

For a moment, she was at a loss for words.

She had spoken out of disappointment upon receiving something said to be His arrangement after losing everything due to the day of the great calamity.

However, when Cheol Su-ryeon coldly pointed out the reality, she could not give any answer.

“He has already watched countless times as his old friends and acquaintances all passed away, and even their children grew old, fell ill, and died. Do you think it would be easy to watch his own children and descendants die like that?”

“...”

“Despite this, isn’t it rather a cruel wish towards him, who could be called your ancestor, to expect hHim to solve everything that will happen in the future?”

‘Ah...’

At this piercing rebuke, as sharp as a needle killing with an inch of steel, Jin Ye-rin immediately became dejected.

Deep down, she felt too ashamed.

She had spoken out of momentary disappointment, but she too believed that Cheol Su-ryeon’s words were right.

That person, their ancestor, had already left behind everything he could give and departed.

The day of the great calamity was something that no one could have done anything about from the beginning, so everyone was inevitably caught up in an unavoidable disaster.

Jin Ye-rin held back the tears that were about to fall and opened her mouth.

“...I apologize. It seems I’ve spoken too childishly. Cheol Su-ryeon, your words are correct. he has already left us many things. Nevertheless, faced with the reality of being the only one left among the clan, my heart weakened unnecessarily, and I seem to have committed a discourtesy. Please...”

-Suk!

As Jin Ye-rin was about to bow her head in apology, bringing her hands together in a martial salute, Cheol Su-ryeon stopped her and said.

“No. It’s natural to want to lean on something or vent your frustrations when you’ve lost your entire clan and barely managed to hold on alone.”

-Suk!

Cheol Su-ryeon embraced her and said.

“There’s no need to forcibly hide your pain. If the path you’ve endured alone has been arduous, it’s okay to cry for a moment.”

At these warm words, tears that Jin Ye-rin had been holding back finally flowed from her eyes.

Although she had always maintained a cold demeanor, earning her the nickname “Ice Flower” even among the Imperial Embroidered Guards, she had endured the most difficult days alone.

Revenge against the beings who caused the day of the great calamity and destroyed her clan.

And a sense of mission to revive her clan once again.

Bearing all these burdens, she had considered it a luxury to shed tears or show weakness until now, but at this moment, she couldn’t help but be overwhelmed with emotion at Cheol Su-ryeon’s warm comfort.

However, these tears didn't last long.

That was because,

“There's no time to keep crying.”

It was due to Mok Gyeong-un.

Cheol Su-ryeon, who had been consoling Jin Ye-rin, glared at him with displeasure, but Mok Gyeong-un didn't care at all.

“There are still enemies outside.”

At these words, Jin Ye-rin, who had been crying, wiped her tears with her sleeve and said, her face slightly flushed with embarrassment.

“Haa... That's right. I almost forgot about that.”

“Young miss...”

“It's alright. Young Master Mok is right. We don't have time for this right now.”

She quickly tucked the secret manual of the Heavenly Concealed Luminous Star Sword Art into her bosom.

Then, pointing to the rolled-up wooden slips in the wooden box, she asked.

“What is this?”

Cheol Su-ryeon showed a puzzled look at her question.

“That... Hmm.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Actually, I don’t know about this either.”

“What do you mean, you don’t know?”

“He put it in saying that the one who was meant to have it would naturally come to possess it, but he didn’t mention specifically what it was.”

“The one who was meant to have it would come to possess it?”

What could it be for Him to leave such an ambiguous message?

Wondering, she picked up the wooden slips and unrolled them.

To be precise, since they were made of bamboo, it would be more correct to call them bamboo slips.

The bamboo slips unexpectedly contained little content, with only six pieces strung together and rolled up, on which thirty Chinese characters were listed haphazardly.

At a glance, it was completely incomprehensible what they were saying.

Seeing this, she frowned.

‘What on earth is this?’

Meanwhile, Mok Gyeong-un, who was observing from a slight distance behind, caught a glimmer in his eye.

‘That is?’

Mok Gyeong-un recognized at once what the thirty characters written on the bamboo slips were.

It was undoubtedly the formula for the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques.

However, while the arrangement and positioning of the written formulas might seem disorganized to those who didn’t know, it felt strangely regular.

Moreover, looking at it, there seemed to be something engraved on the side of the bamboo slips, which he wanted to see once.

As if sensing this gaze, Jin Ye-rin asked.

“Young Master, you seem to have a look as if you’ve seen this before.”

“...”

“Do you know what this is?”

Jin Ye-rin held out the bamboo slips to Mok Gyeong-un.

“Young miss! How can you show that to an outsider...”

Cheol Su-ryeon hastily tried to stop her.

However,

“No. Young Master Mok is also a disciple of the Elder, so strictly speaking, he’s not an outsider. And didn’t you say, Cheol Su-ryeon?”

“Ah...”

[He put it in saying that the one who was meant to have it would naturally come to possess it, but he didn’t mention specifically what it was.]

Those were her words.

At this, Cheol Su-ryeon lowered her hand that had tried to stop her.

Then Jin Ye-rin held out the bamboo slips to Mok Gyeong-un again and asked.

“Do you know what this is?”

-Tak!

At her question, Mok Gyeong-un took the bamboo slips and, looking at Cheol Su-ryeon instead of Jin Ye-rin, said.

“If you pass on the forbidden technique of merging souls, I’ll tell you what this is.”

“Huh? What did you say?”

Cheol Su-ryeon was dumbfounded at those words.

Is this guy really the one who received teachings from that old man Moon Evil Sword?

It had been a long time since she'd encountered someone who wouldn't back down and tried to gain something from her, not since the young days of Him.

But why are this guy and those from outside so hung up on that forbidden technique of merging souls?

As she was wondering, Jin Ye-rin spoke.

“Cheol Su-ryeon.”

“Yes.”

“I too came here to prevent that forbidden technique from falling into the hands of the group behind the great calamity. If it's alright with you, could you teach it to Young Master Mok here?”

“...”

Cheol Su-ryeon stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un.

Then she nodded.

She didn't particularly want to teach it, but it was because of the request from Jin Ye-rin, who was that person's blood relative.

“I'll teach you, so you tell the young miss what that is.”

“This is the formula for the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques.”

“What?”

At those words, Jin Ye-rin's eyes, which had no particular expectation for the bamboo slips, widened.

She had heard about it, not from her father, the Minor Fortress Lord Jin Yeong-in, but from floating rumors.

“Is this the supreme secret manual?”

At that moment, Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon, who was standing beside her, asked in a tone of incomprehension.

“Supreme secret manual?”

“Yes. I don’t know why it was called that, but I heard that at one time, countless people fought and shed great blood to possess this secret manual called the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques.”

At these words, Cheol Su-ryeon let out a strange sigh.

“Huh...”

“Why do you react like that?”

“So it was called that.”

“Did you know about it?”

Cheol Su-ryeon nodded at Jin Ye-rin’s question.

“I didn’t know that what was in here was what he had mentioned.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“As far as I know, before he left, he spent a long time pondering and left His lifetime of enlightenment melted into the hidden underground secret storage of Mushang Fortress.”

“In the underground secret storage of Mushang Fortress?”

“Yes.”

“But how did it end up here?”

“Rather than how, it seems that he foresaw that this essence of His enlightenment would eventually fall into the hands of others, not His descendants. So, perhaps out of precaution, he put it here as well.”

“Ah...”

At Cheol Su-ryeon’s words, Jin Ye-rin’s expression became strange.

That was because it seemed that he had left many things not only for this arrangement but also for future generations.

Looking at it this way, despite these various arrangements of His, Mushang Fortress ultimately failed to prevent its annihilation.

In the end, even if one can read the heavenly secrets, is an approaching calamity something that cannot be prevented from the beginning?

Her mind couldn’t help but become complicated.

While they were conversing like this, Mok Gyeong-un seemed interested in something else and was examining the patterns engraved on the side of the bamboo slips.

At first glance, they looked like mere patterns, but they were signifying something.

Flowing water, burning fire, this is... earth?

As he examined this, Mok Gyeong-un could be certain of what the five engraved patterns were.

This was the Five Elements.

Fire, Water, Wood, Earth, Metal.

Although he didn't know why these were engraved on the side, they seemed to be related to the somewhat regular arrangement of the formula for the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques.

Chapter 449 – Arrangement (2)

The pattern engraved on the thin side of the bamboo slips.

It appeared to represent the Five Elements: Fire, Water, Wood, Earth, and Metal.

Although it was unclear why this was engraved on the side, it seemed to be related to the somewhat regular arrangement of the formula for the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques.

‘Regular arrangement and the Five Elements...’

This was clearly related.

The Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques condensed enlightenment that diverged from the norm into thirty characters, so one had to diversify their perspective to realize new formulas.

However, no matter how intently one stared at this, despite its seemingly regular arrangement, no clues about any formula could be found.

‘It doesn’t combine.’

From the start, this arrangement itself didn’t fit.

It was as if the formula was deliberately tangled to make one conscious of it and interfere.

‘Why?’

It’s strange to do it this way when the formula is tangled.

Intentionally made, but the arrangement doesn’t fit.

Why on earth was it made like this?

As he was pondering deeply, Jin Ye-rin called out to him.

“Young Master Mok?”

“...What is it?”

“Come to think of it, how do you know about this, Young Master Mok?”

“This?”

“The Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques, I mean.”

“Ah...”

“Even if Young Master Mok had heard rumors, you couldn’t know whether this is the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques or not without directly seeing its contents.”

At these words, Cheol Su-ryeon also agreed and chimed in.

“That’s right. Where on earth did you see the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques? To know the formula of just thirty characters, unless you’ve memorized it from the beginning...”

“What kind of answer do you want?”

“What?”

“It happened to fall into my hands while floating around here and there. But are you asking this because you want to dispute ownership now?”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Cheol Su-ryeon clicked her tongue as if exasperated and raised her voice.

“Huh? Ownership? You’re quite a ridiculous fellow. I don’t know how you obtained it, but that formula you came to know is what he condensed His enlightenment into and left for His descendants. Do you know what that means? The true owner of the formula you’ve learned is naturally only Young Miss Jin Ye-rin, the last blood relative of the Jin family.”

“How absurd.”

“Absurd? You...”

“The very person you claim is the owner just found out about it, yet you’re interrogating me about how I know the formula...”

“Enough!”

At that moment, Jin Ye-rin intervened, cutting off Mok Gyeong-un’s words.

Then, letting out a deep sigh, she said.

“This isn’t an interrogation, and as Young Master said, I have no intention of disputing ownership over this now. I was just curious about how far what he left in Mushang Fortress’s hidden underground secret storage had flowed, so I asked.”

This was what she really wanted to ask.

As it was the supreme secret manual that condensed the enlightenment of her ancestor, not just anyone else, she thought there must be some background to how Mok Gyeong-un came to know this formula.

So she just wanted to know how it had come into Mok Gyeong-un’s hands.

“It’s from Mok Gan, also known as the Secret Society’s leader.”

‘!?’

At Mok Gyeong-un’s sudden words, her expression immediately hardened.

Having shared information between them, she knew that behind the day of the great calamity was an organization called the Secret Society and a leader known as Mok Gan.

“The, the Secret Society’s leader, what on earth...”

“You said you were curious about how far it had gone, so I told you. It’s a fact I learned from fighting with Mok Gan’s avatar recently, so it’s certain.”

“Mok Gan’s avatar? What does that mean?”

“He is...”

-Tuk tuk!

Mok Gyeong-un tapped his forehead with his finger as he continued speaking.

“A being with a third eye on his forehead... In other words, he’s become one with an Imaemangyang. It’s fair to say he is essentially the Imaemangyang itself.”

“Imaemangyang...”

“He can implant his mind and will into other bodies and use them as avatars. It’s good to know this. His avatars are not just one. There are at least several. And because each avatar shares his will, you can consider them to be almost equal to his main body.”

Mok Gyeong-un shared the information he knew, as he had intended to share it anyway.

At these words from Mok Gyeong-un, Jin Ye-rin clicked her tongue and asked.

“What did you do with that avatar? Did you let it escape?”

“I killed it.”

“Ah!”

Jin Ye-rin couldn’t hide her surprise at Mok Gyeong-un’s answer.

She had been tracing the remnants of the one who destroyed her clan and caused the day of the great calamity, and had just barely approached an important clue, but Mok Gyeong-un had already directly encountered him and even fought.

Surprised by this, she soon calmed herself and continued speaking.

“...You always surprise me.”

“It’s not that surprising since I didn’t kill the main body.”

“Still, even indirectly, the fact that you approached a being that shares consciousness is important.”

She, who had been clicking her tongue, soon returned to the main point.

“But when I asked how far the secret manual he left behind had been passed on, you mentioned that person, the leader of the Secret Society. Does that mean he possesses the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques?”

“Yes.”

-Kkwak!

At Mok Gyeong-un’s answer, Jin Ye-rin bit her lip hard.

Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon’s expression also twisted terribly.

‘How did this happen...’

That was because for Cheol Su-ryeon, it was the pinnacle of learning left by Him, and for Jin Ye-rin, it was an arrangement left by her ancestor.

And now, this important thing had fallen into the hands of none other than the mastermind behind the day of the great calamity.

This fact was enough to enrage them.

“...Young Master Mok. Do you perhaps know how it came into the hands of the Secret Society’s leader?”

“I do know.”

Mok Gyeong-un had heard about the origins of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques through Cheong-ryeong, who knew the origins of the Heaven-Earth Moon Society.

He just didn’t know that the organization said to have been destroyed was Mushang Fortress.

It was truly coincidental beyond measure.

That’s how connections are linked in such ways.

Due to the secret manual of the destroyed Mushang Fortress, numerous conflicts arose in the martial arts world, and as a result, organizations like the Heaven-Earth Moon Society and then the Heaven and Earth Society were born.

And right before his eyes was the last legitimate descendant of that Mushang Fortress.

It felt like numerous branching paths were finally converging into one at the end.

“How... How did you come to possess that person’s enlightenment?”

Jin Ye-rin asked, struggling to suppress her anger.

This was very important to her.

In response, Mok Gyeong-un was about to answer, but then he turned his head towards Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon instead of Jin Ye-rin and said.

“The forbidden technique comes first.”

“What!”

Cheol Su-ryeon was dumbfounded at Mok Gyeong-un’s words.

She had already agreed to teach it, so why was this guy so urgently insisting on this?

Even Jin Ye-rin, who was suppressing her anger, couldn’t help but express her irritation as Mok Gyeong-un prioritized his own goal in this situation.

“Young Master Mok. Cheol Su-ryeon already said she would teach it, so why are you...”

“There are enemies outside. And my subordinates are holding them back.”

“I know. I don’t intend to stay here for long...”

“Variables can occur at any time. So the forbidden technique comes first.”

Faced with Mok Gyeong-un’s continued firm attitude, Cheol Su-ryeon finally couldn’t contain her anger and shouted.

“You have no sense of moderation...”

“Cheol Su-ryeon.”

“Young miss. This won’t do. Whether this person is an outsider or received teachings from Moon Evil Sword isn’t important. Without mutual respect, prioritizing only oneself...”

“Cheol Su-ryeon... I’m asking you.”

“...Haa.”

Cheol Su-ryeon let out a sigh at Jin Ye-rin’s earnest request.

She felt that Jin Ye-rin had already given up.

Although angry, she understood Jin Ye-rin’s feelings, so Cheol Su-ryeon roughly flipped through an old book shelved in the thatched house’s study.

-Pak!

“If it weren’t for the young miss, I would never have passed this on to you.”

“...”

Mok Gyeong-un silently took the book and quickly flipped through it, skimming the contents.

Watching him, Jin Ye-rin inwardly clicked her tongue.

Since they had a common enemy, she ultimately yielded, realizing it was meaningless to quarrel and get red-faced over this, but on the other hand, she was puzzled.

While the Secret Society seemed to be after the forbidden technique to plot something behind the scenes, why was Mok Gyeong-un so intent on obtaining this forbidden technique?

-Suk!

As she was thinking this, Mok Gyeong-un tucked the book on the forbidden technique into his bosom and opened his mouth.

“I’ll explain briefly since we’re in a hurry. When Mushang Fortress was destroyed on the day of the great calamity, coincidentally, the keeper of the secret storage hidden underground survived.”

“The secret storage keeper?”

“Yes. His name was Yang Bi-ryu. They say he was lucky to survive because he was underground. Yang Bi-ryu, who survived like that, tried for a long time to find a descendant of Mushang Fortress to pass on the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques. However, he eventually died without finding a descendant of Mushang Fortress.”

“Haa. So that’s how the secret manual of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques came out into the world?”

“That’s the result, yes. After Yang Bi-ryu died, his three adopted sons apparently fought over it for quite a long time. It even became a power struggle at some point.”

“Ah...”

That was the war that broke out over what the world called the supreme secret manual.

Mok Gyeong-un briefly explained how in this process, the three clans made a pact to stop the war, determine the owner of the secret manual, and create a new organization.

And in that story, he quickly revealed how the Heaven-Earth Moon Society was formed, and then due to the schemes and madness of the Secret Society's leader, Mok Gan, who took over the body of the Heaven Vein clan's leader, the Moon Vein clan was destroyed, and the current Heaven and Earth Society was formed.

Of course, he omitted the detailed anecdotes related to Cheong-ryeong.

Jin Ye-rin, who heard all of this, couldn't help but feel troubled.

‘How did it come to this?’

The secret manual containing His enlightenment didn't end up in the hands of her father Jin Yeong-in, the surviving clan's descendant, but instead floated around in the war between the descendants of the surviving secret storage keeper Yang Bi-ryu, and finally ended up in the hands of Mok Gan, who destroyed Mushang Fortress.

What was interesting in this process was that the Heaven and Earth Society, in a sense, was no different from an organization made up of descendants of Mushang Fortress.

Cheol Su-ryeon seemed to have the same thought,

“I suppose it's fair to say that this Heaven and Earth Society also ultimately derived from Mushang Fortress.”

“...That's right. But it's too humiliating that His enlightenment ended up in the hands of the mastermind who destroyed Mushang Fortress and drove our clan to death.”

-Kkwak! Pareureu!

Jin Ye-rin clenched her fist so tightly that her nails dug into her flesh.

She sincerely wanted to catch that mastermind, Mok Gan, tear his entire body apart, burn every piece of his flesh, and kill him.

To her in this state, Mok Gyeong-un suddenly asked.

“But I don’t understand why this was divided into two.”

“What?”

“Didn’t you say earlier? That ancestor you call ‘That person’ left the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques in a hidden secret storage for his descendants. But if he guessed it might not end up in the hands of his descendants, there was no reason to leave the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques there in the first place.”

“Ah...”

At Mok Gyeong-un’s words, Jin Ye-rin also became puzzled.

Thinking about it, if he was going to leave the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques here, there was no reason to leave it in Mushang Fortress’s underground secret storage.

Also, conversely, why didn’t he put the secret manual of the Heavenly Concealed Luminous Star Sword Art there?

Cheol Su-ryeon said this secret manual was an important arrangement for the descendant who would find this place.

Then shouldn’t this have been put in the underground secret storage as well?

‘It’s strange.’

There were parts that didn't quite add up.

He might have left only that in the underground secret storage out of concern for his descendants, just in case, but in the end, it fell into the hands of Mok Gan, the leader of the Secret Society who destroyed Mushang Fortress.

If he could even read the heavenly secrets, couldn't he have predicted this as well?

To deliberately leave a secret manual that would fall into someone else's hands...

‘Ah?’

As she was pondering, she suddenly stared intently at Mok Gyeong-un, who was holding the bamboo slips with the formula of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques written on them.

Come to think of it, Mok Gyeong-un also said he obtained the formula of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques by chance.

‘Wait... Could it be...’

-Kwaaaang!

At that moment, a tremendous roar came from outside, shaking the entire thatched house.

-Kururururu!

Perhaps due to the aftershock, not just a small part, but about one-third of the pillar at the center of the thatched house cracked and fissured.

Seeing this, they instinctively realized that something had gone wrong with the formation.

At this, Cheol Su-ryeon shouted at Mok Gyeong-un.

“Give those bamboo slips to the young miss.”

She thought Jin Ye-rin should take them as this was also His arrangement.

Mok Gyeong-un, who already knew the formula and had memorized the patterns engraved on the side and the regularity of the arrangement, was about to roll them up again and hand them over without particular greed.

But at the moment he was rolling up the bamboo slips.

-Chwareuk!

At that instant, as the bamboo slips were being rolled up, space distorted and Mok Gyeong-un's body was sucked into it.

-Tak!

Along with that, the rolled-up bamboo slips fell to the floor.

‘!?’

Jin Ye-rin and Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon couldn't hide their bewilderment at the sudden turn of events.

What on earth had just happened?

Hurriedly, Jin Ye-rin tried to suck in the bamboo slips with her Void Grasping technique and unroll them again.

But right at that moment.

-Kwang!

The wall of the thatched house right in front of them was torn away.

Along with that, the outside was revealed, and,

‘!!!!!!’

There stood a middle-aged man with a third eye on his forehead, his hands behind his back.

\*\*\*

Mok Gyeong-un looked around.

In the blink of an eye, Jin Ye-rin and Cheol Su-ryeon who had been nearby disappeared, and suddenly everything around him changed.

He had clearly been inside a thatched house, but looking around, this place seemed to be some mountain peak.

So Mok Gyeong-un approached the cliff at the edge of the mountain peak to figure out where this place was, but,

‘This... What on earth?’

Mok Gyeong-un doubted his eyes.

That was because while the sky was clearly clear and blue, the ground below the peak was not visible.

All that could be seen was a black floor, which looked like an endless abyss.

What on earth is this place?

Thinking it might be an illusion, he walked along the edge of the peak looking down, but even after a full circle, he couldn't see the bottom.

He was just wondering about this when,

-Looking down won't show you a way down.

Mok Gyeong-un frowned at the voice coming from behind.

He was clearly the only one on top of the mountain peak.

Moreover, he hadn't sensed any presence from behind, so why did he hear a voice?

After a moment's consideration, Mok Gyeong-un grasped his sword hilt and naturally turned his head.

‘!?’

There was a rock about waist-high, and sitting on top of it was someone of unknown identity wearing a demon mask.

Chapter 450 – Arrangement (3)

Mortal.

Cheong-ryeong called out in a somewhat worried voice.

The composure disappeared from Mok Gyeong-un's face.

-Is he strong?

To this question, Mok Gyeong-un stared intently at the masked figure and replied using sound transmission.

-I can't sense anything.

-What?

-Exactly as I said. That masked man... Even though I'm looking at him with my own eyes, it feels like he doesn't exist.

‘!!!!’

Cheong-ryeong couldn't hide her internal surprise at Mok Gyeong-un's words.

The current Mortal was arguably at the highest level in the entire current martial arts world.

Even Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon, who was one of the strongest in the old martial arts world and called a great villain, had acknowledged him.

Yet this Mok Gyeong-un couldn't sense anything at this distance?

Just who on earth is that person?

As she was wondering,

-Who are you talking to using sound transmission?

‘!?’

Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes narrowed at those words from the demon-masked figure.

Does this person know about sound transmission?

Otherwise, there’s no way he could recognize sound transmission just from a slight throat movement.

But Mok Gyeong-un was genuinely surprised by the demon-masked figure’s next words.

-The faint spirit energy I sense from your bosom... Are you talking to that being?

“What?”

-Why are you so surprised? The basics of sound transmission involve imbuing energy into the air vibrations caused by sound, so if one can read those waves well, there’s nothing that can’t be understood.

He not only knew whether sound transmission was being used or not, but he heard what was said?

Mok Gyeong-un’s gaze sharpened with wariness.

Whoever this demon-masked man was, he seemed to have many strange abilities, not to mention being undetectable through energy sensing.

-Suk!

Not knowing if he was friend or foe, preparation was necessary.

Mok Gyeong-un tried to raise a sharp sword energy through his sword hilt.

Then the demon-masked man chuckled and said,

-Perhaps because it originates from Demon, it's certainly sensitive and aggressive. Innate nature...

-Seureuk!

It was before his words could finish.

Mok Gyeong-un swung his sword hilt towards the demon mask.

A large formless sword appeared in the air, attempting to slice the demon-masked man sitting on the rock in half.

-Chwaaaaaak!

-Hoo. Better than expected.

-Suk!

The demon-masked man reached out his hand towards the giant formless sword flying at him.

Then the formless sword made of true energy that was cutting through the air suddenly oxidized like smoke and disappeared.

-Passssssss!

‘!?’

Mok Gyeong-un’s pupils shook at this sight.

Did he just forcibly disperse the true energy of the formless sword called the Sword Extreme?

Mok Gyeong-un couldn’t help but be bewildered by this completely unexpected technique.

This was the first time he’d seen someone break through a formless sword, which only those who have reached the Life and Death Realm could use, in such a way.

At that moment, Cheong-ryeong shouted.

-Mortal! Behind you!

‘Behind?’

In Mok Gyeong-un’s eyes, the demon-masked man was still sitting on the rock.

But why did she shout about behind when he couldn’t sense anything?

The doubt was momentary, and Mok Gyeong-un moved instinctively.

-Seureuk!

He deployed the Clear and Manifest Water Crossing Steps, moving his body at ultra-high speed, but no sooner had he taken two steps,

-Chwak! Kwang!

A sharp sound of air being cut and a thunderous noise rang out from behind.

As he turned his head while taking his third step, he saw the demon-masked man holding something like a tree branch, and noticed a sword mark where he had swung.

‘A tree branch?’

Did he just produce such power with a tree branch?

Of course, even Mok Gyeong-un himself could cut someone by imbuing sword energy into a tree branch.

But that sword mark had an unreasonably powerful force.

If he hadn’t used his ultra-high-speed movement technique, his body would have been cut in half.

-Mortal, above!

At Cheong-ryeong’s shout, Mok Gyeong-un twisted his body and leaned back.

Then, the demon-masked man’s fist flew over his leaned-back head, and Mok Gyeong-un tried to use the Scripture of Transferring True Qi technique to create a wave and,

-Paaaang!

Attempted to repel him in reverse.

However,

-Paaaang!

The moment he activated the Scripture of Transferring True Qi, a wave of ripples also erupted from the demon-masked man's fist, causing Mok Gyeong-un's body to be driven into the ground.

-Kwaaaang!

The technique of the Scripture of Transferring True Qi is to reverse and send back not only the received force but also one's own power.

But when he was hit with the Scripture of Transferring True Qi while deploying it himself, the power was so strong that his body was driven into the ground, causing it to cave in more than five jang deep.

The form of the demon-masked man who had slammed Mok Gyeong-un disappeared as if scattering.

-Seureureuruk!

Even the form that had swung the tree branch was the same.

As the two forms that had seemed like (avatars) disappeared, the demon-masked man sitting on the rock muttered.

-This is really beyond expectations.

As he said this, Mok Gyeong-un could be seen walking out of the sunken pit, wiping blood from the corner of his mouth.

The demon-masked man clapped his hands as he watched Mok Gyeong-un.

-Clap clap clap!

-This is excellent. I predicted you might have learned the Scripture of Transferring True Qi technique because you possess Plundering-killing Sword, but to disperse that overlapped power...

The demon-masked man was genuinely impressed with Mok Gyeong-un.

With that technique just now, even a master who had reached the Life and Death Realm should have been caught off guard and unable to respond properly, resulting in severe injuries.

Yet in that instant, he dispersed more than eighty percent of the energy.

He truly possessed monstrous battle instincts.

-Ssssssss!

As Mok Gyeong-un wiped away the blood, black energy began to flow from his entire body.

From the black energy rising like a heat haze, an extremely ferocious and ominous aura was surging.

Seeing this, the eyes faintly visible inside the demon mask narrowed.

-Demon. So that's your essence.

“You, what's your identity?”

-Identity? Well, compared to you, I'm just an ordinary human.

"I am... just myself."

-Kwang!

No sooner had those words ended than Mok Gyeong-un stomped on the ground with true force.

The moment he stomped, the ground began to shake and split as if hit by an earthquake.

That crack and shockwave instantly reached the demon-masked man sitting on the rock.

-Pat!

Along with this, Mok Gyeong-un's form moved.

He used one of the Eight Thought-Shattering Techniques, the Art of Suppression, to control the opponent's movement even if he couldn't completely subdue them, aiming to exploit an opening.

But then an astonishing sight occurred.

-Dak!

The demon-masked man suddenly flicked his finger.

-Paaaang!

Then, a shockwave spread out from him, completely neutralizing the wave of Art of Suppression.

Not only did he block it so easily,

-Seureuk! Seureuk! Seureuk!

Three forms sprang out from the seated demon-masked man, instantly closing the distance to Mok Gyeong-un and launching a combined attack.

At that moment,

-Chwak!

Mok Gyeong-un's form blurred and a black line appeared in the air.

He concentrated his power to pass through these avatar-like beings in one go, aiming to cut down the demon-masked man in a single stroke.

-Heumchit!

Against this strike with concentrated power emanating black energy,

-This might be a bit difficult as is.

-Chang!

The demon-masked man, who had never moved from sitting on the rock until now, finally drew his sword.

-Chaeaaaaaang!

As Mok Gyeong-un's demonic sword Evil Commandment Sword, imbued with concentrated power, clashed with the demon-masked man's sword, the air rippled as if torn apart, accompanied by an ear-splitting metallic sound.

‘He even blocked this.’

Mok Gyeong-un was genuinely impressed by his opponent's strength.

The sword strike he just unleashed, with concentrated power, had reached an even higher level after his bout with Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon.

Yet this demon-masked man easily blocked this heightened power strike.

Moreover, he had his left foot on the rock and only stepped forward with his right foot, but there was no sign of wavering at all.

He wasn't dispersing the force, yet he seemed utterly at ease.

‘The energy is continuously flowing.’

Only upon clashing swords did Mok Gyeong-un realize.

From this person's sword, an energy like that of the infinite was surging, reminiscent of the Supreme Great Ability of the fallen monk Ja Geum-jeong, as energies from the surroundings were gathering.

Is he producing such power using only the surrounding energy, not his own?

As he was wondering,

-Woong!

At that moment, a resonating sound flowed from the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword at his waist.

That resonating sound was like a strong killing intent.

At this, without time to think, Mok Gyeong-un drew Plundering-killing Sword with his left hand and attempted to cut down the demon-masked man with a concentrated power strike.

-Pat!

The demon-masked man flung his body backward to avoid this.

The sword force of Plundering-killing Sword, gathered with concentrated power, split the ground, cleaving half of the peak.

-Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Mok Gyeong-un's eyes gleamed at the tremendous power of the sword force.

The moment he felt the killing intent flowing from Plundering-killing Sword, he was reminded of that sensation when facing Wicked Granny Cheol Su-ryeon, and swung the sword without hesitation, resulting in power beyond imagination.

-Huh?

Even the demon-masked man seemed not to have expected such power, clicking his tongue with an exclamation.

He instinctively avoided it due to the chilling killing intent flowing from the sword, but its power was truly earth-shattering.

This was a sword force capable of cleaving even a mountain peak.

If he hadn't avoided it, he would have been in quite a predicament.

-Woo woo woong!

Then, a strong resonating sound spread from the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword in Mok Gyeong-un's left hand.

Mok Gyeong-un couldn't hide his puzzlement at the resonating sound.

He was aware that its sword spirit was stronger than Evil Commandment Sword's, but the sword was showing strong hostility towards that demon mask as if it were alive.

Then, as if sensing this hostility from Plundering-killing Sword, the demon-masked man,

-Still full of killing intent, I see. Plundering-killing Sword.

Was he actually addressing the sword?

At those words, the resonating sound from Plundering-killing Sword grew even stronger.

-Woo woo woong!

It was even trembling to the point where he could feel it in the sword handle he was gripping.

Though unclear why, this demon-masked man seemed to have an incredibly strong resonance with swords.

To even affect others' swords to this extent.

‘Nothing else matters.’

This sensation right now was the only way to deal with that man.

So Mok Gyeong-un threw Plundering-killing Sword in his left hand at the demon-masked man like a javelin.

-Paaang!

The demon-masked man reached out his hand towards the flying Plundering-killing Sword.

It seemed he was trying to change its direction with true energy.

Then Mok Gyeong-un moved his sword hilt, using the subtlety of the Sword Control with Energy technique to make the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword soar upwards.

-Pak!

At this, the pupils visible through the gaps of the demon mask naturally rose upwards.

In that gap, Mok Gyeong-un once again concentrated his power into a single point.

-Chwak!

A black line cutting through the air.

-Chaeaaang!

As if to say this level could be easily blocked even though his gaze had momentarily shifted upwards, the demon-masked man lightly blocked it with the iron sword he was holding.

As their swords clashed again, the demon-masked man first thrust the sword hilt in his left hand towards the acupoint on Mok Gyeong-un's left shoulder.

It seemed like he was trying to preemptively stop Mok Gyeong-un from unleashing that sword force overflowing with killing intent again.

Mok Gyeong-un tried to grasp the demon-masked man's sword hilt using the Geumna Tree technique as if snatching it, but the demon-masked man rotated it in a spiral and instead,

-Whirlick!

Wrapped and caught Mok Gyeong-un's left arm.

In that state, as the demon-masked man tried to break that arm,

-Shuuuuk!

At that moment, the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword, which had soared high above the demon mask's head, came flying down with terrifying momentum.

‘I predicted this would happen.’

As if he had already anticipated this, the demon-masked man applied force to where their swords were meeting to push Mok Gyeong-un away and avoid it.

However, it was not an ordinary sword.

-Chwak!

At that instant, the demonic sword Plundering-killing Sword drew a black line in the air.

‘!?’

This was a concentrated power strike unleashed in the state of Sword Control with Energy.

Faced with this unexpected concentrated power strike, the demon-masked man released both the sword he was clashing with and Mok Gyeong-un’s wrist he was holding, trying to avoid it.

-Pak!

However, Mok Gyeong-un firmly grasped him using the Attach technique and the Geumna Tree technique.

Thanks to this, it seemed he couldn’t avoid it, but,

-Chang!

It was at that very moment.

Just as the swords were about to clash, a white line was drawn in the air, and something caused the path of Plundering-killing Sword’s concentrated power strike to curve.

-Puk!

As a result, Plundering-killing Sword’s sword deviated from its trajectory and plunged into an unintended place.

As Mok Gyeong-un was wondering what had happened, he saw a short sword spinning in the air as if it were alive.