

The Tower 251

Chapter 251: Side Story 4

The flower shop owner, Yu Jia, was working late to prepare for her next day's work. In the middle of the night, she received a call from Kim Kang-Chun, so she tried to tidy up the store quickly.

"Unnie!" Ji Eun-Ju called out with a terrified look as she entered the store.

"Eun-Ju! What on earth happened? Why are you being chased?" Yu Jia asked with a confused look.

"I... I don't know, but we need to hide quickly," Ji Eun-Ju replied.

"Yes, that's right, let's hide first," Yu Jia said.

Because everything happened so fast, there was not enough time for Yu Jia to clean up the store properly. Yu Jia, unable to pull down the shop's shutter or clear the fallen flower petals from the floor, hastily turned off the lights, locked the door, and hid beneath the counter.

Her breathing was heavy. Since she could not look out, she could not tell if anyone had come. In fact, she was frustrated about the whole situation.

"But seriously. Would anyone come here for real—" As Yu Jia was in the middle of her question to Eun-Ju, there came a loud noise.

Baaam—!

At the sudden sound of breaking glass, Yu Jia bit her lip and took a deep breath. From the shattered window, a cold wind rushed in, sending a shiver down her spine.

'Darn it... What on earth is going on?'

Yu Jia cursed internally at the unexpected turn of events and looked at Ji Eun-Ju. She seemed like she was about to cry, but she was also trying hard not to make a sound. Thinking of how this gentle and kind girl had been trembling all while trying to run away, Yu Jia's heart ached.

'What could this sweet girl have done wrong...'

Yu Jia thought Ji Eun-Ju was holding up quite well, at least better than expected. Based on how much she knew Ji Eun-Ju as an emotionally sensitive girl, she thought Eun-Ju would have broken down long ago.

"Ji Eun-Ju... Are you there?" the North Korean agent said.

The footsteps were getting closer, and a man's voice could be heard. He had indeed come specifically for her. Yu Jia tightly gripped the knife she had hidden just in case.

'On TV, they usually would give up and turn away at the very last minute...'

Yu Jia prayed and hoped that the man would just turn around and walk away. However, that did not happen.

"Gotcha, were you guys hiding here this whole time?" The North Korean agent appeared in front of them.

Just as Yu Jia had expected, reality was different from the movies. The man violently grabbed Ji Eun-Ju's hair and dragged her toward him.

"Ahh!" Ji Eun-Ju screamed, terrified.

"Let go of her!" Yu Jia shouted and attempted to stab the man's arm with the knife she had.

"How dare you!" The man easily dodged her attack, then threw Ji Eun-Ju at her.

Thud.

"Ah...!" Ji Eun-Ju groaned.

"Ha, you're not giving up even now?" The man looked at Yu Jia, surprised.

Looking at the determination in Yu Jia's eyes, it was clear to the man that she was not an ordinary person. She had the eyes of someone who would have become a formidable warrior if she were to undergo training in North Korea.

"Who the hell are you? Why are you breaking into my shop!" Yu Jia shouted.

As she stood up, she grabbed a container filled with flower pollen from the table and threw it into his face.

"Kechk! Cough! Cough!" The North Korean man frantically covered his eyes and coughed continuously.

There was no hesitation in Yu Jia as she thrust her knife into the man's arm.

"Keughh!" The man groaned in pain and used his free hand to grab her arm.

"You darn bitch...!" the North Korean man shouted with anger.

"Let go of me! You crazy bastard!" Yu Jia shouted.

She resisted and tried to bite his arm, but the man threw her against the counter.

"Ahh! Eun-Ju, run! Run away quickly!" Yu Jia shouted at Ji Eun-Ju.

Ji Eun-Ju quickly looked around, and as Yu Jia had done a moment ago, she found another container of flower pollen. While the man still could not see well, Ji Eun-Ju flung the second container toward the man. Hit for the second time and unable to regain his senses quickly, he was disoriented.

"Unnie! Hurry up!" Ji Eun-Ju grabbed Yu Jia and leaped onto the counter.

"How dare you try to escape!" the man shouted.

Although the man could not see very well, he instinctively grabbed a chair and threw it toward the entrance. Yu Jia got hit on her back and she fell to the ground.

"Unnie!" Ji Eun-Ju shouted, looking at Yu Jia, who was on the floor.

"Just go... Go without me...!" Yu Jia replied.

There were many cuts and bleeding wounds over Yu Jia's entire body because of the glass shards scattered all over the floor. While Ji Eun-Ju was hesitating to leave, the man, whose vision had almost fully recovered, quickly dashed out and grabbed Ji Eun-Ju.

"Hahaha Finally I caught y—" said the man.

Whoosh— Thud!

However, just as he was about to grab Ji Eun-Ju, the man was knocked down by a sudden kick to his side.

"Are you okay?" Cha Yu-Min supported Yu Jia, who had fallen on the floor, while Baek Kang-Woo stood in front of the North Korean agent.

Shin Ha-Neul pulled Ji Eun-Ju to stand behind him.

"Stop playing around. If you really want to die, I can help you with that," the North Korean agent said with a smirk.

The next moment, the man drew a sword from his waist. Baek Kang-Woo also unsheathed his own dagger, and it seemed like he had been prepared for this moment.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The two people clashed. In the darkness, their gazes met, as did their blades, sending sparks rebounding off the edges.

"Not bad. Do South Korean soldiers learn dagger fighting too?" the North Korean agent asked Baek Kang-Woo.

"That's right. This is the strength of the South, you bastard!" Baek Kang-Woo shouted back.

Baek Kang-Woo managed to gradually push the North Korean agent back. His previous injury from getting stabbed by Yu Jia's knife had a significant impact on his ability. However, Baek Kang-Woo's pride was hurt—he had learned dagger fighting from a former member of a special task force, and despite giving his all, he still could not manage to fully subdue an injured opponent.

Thunk!

'Oh no!'

A moment's distraction created room for the opponent to attack him. As Baek Kang-Woo's arm was raised, his body was unguarded and the opponent's blade lunged toward his chest.

Swoosh—!

Thankfully, the North Korean man missed the mark and cut somewhere else. It seemed to have torn something lower down, more like his left liver. The way the North Korean man aimed for his vital organs was evidence that he was not a novice.

Kach!

Cha Yu-Min hurriedly joined the fight. His wooden sword clashed with the North Korean agent's dagger, deflecting it.

"You've managed to survive quite well," the North Korean man said, looking at Cha Yu-Min.

"This time won't be like the last," Cha Yu-Min replied with a determined look.

"Ha! It's your fault that you lost," the North Korean man smirked.

After saying that, the North Korean agent put his hand inside his vest and ran forward. Cha Yu-Min wondered if he was trying to spray something or play a trick on him again. He furrowed his eyebrows and started moving his wooden sword.

"Haha You're tricked again," the North Korean agent laughed at Cha Yu-Min.

After noticing that Cha Yu-Min's attention was focused on his hand, the man abruptly twisted his body and kicked Cha Yu-Min's side with his foot. Cha Yu-Min desperately tried to block the attack with his arm, but he could not prevent the powerful swing from reaching him.

The next moment, the North Korean man thrust his sword, gaining the upper hand in this fight and making it difficult for Cha Yu-Min to retaliate properly. At that moment, Shin Ha-Neul, who had been stealthily observing the situation from behind, threw himself at the man.

"Keugh!"

The North Korean man felt the arms grabbing his waist, so he quickly thrust his dagger toward and into Shin Ha-Neul's spine.

"Aaaah!" Shin Ha-Neul screamed in pain.

"Ha-Neul!"

"Hurry up!" Shin Ha-Neul shouted.

As Cha Yu-Min swung his sword toward the man's head, the man dodged at a strange angle and pushed Shin Ha-Neul away. He then pulled out another knife from his pocket and charged toward Cha Yu-Min.

The man, an unhesitating killing machine, proved impossible to defeat even for three highly skilled individuals who had exceptional athletic abilities. Someone like Baek Kang-Woo, who had learned dagger fighting, would have the highest chance of successfully defeating him; but since he could not utilize his skills often, he was not at his best.

"Keugh!" Cha Yu-Min gasped and fell to the ground.

Eventually, they were all subdued by the man, including Cha Yu-Min. They were now all on the floor.

"Ha... Ha..." Gasping for breath, the North Korean man made a phone call to someone.

- Yes! Hyung.

"We've captured Ji Eun-Ju. So, come over here," the North Korean man said over the phone.

- Are you serious? Ji Eun-Ju was there? No wonder... because we caught this guy and almost killed him thinking Ji Eun-Ju wasn't here with him...

Beep.

The North Korean man hung up the phone as the gang member on the other end went on and on about unimportant stuff. Then, the man stepped on Baek Kang-Woo's knee hard, cracking it.

"Kwaaaaah!" Baek Kang-Woo screamed in pain.

His agonized scream echoed through the silent village, but no one came over. Baek Kang-Woo just could not understand the whole situation. He had contacted the police in advance and given the information on the van, but how could no one have shown up yet?

In the frustration over his disappointing profession, his mind grew hazy. After a while, a black van and a gray sedan entered the village side by side. The gangs tied up all the captives and loaded them into two cars, dragging them to somewhere in the mountain, which was not too far from where they originally were.

When they arrived, there was a small storage container as well as more gang members and other Asian foreigners as well.

Squeak—!

The black van and the gray sedan were parked in front of the storage container.

"Get everyone out of the cars!"

The thugs who were already gathered there approached the cars and dragged the captives out. The hostages, who were originally only Kang Ji-Hoon and Park Hye-Won, had now increased to eight: Shin Ha-Neul, Baek Kang-Woo, Cha Yu-Min, Kim Kang-Chun, Yu Jia, and Ji Eun-Ju.

"Bury everyone except for Ji Eun-Ju and Park Hye-Won," the North Korean agent ordered.

"Yes sir!"

"Ugh! Ugh! Ugh!"

Those with gags in their mouths desperately tried to yell, but it was futile. They trembled as they looked at the holes in the ground, which were rapidly going deeper and deeper. Just as they were gripped in fear, footsteps could be heard beyond the densely packed trees. It was not coming from just one or two individuals.

Swoosh— Swoosh—

From the thicket, a black figure suddenly sprang out.

"Who are you?" The man who sprang out from the thicket took out a small knife from his pocket.

"You bastard!" One of the gang members charged toward the man.

However, the gang member who rushed toward the man had his arm bent and broken in an instant.

Swoosh—! Splash!

As the gang member fell to the ground, blood spurted from his severed neck.

"Shit! Did he seriously just kill a person?"

"What are you! You crazy bastard! Who are you?"

The man stared coldly at them and looked around.

"I'm Park Joo-Hyuk, the leader of a Task Force called Special Warfare Challenger Group (SWCG)." Park Joo-Hyuk introduced himself.

"What? S— what?"

"You're from a Task Force? A Task Force in South Korea?"

"Did the government send him then?"

"What the hell! How did he find out?"

The thugs cursed at the situation. The foreigners at the back sensed that something had gone wrong and tried to escape while no one was paying attention. However, there was nowhere to escape.

"You guys won't be able to run away," Park Joo-Hyuk said, looking at the people gathered there.

The members of the Task Force had already completely surrounded the area. The government's plan was to either kill or seize everyone here, besides the ordinary South Koreans.

"They say there's a commotion all over the world because of these fragments of memory. Besides, if a North Korean agent who had been hiding in South Korea has revealed himself because of this, I guess that says it all," Park Joo-Hyuk muttered.

"Kill him immediately!" the North Korean agent shouted angrily.

As the thugs rushed toward the leader of the Task Force, the North Korean agent approached Ji Eun-Ju.

Thunk.

He forcefully ripped her shirt and discovered the pendant hanging on her neck. Then, he grabbed it off of her.

"No! Stop it! Give it back!" Ji Eun-Ju cried out.

When Ji Eun-Ju clung onto him, refusing to let go, the North Korean man was about to kick her. At that moment, Park Hye-Won, who was next to her, threw herself toward the man.

"Ugh!" Hit by the impact, the North Korean man dropped the pendant.

The pendant, which was framed in glass, shattered as it hit the ground. The purple fragment that was inside the pendant fell to the floor.

"Miss Ji! Here you go!" Park Hye-Won leaped and picked up the fragment.

In that moment, unknown memories rushed into her mind.

- Hello! This is the Tower—

- I am a god...

- Will you teach me magic?

- Master...

She started to have a severe headache.

"What is going on..." Park Hye-Won was confused.

"Miss Park! Are you okay?"

"Oh, yes. But suddenly, strange things are just popping up in my mind..." Park Hye-Won replied.

Ji Eun-Ju looked at her with a surprised look. Then, she noticed the shining fragment of memory. She held Park Hye-Won's hand.

"That's your past life, Miss Park," Ji Eun-Ju explained.

"What? My past life?" Park Hye-Won seemed confused.

"Ugh! These bastards!" the North Korean agent shouted.

He grabbed Ji Eun-Ju's head and threw her aside. He then seized Park Hye-Won's neck and lifted her up, glaring at her with bloodshot eyes.

"Where's the fragment of memory!" the North Korean agent shouted.

"Keugh..." Park Hye-Won groaned.

Her face turned red, and Ji Eun-Ju, who was flung to the ground, shouted at her.

"Miss Park! Try to remember! What you just saw is definitely your past life!" Ji Eun-Ju shouted.

The memories were vivid, as real as the experiences she had just gone through. The face of someone she had missed so much kept flashing in her mind, and it was as if she could reach out and touch him.

'Master...'

- Park Hye-Won, you have an exceptional talent for wind magic.

- Remember well. Magic begins with senses.

- Feel the mana around you. Don't just try to rely on the system.

'Mana... magic... system...'

As she held onto the fragment of memory, her memories became clearer, and her senses became sharper. She started to sense a faint mana within her. The cool breeze lingered around her.

'Ah...'

Yes, this was it. She raised her trembling fingers and gathered mana.

"Air Ball," Park Hye-Won muttered.

Whoosh! Thud!

"Keugh!" The North Korean agent groaned and coughed. "Cough! Cough! Cough!"

A powerful blast hit his face. The North Korean agent, who did not know what was going on, fell backward, bleeding from his nose. Touching his sore cheeks, the North Korean agent glared at Park Hye-Won.

"Did it actually work?" Park Hye-Won, with a bewildered face, looked at the fragment of memory that she was holding onto.

However, it felt like she had been drained of all her strength because of the magic she used.

"Miss Park, be careful!"

Swoosh—!

The North Korean agent, who suddenly rose, whipped his foot at Park Hye-Won's face. She tumbled and rolled on the ground.

"I heard that you were a wizard or something but... you actually possess such an ability?" the North Korean man asked Park Hye-Won.

The next moment, he grabbed the fragment of memory that Park Hye-Won had dropped. Then, the man stood still with a dazed expression. The memories, like scattered puzzle pieces, fell into place, and the memories of his past life vividly swept through his mind.

"No way... This can't be happening..."