

## Chapter 1265

Don't let them live. (5)

As the battlefield erupted once more, Gwak Hwanso was still struggling to find a way out.

‘What should I do?’

Ahead, there was the ship of Maninbang, while behind him, the main force of Maninbang was pushing forward. If he were just an ordinary disciple of Haenam, he would have undoubtedly gone to seize the ship without hesitation. But he was the senior disciple of Haenam. He couldn't ignore the approaching main force of Maninbang.

‘Should I block them?’

In the midst of his indecisiveness about which way to go, someone grabbed his shoulder and pulled him firmly.

«...Baek Cheon Daehyeop?»

«What are you doing!»

«I-I'll help too...»

«We'll hold off the rear. Hurry and get on the ship! There will be enemies on board as well!»

Finally realizing the situation, Gwak Hwanso hastily nodded.

Baek Cheon was right. There was no guarantee that there were no Maninbang's members left on the ship. Then someone had to command Haenam from the ship.

«Lead the disciples and seize all the ships! If everyone boards without leaving anyone behind, just sail out to the sea!»

«W-What about Daesahyeops?»

«Hurry!»

Once again, Baek Cheon firmly grabbed Gwak Hwanso's shoulder.

«If you want to help us, this is not the time to hesitate!»

Without waiting for a response, Baek Cheon pushed Gwak Hwanso. As he stumbled backward, Gwak Hwanso saw the members of Cheonumaeng flying from all directions, filling the space in front of him.

«Where are you crawling to!»

With a loud roar, a sword flew from the air before Jo Geol even landed. Sword energy spread like a crack from the tip of the sword, pouring down towards Maninbang like rain.

Gwak Hwanso involuntarily opened his mouth in shock.

The sword energy pouring out from the sword seemed to cut through the blazing sunlight of the Southern Sea.

«Gah!»

«This... this bastard!»

Changgwi's members, who had been attacking with great courage, hesitated and retreated in the face of that radiant sword energy.

Behind Jo Geol, another figure emerged like a shadow.

Saralalak!

Nakhwa [Falling Blossoms — 낙화(落花)].

From the sword above Jo Geol's head, red flower petals shot up ahead. For a moment, the hot midday was covered in the atmosphere of spring as the petals scattered and fell gently, embroidering the sky of the Southern Sea.

«Kuh... Kryuk!»

From afar, the delicate flower petals seemed to flutter harmlessly. However, those facing the sword knew better. Each of those delicate flower petals was sharp and dangerous.

With Jo Geol's sword energy and Yu Iseol's sword technique, they broke the momentum of Maninbang in an instant.

«Ta-a-a-ab!»

«O-o-o-o-o-o!»

Dazzling white light and fierce golden flames erupted simultaneously.

In the midst of those rushing forward, Namgung Dowi's white sword energy, and Hye Yeon's Arahat Divine Fist [아라한신권(阿羅漢神拳)] descended without mercy.

Kwaaaaang!

The sound of the explosion, mixed with the dazzling light and flames, completely overwhelmed the screams erupting from within.

But Maninbang were not ordinary Sapa. As their comrades burst forward like beasts, they didn't falter in their momentum.

«Krr-ha-ha-aa-at!»

Maninbang's members roared like beasts, aiming their attacks at Jo Geol and Yu Iseol as they descended. But someone dashed forward to intercept them. It was none other than Baek Cheon, who had rushed to the forefront in an instant.

Thud!

With the force to split the ground, Baek Cheon stamped forward and swung his sword with terrifying force. The crimson sword energy swiftly cut down those charging towards them.

Paaaat!

Hot blood covered his face, but Baek Cheon didn't bat an eye as he shouted,

“Protect!»

It was a simple command, but it was enough for them. They were already accustomed to moving like Baek Cheon's limbs. Naturally, they swiftly moved to their designated positions and swung their swords.

«Ah-ha-ha-ha! To the right! To the right! Holy crap, isn't it obvious to go right! What are you doing, you young lord bastard! Where's your poison going... No, damn it! Did you eat poison instead of food? Hurry up, hurry!»

«...Let's meet someday, Nokrim King.»

Tang Pae gritted his teeth and quickly rushed towards where Im Sobyong pointed. Venom sprayed from his nervously swung hand, scattering towards the charging Maninbang's members.

Thunk!

«Gah!»

Pierced by the sharp needle, Maninbang's member gritted his teeth. Despite the pain, he tried to run forward. No, he attempted to. If his body hadn't collapsed right there with a thud, he would've continued running.

The poison injected through the wound instantly paralyzed his body.

«Widen the gaps, widen! Block the ones trying to escape left and right!»

«Where should I go, Nokrim King?»

To the question flying from somewhere behind, Im Sobyong turned his head sharply. He saw Seol Sobaek gripping his sword, lips tightly sealed.

«Palace Lord!»

«Yes!»

«... Where should you go?»

«... Yes?»

Rubbing his cheek with the fan, Im Sobyong hastily turned his head.

«Uh... For now, uh... Behind, uh...»

«Tang Yeohyeop! It's dangerous!»

Before Im Sobyong could even finish giving orders, Seol Sobaek rushed toward Tang Soso with all his might.

With bewildered expression, Im Sobyong couldn't help but laugh.

«... Who taught you that?»

What's the point of saying that? It's obvious.

And then, another group joined the defense line they had created.

«Help the Vice Sect Leader!»

«Let's go!»

Among them were the elders of Haenam, including Geum Yangbaek, the Sect Leader of Haenam. They joined the defense line with fire in their eyes.

«These vile bastards!»

«We've been waiting for this moment!»

Just like Cheonumaeng, Haenam harbors no less resentment toward Sapaeryeon and Maninbang.

Having the opportunity to swing their swords freely against Maninbang for the first time, the elders of Haenam unleashed waves of relentless attacks.

«Oh, you old guys are strong indeed!»

«They are elders! This madman!»

«... Sahyeong. Lately, you've been treating me too harshly.»

«You're a despicable human being!»

«...Your words are still too harsh.»

With a determined thrust, Jo Geol aimed his sword towards the gap created by Yoon Jong in the midst of the ferocious crowd of Maninbang.

«Come on, and...»

«Look at them! These bastards!»

Silence followed.

Jo Geol turned his head towards the direction of the intervening voice, only to find Tang Soso mercilessly swinging her sword with a grimace akin to a demon's.

Quietly, Jo Geol lowered his gaze and returned his head to its original position.

With a thud, as the ground met his foot, sand erupted violently into the air.

«Faster, run!»

«Uwaaaaah!»

Gwak Hwanso gritted his teeth in response.

The pressure emanating from the main force of Maninbang surpassed all imagination. Even now, if he didn't grit their teeth, his hands would tremble uncontrollably in no time.

«Let's go!»

«Yes!»

What spurred Gwak Hwanso into action was the loud roar echoing from behind.

The saying «the body moves before the mind has a chance to think» seemed fitting for this moment. Amidst the intense battle, the deafening roar persisted without respite. Gwak Hwanso's body instinctively surged forward, propelling him onto the raised prow of the ship.

«Uwaaaaah!»

With every ounce of his heightened vigor unleashed, Gwak Hwanso leaped onto the deck, where he caught sight of several Maninbang's members protecting the vessel.

«Suppress!»

With a roar reminiscent of a wild beast, Gwak Hwanso wasted no time, charging forward.

His sword technique poured forth like a raging tide upon the enemy.

«Urgh!»

One of the subdued Maninbang's fighter groaned as Gwak Hwanso's blade sliced through his defenses, forcing him to retreat. Sensing the opportunity, another disciple from Haenam swiftly rushed towards the restrained opponent.

«Die!»

Swish!

To Gwak Hwanso's eyes, it was an impeccable sword technique, flawless in every aspect.

Therefore, he didn't entertain any thoughts of something being amiss. That is, until

Maninbang's fighter, with a shoulder wound, glared fiercely before wielding his blade.

Swish!

Like a dart, Maninbang fighter's sword flew, slicing through the chest of Haenam's disciple.

«Jwa Gong!»

«Saje!»

Gwak Hwanso grimaced as he swung his sword towards Maninbang's warrior. Following suit, other disciples' swords skewered their enemy's torso like a kebab.

«Uwaaaaah! You insolent brats!»

However, despite being pierced through, he charged forward with a terrifying momentum, swinging his blade towards them.

Crash!

As he attempted to parry the attack, the sword struck down several more Haenam's disciples. Blood spurted out in all directions, and screams echoed through the air. In an instant, the deck turned into a scene of hellish chaos.

«You baaaaaastard!»

Lee Jayang charged forward roughly, thrusting his sword into the chest of Maninbang's fighter. Gwak Hwanso followed suit without hesitation, leaping in and stabbing his sword into the neck of the enemy.

Thud!

«Guh...!»

Blood gurgled from the mouth of Maninbang's fighter.

«You all...!»

«...»

«... Will all die...»

Despite being filled with venomous rage, the human body couldn't withstand a pierced throat, and the man slumped down, life draining away. Even as his breath faded, his eyes remained wide open.

Gwak Hwanso's hand trembled weakly.

«Jwa Gong! Are you okay?»

«Damn it! Daesayeong! He is seriously injured!»

«Blood... blood keeps coming out. Sahyeong!»

Huhuk...

Gwak Hwanso wiped the blood splattered on his face with his sleeve. His ears felt clogged, unable to properly hear any sound except for the pounding of his heart, which echoed loudly in his throat.

«Daesahyeong!»

As the urgent calls came again, Gwak Hwanso clenched his fist tightly.

«Can't you calm down!»

The loud outcry made the trembling individuals startle.

«Didn't you come prepared!»

«...»

«Below, Cheonumaeng's members are risking their lives to hold them off. And yet, some of you are fussing over being injured!»

«S-Sahyeong...»

«Some tend to the remaining wounded! The rest, quickly seize control of all the ships!

Hurry!»

«Yes!»

«Jayang!»

«Yes, Sahyeong!»

«Head to the helm! We need to move the ships!»

«Yes!»

As everyone moved with unwavering determination, Gwak Hwanso finally turned his gaze to the fallen. His Sajils, who had shared his hardships, were now lying whimpering. Their eyes had lost half their light.

Seeing this, Gwak Hwanso felt a stab in his chest, as if pierced by a sharp needle. Yet, he closed his eyes tightly and turned his head away.

This was something he had to endure!

«Hurry, move quickly! Before those holding them off below collapse!»

«Yes!»

Gwak Hwanso tightened the grip on his sword and leaped forward.

First, fulfill the given role. Mourning and anger can come later.

'This is war!'

As if awakening from a dream, the sudden realization flooded his senses with the smell of blood. It was a stark reminder of the harsh reality. He was now amidst the battlefield.

«Argh!»

Gwak Hwanso thrust his sword towards the approaching Maninbang's warriors from the cabin. The sensation of the blade cutting through flesh was vivid. In his eyes, there was a newfound, sinister resolve.

«Kill them all! Make them regret ever setting foot on the land of Haenam!»

The madness of the battlefield consumed yet another swordsman.