

Chapter 1258

He will take care of that, won't he? (3)

«Sect Leader.»

«...»

«How should we proceed?»

At the urgent tone of the young one, Geum Yangbaek couldn't muster a response. He just stared intently at Chung Myung's back, who stood alone in front of Changgwi Unit.

'What's going on?'

No matter how much he thought about it, he couldn't understand.

Standing in front of him was none other than the formidable Maninbang. Even though they were just a small group, their strength alone could easily wipe out one or two small martial arts sects in no time.

And yet, he had revealed himself without any plan in place. Moreover, the enemy's main force was still not too far away.

«Sect Leader!»

Once again, the urgent voice sucked Geum Yangbaek back to reality.

«W-what was the original plan?»

«The plan was to rush to the coast when the signal was given from over there and seize the ships.»

Right. That was indeed the original plan. But now that the situation had turned like this, a fundamental question arose.

«What exactly does that signal mean?»

«...»

«Should we go out now?»

No one could answer that question.

In situations like this, the signal to act was blatantly obvious. If someone shouted and ran forward, they should rally support and rush out together.

There was no need for deliberation or thought.

But the scene unfolding before them now was far beyond their expectations. Who could have imagined that against the formidable force of Maninbang, only one person would stroll out as if taking a leisurely walk?

«W-well, for now...»

One of the elders hesitated and spoke with a troubled expression.

«Perhaps... it would be better to observe a bit more? The other members of Cheonumaeng haven't revealed themselves yet.»

Geum Yangbaek didn't respond immediately. He simply continued to look at Chung Myung.

'What on earth...'

It was both bewildering and terrifying.

The reckless act was absurd enough, but the thought of all their plans being thrown into disarray because of that small action was utterly terrifying.

«But... why are they just standing there?»

At that remark, Geum Yangbaek narrowed his eyes and observed the situation ahead.

‘Come to think of it...’

Hwasan Geomhyeop Chung Myung was approaching slowly, almost as if he was on a walk.

So, they must have observed Chung Myung’s approach attentively.

The strange thing started from this point.

Maninbang were bloodthirsty monsters. Among Sapaeryeon, they were known as the fiercest demons of Guangdong.

So, if it was Maninbang Geum Yangbaek knew, they wouldn’t just stand by and watch an approaching enemy. Normally, they would have already rushed in and torn them to shreds.

But...

‘Why aren’t they moving?’

Geum Yangbaek couldn’t understand. No matter how wide he opened his eyes and observed, he couldn’t comprehend it.

What significance did that young man hold for them, in the eyes of Maninbang?

And what did the name «Hwasan Geomhyeop» mean to them?

«...Hwasan Geomhyeop.»

The expression on the face of Dogbi Geomgwi [독비검귀(獨譬劍鬼) — lone rain ghost sword(?)] Beom Chung [범충(范充)], Daeju of Changgwi Unit of Maninbang, hardened.

‘Why is he here...’

Changgwi Unit of Maninbang.

Just the fact that they were affiliated with Maninbang was enough to instill fear in the hearts of all under the heavens.

Powerless commoners naturally feared them like grim reapers, and even martial artists who boasted considerable strength would quietly lower their tails in front of the name

«Maninbang.»

Beom Chung had been confident. He believed that the name Changgwi existed not to inspire fear, but as a force to dispel it.

But at this moment, Beom Chung keenly realized the relativity of everything in the world.

Who was Hwasan Geomhyeop?

He was the one who clashed head-on with Jang Ilso, the leader of Sapaeryeon, at Black Dragon Fortress, and forcefully broke through Surochae, achieving feats bordering the mythical level.

Before that, he had defeated the unit of the same rank within Maninbang, and turned the armed forces that ventured into Hwasan's mountains into ashes, leaving an unprecedented stain of defeat on Maninbang.

And above all...

'The one who joined hands with Ryeonju and defeated Demonic Cult.'

His legendary prowess displayed in Hangzhou, witnessed by those who had endured that hellish battle, was still being recounted to this day.

Those who had accompanied Jang Ilso to Hangzhou alongside Hwasan Geomhyeop were individuals who were willing to throw themselves into the fires of hell out of loyalty for Jang Ilso alone. They were those who not only revered but almost worshipped Jang Ilso.

From the mouths of such individuals, one could derive the assurance that he was not an inch inferior to Ryeonju. And now, such a person stood before them.

His blood ran cold, and the hairs on his body stood up.

Beom Chung, who had never felt fear in the face of an enemy, found it impossible to maintain his usual composure in front of the black robes and crimson plum blossom pattern.

To the members of Sapaeryeon, those black robes were akin to the attire of a divine beast.

Ironically, Beom Chung keenly felt what the powerless commoners must have felt when they saw them.

'What should I do?'

Cold sweat covered his palms.

A silence as profound as the stillness of death descended upon the previously bustling and chaotic shore. The only sound audible was the rushing of the waves.

Likewise, even the members of Changgwi were holding their breath. The fact that they, too, were silent meant that they were crouching and trembling like startled rabbits, rather than rushing forward like hungry wolves in the face of the enemy.

Yet, Beom Chung felt no desire to scold or rebuke them for this. If even their leader couldn't conceal his bewilderment in this situation, who could he possibly blame or admonish?

'A signal...'

Swallowing dryly, he involuntarily turned his head. Then, he bit his lip until it bled.

'What am I doing right now?'

At this moment, the enemy stood alone.

Of course, there may be others hiding behind him, but for now, there was only Hwasan Geomhyeop standing before them.

But what on earth was there to be afraid of, to the point of seeking a signal flare to alert the main force? Was it possible that the leader of Changgwi, renowned as the elite of Maninbang, couldn't handle just one person and felt the need to request salvation?

For Beom Chung, who had been infamous in Guangdong and had taken pride in being appointed as the leader of Changgwi Unit by Jang Ilso himself, this was an unbearable humiliation.

«Hwasan Geomhyeop.»

Chung Myung was amused with the cracked voice that reached his ears.

«Oh?»

A smirk played at the corner of his mouth.

«It seems I've become quite famous now. I don't even need to explain, you recognize me right away.»

«...»

«Is it fortunate? Until now, I've had to explain myself to even the most insignificant brats.»

«Why are you here?»

Chung Myung shrugged.

«Well, is there any reason why I couldn't come to a place where even Sapa bastards are buzzing around?»

«...»

«Anyway, that's not important right now.»

Chung Myung glanced back for a moment.

At that moment, Beom Chung's body involuntarily convulsed.

An enemy standing in front of him turning his head? It was a disrespect that couldn't be described even with the most severe words. However, Beom Chung, who seemed barely able to restrain his anger, clenched the handle of his sword tightly but couldn't draw it from its sheath. He simply gripped it as hard as he could.

«Hmm.»

A low grunt escaped Chung Myung's lips as he turned his head back.

«We shouldn't let the distance between us grow too far.»

As Chung Myung muttered, Beom Chung saw it.

It might have been because of these eyes. No, perhaps it was because Chung Myung's white teeth, revealed momentarily between his twisted lips, looked too menacing.

Whatever the reason, Beom Chung unconsciously took a step back. And that resulted in an outcome completely different from his intention.

The signal for combat within Changgwi was always the same. Beom Chung stepping back meant «attack the enemy.» Anytime, anywhere.

The reason this gesture could serve as a signal was simple. Changgwi never retreated in front of the enemy. Especially in a situation where the leader, Beom Chung, retreated due to pressure from the enemy, was an unimaginable scenario within the unit.

One of those who saw the leader retreat charged towards Chung Myung as if it was the most natural thing in the world, a result of rigorous training piled up to a daunting degree. It was instinctive, moving the body without considering the situation.

“Don't...”

Only then did Beom Chung realize what he had done. However, it was already too late to catch him who was charging at Chung Myung with all his might.

«Get ready to diiii!»

With a fierce battle cry that seemed to tear the sky of Hainan apart, the sword descended with incredible force.

And at that moment.

Paaaaat!

The gleam of the sword [검광(劍光) — sword light] flashed even faster than before, slicing through the wrist holding the sword and passing through cleanly.

Swoosh.

«Ahh...!»

A terrible sound and a sharp groan echoed. The light of the sword, recovered even faster than when it was extended, struck again. And it accurately sliced through the remaining wrist.

Swoosh!

The grip, now devoid of strength, released the sword. But before the sword could fly into the air, the successive afterimages extended and began to cut through the body of the attacker.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

«Ahhhhhh!»

A horrifying scream, unbearable to hear, violently shattered the silence that had settled over the coast.

«Ahhhhhh!»

The sword sliced through flesh and twisted muscles, causing indescribable agony that could only be expressed through horrifying screams.

In an instant, the severed body collapsed, trembling like a withered tree, either from pain or disbelief at what had just occurred.

Thunk.

And in that moment, the edge of Chung Myung's Dark Plum Sword touched the kneeling man's neck.

With an infinitely cold gaze, Chung Myung looked down at the man, his lips curling into a faint smile before he uttered softly,

«Not enough.»

Swoosh!

Ahhhhh!

A hot fountain of blood spurted from the split neck of the man. The white sandy beach was splattered with crimson blood.

Thud.

The man's body collapsed lifelessly to the ground.

With indifferent eyes, Chung Myung slowly shifted his gaze, almost absentmindedly, towards the onlooking Changgwi.

«...This won't be enough to make them hear,»

Chung Myung remarked sarcastically, exuding an aura that enveloped Changgwi like a snow of the northern wind.

«Scream louder. Maybe then you'll have a chance to survive, who knows?»

In an instant, a sinister gleam flashed in his eyes. Without hesitation, he dashed towards Changgwi Unit with frightening speed, effortlessly penetrating through their ranks.

Chung Myung's Dark Plum Sword traced a crescent moon-like arc through the air, like the rising sun at the dawn of the day.