

Return of The Mount Hua – Chapter 960. Where is Mount Hua (4)

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“...Please.”

In essence, kneeling and bowing one's head is a posture of humiliation that a martial artist should never adopt.

But no one here thought Namgung Dowi was being a disgrace. How could they, being human, harbor such a thought?

“...Sogaju.”

The first to move was Hyun Jong.

“Sogaju, what... What has happened....”

Intending to ask 'what happened?' he hesitated and then shook his head instead.

Did he really not know?

Is he asking this because he doesn't know what hardships Namgung is going through on the Yangtze River?

Instead of asking questions, Hyun Jong approached Namgung Dowi and grabbed his shoulder. The moment Hyun Jong's trembling hand touched him, Namgung Dowi's body also flinched.

“...Sect Leader.”

Namgung Dowi raised his head with difficulty and looked at Hyun Jong.

Seeing his bloodshot eyes, Hyun Jong unknowingly bit his lip.

"At Plum Blossom Island..."

“.....”

"Still... a hundred of Namgung Family members are trapped."

“...Sogaju.”

"The injured are dying day by day, and those who have survived are just waiting their turn... Yes, just waiting."

Hyun Jong's shoulders trembled.

"Please... Please help us, Sect Leader. Them... Please help them.”

When Namgung Dowi tried to lower his head to the ground again, Hyun Jong quickly grabbed his shoulder firmly.

“...Don’t do this, Sogaju.”

"I beg of you."

Meanwhile, Tang Gun-ak, who was watching the situation, turned his attention to Ciwu Beggar. Noticing the evident anger in his gaze, Ciwu Beggar sighed and started speaking.

“Shaolin...”

But he hesitated for a moment, biting his lip.

Was it really all Shaolin's fault?

“Beggar Union, Kongtong, and Shaolin did not help Namgung.”

"How come?"

"...Myriad Man Manor came to the rescue. In such a situation, it will be difficult to fight with water fortress on the Yangtze..."

"That's not what I'm asking, Elder-nim."

Tang Gun-ak's voice was so cold it felt like it came from a malevolent ghost crawling out of the abyss. His anger was that intense.

"I know the situation. What I'm asking is why you're still just watching even now."

“.....”

Ciwu Beggar couldn't immediately respond.

There were too many reasons, but not a single one could justify the real reason.

"This..."

When Tang Gun-ak bared his teeth and glared, Ciwu Beggar could not bear to meet his gaze and turned his head away.

Didn't he know how much Tang Family had strived to protect those that the Ten Great Sects failed to protect?

He was the one sneering at them when among the Ten Great Sects, but here, he's merely a sinner. No one bearing the name of the Ten Great Sects should dare to raise their heads before Mount Hua and Tang Family. Actually, they shouldn't be allowed to.

“...Namgung Hwang?”

“.....”

"What has become of Namgung Hwang?"

The reason Tang Gun-ak asked this was simple. The Namgung Hwang he knew wouldn't be the one to risk his life for his son's escape.

No, it would be more accurate to say that he wouldn't be the man to send his son alone into peril.

"Perhaps..."

Ciwu Beggar lowered his head, unable to finish his sentence.

Ppudeuk.

The sound of Tang Gun-ak grinding his teeth spread eerily. Thick veins appeared on Tang Gun-ak's fist, which was exposed under his wide sleeves.

"Please."

At that time, Namgung Dowi raised his head and looked at everyone. Tears flowed from his eyes, mixing with dried blood.

"Them.... Please save them. I'm begging you."

"....."

"Please....."

Hyun Jong gave strength to his hand that held Namgung Dowi's shoulder. But no answer came from his mouth.

If it only required risking his life, he would've already rushed to Plum Blossom Island. But it's not just about risking his own life, is it?

He cannot ask them to risk their lives.

".....I'm sorry."

Hyun Jong's shoulders shook violently.

"I'm sorry... I'm sorry, Sogaju. I'm... sorry..."

This was not an apology to Namgung Dowi.

Maybe it was an apology to himself. During those painful days, bearing the heavy burden named Mount Hua, enduring and enduring again.

Hadn't he resented?

That no one is reaching out to help.

That no one would listen to his cries.

Hadn't he cursed and shouted countless times?

Nevertheless, Hyun Jong could not bear to take Namgung Dowi's hand willingly right now. The agony made his teeth clench.

'I am...'

It was right then.

Seureureung.

The sound of a sword being drawn was heard from behind.

Hyun Jong looked back with trembling eyes.

Baek Cheon looked closely at the sword he had drawn and then put it back into its sheath. And with the sheath tied tightly around his waist, he took one step forward and stood.

The eyes that looked at Hyun Jong in silence were full of courage.

“Baek Cheon....”

Cholkok!

Yoo Iseol's process of drawing her sword and checking it was much faster than Baek Cheon's. Likewise, she stood next to Baek Cheon, with her sheath tied tightly.

It wasn't just the two of them.

Yoon Jong, with firm eyes, walked forward and supported Baek Cheon. Jo-Gol stood behind Yoon Jong with an angry look on his face, as if he was about to charge at any moment. Tang Soso silently stood behind Yoo Iseol, and the remaining disciples of Mount Hua, including Baek Sang, all drew their swords to check and formed their line in silence.

"...You guys..."

Hyun Jong fell silent for a moment, as if speechless.

No one has come forward and said anything. As if they hadn't forgotten that it was Hyun Jong who decided all of this.

But their actions speak for themselves.

The moment his command is given, without hesitation, they would rush to the Yangtze River.

Step. Step.

Un Gum walks slowly and stands behind the children. Un Am also stayed by his side with a stern expression, unlike usual.

Hyun Jong looked at that scene and bit his lip. A storm of emotions raged in his heart.

He wanted to help.

He too wished he could rush to the Yangtze River at this very moment. But...

'I am the Sect Leader of Mount Hua'

It was at that time that Hyun Jong was about to close his eyes in resignation.

Seureung.

Chung Myung, who had been silent all this while, half-drew his sword, glancing at it briefly.

“Chung Myung.....”

Hyun Jong looked at him in surprise. However, instead of looking at Hyun Jong, Chung Myung looked at Namgung Dowi. And slowly began to speak.

"Answer me."

“.....”

Namgung Dowi lifted his trembling head and looked up at him.

“Why should we help you?”

“.....”

“That place is a death trap. If we help, we risk our lives too. But why should we risk our lives?”

“.....”

"Answer me."

Namgung Dowi's eyes shook greatly.

He had too much he wanted to say, too much he could say. But none of those words could wholly convince them.

"....I."

In the face of desperation, all logic crumbled, everything he had was rendered useless. All that remained was just one human, Namgung Dowi himself.

"I can't... watch."

“... ..”

Chung Myung's expression hardened further.

Namgung Dowi's shoulder trembled as he sobbed.

"They.... My brothers, my family... my dying colleagues.... I can't watch them like that."

Chung Myung's gaze landed on the hunched back of Namgung Dowi.

"Please... Please."

Chung Myung was able to understand the emotions on that trembling back. That trembling does not come from pain or sorrow.

Fear.

Namgung Dowi was trembling with fear.

He's afraid that words of rejection will come out of Chung Myung's mouth. He's afraid that he will end up not being able to protect those he must protect.

Watching everyone die, afraid that in the worst-case scenario, he will survive alone.

He's trembling in front of that great fear.

"....."

Chung Myung's gaze, which had been silently staring at Namgung Dowi, then turned to Hyun Jong.

"Sect Leader."

"....."

"What will Sect Leader do?"

His voice didn't seem to carry any emotion. There was no urging or dissuasion. It was just a question.

As if the choice was entirely up to Hyun Jong.

Hyun Jong bit his lips so hard that they turned white.

"I...."

What he was originally trying to say was 'We will not help.'

It is fine even if they are being criticized for not knowing Chivalrousness. In the end, he was no different from that Shaolin. It was okay to be laughed at. However, he could not command his disciples to risk their lives for others.

Hyun Jong might have been able to do so, but the Sect Leader of Mount Hua, who had endured those hellish days, couldn't.

But the words 'we will not help' just wouldn't leave his mouth. No matter how hard he tried, his throat seemed choked, only allowing faint groans to escape.

Then, Chung Myung, who had been looking at Hyun Jong in silence, opened his mouth.

"There was once a person I thought was great."

"....."

"He was a great Sect Leader. Everyone believed in him and followed him, and everyone did not hesitate to risk their lives for him. Truly, the most suitable person to lead a sect."

Hyun Jong clenched his eyes shut. Because those words sounded like a criticism of his weakness.

"But."

Chung Myung looked straight at Hyun Jong and said.

"In my opinion, Sect Leader is no less than that man."

"Chung Myung....."

"There's just one thing missing."

Chung Myung paused for a moment.

There was a short silence, and Hyun Jong, unable to overcome the weight, sighed and asked first.

"What was it?"

At first glance, his voice was full of desperation.

"What am I lacking... What was it?"

Chung Myung answered with an expressionless face.

"Knowing."

There wasn't a hint of wavering in Chung Myung's gaze.

"The sword in Sect Leader's hand..."

After pausing for a moment, the corner of his mouth twitched, revealing his pure white teeth.

Seureureureung.

His sword was completely drawn of its scabbard.

"...how sharp it is."

As those words fell, all disciples of Mount Hua drew their swords in unison.

In the darkest dawn, the swords held low gleamed white in the darkness.

Tang Gun-ak, who was watching in silence, clenched his fists. This feeling of goosebumps all over the body is probably described as a thrill.

Chung Myung's calm voice flowed.

"I am the sword of Sect Leader."

Hyun Jong's body trembled slightly.

"Please name it."

Chung Myung, with bared teeth, spoke in a tone sharp as a drawn blade.

"Sword enacts the will. If Sect Leader commands, I shall fulfill that will. I, and all of us."

Hyun Jong's gaze swept over the disciplined ranks of Mount Hua disciples.

Everyone was only looking at Hyun Jong with unwavering eyes.

What was reflected in those eyes was unshakeable trust. A belief that their Sect Leader would never make the wrong choice.

"We will simply realize it."

Hyun Jong quietly closed his eyes.

As if struggling with his thoughts, as if steadying his heart, or perhaps re-affirming the path he had to take.

When he finally opened his eyes again after being silent for such a long time, there was not a single trace of hesitation left in his eyes.

"Disciples of Mount Hua, listen."

"Yes, Sect Leader!"

All the disciples of Mount Hua knelt down on one knee to show respect.

"We will go to the Yangtze River."

Everyone's eyes shone brightly even in the dark.

"Rescue the trapped Namgung at Plum Blossom Island, and let those Evil Sects know that the spirit of Chivalrousness still lives in this land!"

"Yes!"

The answer sounded as if it came from one mouth.

The disciples of Mount Hua stood up all at once.

Namgung Dowi, who was watching the scene, sobbed loudly. His body, relaxed from the release of tension, began to crumble. But before his body could even hit the ground, someone grabbed him and forced him up.

"Stand up."

"Do- Dojang."

Chung Myung gritted his teeth and dragged Namgung Dowi up.

"If there's something to be done, do it yourself. We are not here to rescue you."

The voice sounded like an angry beast growling.

"We fight together."

"....."

"No one gets things done for them here. You lead the front. You will save Namgung."

Namgung Dowi, who was looking at Chung Myung with trembling eyes, gradually stopped trembling. And a fierce resolve and venom filled them.

"Yes! I will!"

When Chung Myung turned around, all of Mount Hua's disciples were staring at him with faces full of conviction. As if they were waiting for Chung Myung's words.

Chung Myung nodded lightly in response to their determination.

"Let's go!"

Finally, the eastern sky began to faintly brighten, tinged with red.

And the two sects, Mount Hua and Sichuan Tang Family, began to advance toward the Yangtze River under the name of Heavenly Comrade Alliance.

[Note