

Return of The Mount Hua – Chapter 957. Don't bow your head (6)

Editor: Hoamzz

Co-Translator: Xoxo

Splash!

Namgung Dowi, who fell into the water, clenched his teeth.

'Father!'

He knows. He shouldn't mourn. There's no time for mourning.

He waved his arms and legs frantically. Focusing only on the riverbank, now not too far away.

“Euaaaaak!”

An extremely pitiful voice burst from his mouth.

Frustration, sorrow, pain, rage.

A myriad of emotions intertwined chaotically, erupting in a beast-like howl.

He couldn't tell if it was blood, tears, or river water streaming down his face. All he could do was move his limbs in a fitful manner and push forward.

If he dies here, the sacrifices of those who perished before him would be in vain.

So he must go!

“Euaaah!”

Namgung Dowi, who was advancing with a desperate shout, had to stop before he could even move forward a few zhang. The pirates positioned in front of him quickly surrounded him.

Namgung Dowi glared at them with bloodshot eyes and drew his sword.

'Don't panic.'

He wanted to unleash the anger he had built up against them. He wanted to let go of all reason and swing his sword until he collapsed from exhaustion.

But he couldn't do that.

Because his life was not his own anymore.

'I have to survive.'

Absolutely! Without fail!

Paaaaaat!

His sword sliced through the waist of the approaching pirate in one go.

Hot blood spurted from the torn corpse and covered Nangung Dowi's face. The cold river water mixed with the warm blood.

Kwadeuk!

A harpoon flew and grazed his arm, tearing away a chunk of flesh. But he didn't even have time to feel the pain. Reflexively swinging his sword, Nangung Dowi struck the bandit and advanced by slamming down on the water surface.

'I must live!'

Kwadeuk!

A harpoon launched from the water and burrowed into his stomach. Nangung Dowi broke the shaft of the embedded harpoon and swung his sword frantically.

'Absolutely!'

The riverbank was not far now.

Just a little... just a bit more!

“Euaaaaak!”

Every time he swung his sword in a fit, white sword energy sliced through the pirates. Even as his face was drenched with warm blood, his limbs did not stop.

'Absolutely...'

Just a little further....

Kwaaaaaaaaaaa!

At that moment, Nangung Dowi reflexively turned around as an ominous sound penetrated his ears.

A dark blue Reinforced Sword Energy.

The same Reinforced Sword Energy that had brought down even Nangung Hwang was now flying straight towards Nangung Dowi. A powerful strike too daunting for his exhausted body to even think of countering.

Nangung Dowi's pupils dilated in shock.

'No....'

Kwaaaaaaaaaaaaang!

Just then, the straight-flying Reinforced Sword Energy caused a massive explosion mid-air. The pirates chasing Namgung Dowi screamed as they were swept away by the huge explosion of energy.

“Euaaaaaal!”

“Aaaaakh!”

Namgung Dowi was momentarily taken aback.

'What?'

What happened?

But instead of pondering further, he immediately turned around. What is important now is not 'why'. The only thing that mattered was surviving by any means.

“Get out of the way, you bastaaards!”

With a desperate shout, Namgung Dowi headed toward the shore.

"This...."

The angry Black Dragon King's eyes were bloodshot.

"What is the meaning of this!"

His face was full of anger.

Black Dragon King had never suppressed his fury like this. If he was this angry, he would usually charge and finish off anyone, regardless of who they were. That was his nature.

However, even though he was angry now, he couldn't bring himself to rush at the other person.

The reason is very simple.

The one who had infuriated him was none other than Paegun Jang Ilso.

“I ask you why you blocked my attack!”

He obviously tried to put an end to it. Had it not been for interference, Namgung Dowi would have undoubtedly met his demise right there. However, his strike was intercepted by Jang Ilso's energy and exploded before reaching Namgung Dowi.

In other words, Jang Ilso saved Namgung Dowi's life.

“Hmm.”

Jang Ilso snorted shortly and just looked at Black Dragon King with an annoyed face.

“Ryeonju!”

“Tsk, tsk.”

In the end, Black Dragon King could not stand it anymore and shouted again, and Jang Ilso lightly clicked his tongue and glared at him as if reproaching him.

“How cruel....”

"...What did you say?"

Jang Ilso smiled, his red lips curled elegantly.

"Isn't it heart-wrenching?"

“... ..”

"To go to such lengths to save one's own child, but to kill both the father and the child is not the way a human should be. That's too heartbreaking."

Black Dragon King gritted his teeth.

What kind of nonsense was this?

“Hahahaha.”

Laughing heartily at the expression on his face, Jang Ilso glanced briefly at Namgung Dowi, who was desperately fighting off the pirates' attacks. Jang Ilso's eyes narrowed slightly.

"Don't you want to see?"

“...What do you mean?”

“I mean the moment when he arrives at the riverside and encounters Shaolin.”

Black Dragon King, who was about to say something, closed his mouth. Jang Ilso continued slowly.

"People are like that, aren't they? They hide, ignore, and turn away from what they consider to be dishonorable. But... as one lives, inevitably comes that moment. The moment when you have to confront your shame head-on."

“...”

"That moment..."

Jang Ilso slowly licked his red lips, fixing his gaze on Black Dragon King.

"Do you know what kind of expression people make?"

Black Dragon King's shoulders trembled slightly.

He couldn't comprehend this man's thoughts. But he didn't need to. Jang Ilso's malicious intent can be vividly conveyed without any need to understand it.

"You're about to see."

Hearing Jang Ilso's light tone, Black Dragon King quietly glared at him. But as time passed, it was ultimately Black Dragon King who averted his gaze first.

"Collect the bodies!"

Black Dragon King, who commanded in a rough voice, turned and walked away from Jang Ilso as if he were displeased.

Ho Gamyeong, who had been listening to the entire conversation, shook his head.

He understood the sentiment, but he didn't appreciate the attitude.

'It won't be long.'

Ho Gamyeong, who stared at the back of Black Dragon King with sharp eyes, straightened his complexion as if he had washed himself and spoke to Jang Ilso.

"Ryeonju-nim, now...."

"Shhh."

At that time, Jang Ilso stopped Ho Gamyeong and slowly gestured as if to tell him to be quiet. He then grasped a bottle of alcohol placed on the table.

Looking down at the white liquor bottle, he extended his hand beyond the railing and slowly tilted the bottle.

Glug, glug, glug.

The liquor that flowed out was sprayed onto the cold surface of the Yangtze River.

Ho Gamyeong, who understood the meaning of that action, looked at Jang Ilso with strange eyes.

"Ryeonju-nim, don't you dislike foolish people?"

"I do."

Jang Ilso nodded slowly.

"But I don't hate them."

"....."

Once again, tranquility descended over the Yangtze. Jang Ilso's slightly downcast eyes gazed at the flowing river as if nothing had happened.

"He achieved what he wanted to achieve, so there will be no regrets."

The alcohol that Jang Ilso spilled scattered like rain over the Yangtze River.

His feet finally touched the ground.

Splash.

Namgung Dowi took a step forward with a step as heavy as a thousand pounds.

At this point, the pursuit of the pirates had ceased.

A trail of blood had formed in the dark river behind him. At its end, Namgung Dowi staggered yet continued to step forward relentlessly.

The water, which had been up to his neck, now only reached his chest, and soon his upper body was fully out of the water.

Splash. Splash.

"Live...."

He mumbled as if he were possessed by something.

Though his eyes were half-closed and his pupils were dilated, Namgung Dowi kept moving forward, just advancing.

"I must live..."

Splash. Splash.

Finally, his feet emerged from the water.

Tak.

As he reached the land, he walked languidly. Water poured down from his sword, now out of the river.

And....

Those standing on the riverbank watched in silence as he emerged from the water. Even though they saw the stumbling figure walking towards them, they couldn't bring themselves to do anything.

Out of guilt. Out of shame.

They didn't even dare to help him as he stumbled.

Thud. Thud.

Finally, Namgung Dowi reached in front of them, planted his sword on the ground, and leaned on it.

It was truly a pitiful sight.

There wasn't a single spot on his body without injury, and the water dripping from his body was bright red mixed with blood. And even now, blood was still coming out. As the hem of his clothes turned red, the hearts of the onlookers also ached.

“Cough! Cough!”

Namgung Dowi's upper body shook violently as he let out a wet cough and struggled to steady himself.

Eventually, very slowly, so much so that it felt like an eternity to those watching, Namgung Dowi lifted his head.

Who could dare meet those gazes?

Namgung Dowi's head was raised, but their gazes still did not meet. As if on cue, everyone lowered their eyes and turned away.

Shaolin monks stood here like a stone and watched the whole situation on the Yangtze River.

Disciples of Kongtong who arrived late at the Yangtze River and were unable to do anything.

Even the beggars of Beggar Union who took pride in living at the lowest point with only Chivalrousness in their hearts.

None could meet Namgung Dowi's eyes.

Even Shaolin's Banjang, Bop Jeong, turned his gaze towards the distant sky.

It was only natural for a person. If there was even a shred of conscience left, they couldn't bear to look into those eyes.

"Hu...."

A groan-like sound escaped Namgung Dowi's mouth.

“Huhu....”

And that distorted voice soon turned into a soft chuckle.

No one there understood the meaning of that laughter. They could only guess from the glimmer of self-deprecation and sadness buried there.

“Cough! Cough!”

Namgung Daowi, who once again coughed loudly and stumbled as if he was about to collapse, steadied himself by pressing down on his sword. He then took a deep breath.

At that moment, everyone there was seized with fear.

Whether the words from his mouth would be a scathing criticism, a stern reprimand, or an outright mockery... They couldn't resist. They could only close their eyes and listen.

What would they say if they were Namgung Dowi?

The anticipated words were too numerous and too painful. There was nothing that didn't hurt.

And at the end of that long yet brief moment of agony... Namgung Dowi finally spoke.

They barely managed to overcome the urge to block their ears and listen to Namgung Dowi's voice.

But at that moment, what came out of Namgung Dowi's mouth was not a criticism, a reprimand, or a mockery.

It was something entirely unexpected, something none of those present could have anticipated.

Everyone who had their heads down widened their eyes and raised their heads. To make sure they didn't mishear something.

Naturally, all those gazes met Namgung Dowi's.

There was no expectation or emotion in Namgung Dowi's gaze. The moment everyone saw those indifferent and dark eyes, everyone realized. What mistake did they make.

And at that moment, Namgung Dowi spoke clearly once again.

"...Mount Hua."

It was a voice that was clear and devoid of any emotion, making it difficult to ignore.

"....Where is Mount Hua?"

[Note