Return of The Mount Hua – Chapter 944. I need to show you what real despair is (3)

Editor: Hoamzz

Co-Translator: Xoxo

He may not be the strongest.

It is Jang Ilso, said to be the greatest man of Evil Sects, but no one can know whether his military power is truly the greatest in the world. No, they cannot tell.

Why? The reason is all too simple.

Because it's utterly unimportant.

In Kangho, one's place is determined by their strength. To build prestige in this Mountain of Dao and Forest of Sword (도산검림/刀山劍林), one must prove their might time and again.

But this man... this man is the exception.

Paegun Jang Ilso.

His name stands uniquely alone in this Kangho.

Even if Jang Ilso's forces are no more than that of a third-rate street robber, everyone in the world will say this with one voice.

This man… This man is the most dangerous person in the current Kangho.

That deadly viper slowly made his way across the sandy beach. His steps were light rather than menacing, elegant rather than solemn. It was a leisurely walk as if he were merely out for a stroll nearby.

But not a single soul on Plum Blossom Island could take their eyes off him.

"……."

Swallowing dry saliva became involuntary.

No one has ever ordered them to cease fighting. But the battle naturally came to a halt.

At least Namgung Myung seemed to understand why.

No rabbit fights over territory when faced with a wolf.

The moment Jang Ilso showed up, everyone here intuitively realized it wasn't the time to fight each other.

"Hmmm."

A low, nasal voice was carried by the wind blowing over Plum Blossom Island.

"This…."

Jang Ilso's gaze shifted towards Namgung Hwang.

"Seems like quite a mess..."

Namgung Hwang clenched his fist tightly. It felt like a cold, scaly snake was tightening around his neck.

In fact, it wasn't just a feeling. In Namgung Hwang's eyes, ships that followed Jang Ilso turned around, not docking at the island but leisurely changing direction to block the river between Plum Blossom Island and Shaolin.

Now, even if Shaolin is willing to come to their aid, it will be difficult to break through.

Unlike the leisure walk, Jang Ilso was definitely tightening their breathing.

As if to confirm this, the martial artists of Myriad Man Manor disembarked and flocked behind Jang Ilso. Ho Gamyeong rushed out from between them and stood next to him as if he were guarding him.

Even knowing the gravity of the situation, Namgung Hwang felt like laughing.

Jang Ilso and escorts. Could there be a more mismatched pairing of words?

At that time, Jang Ilso's corners of mouth creepily curled up.

"How did the great Namgung Family... end up like this? Hmm?"

The snake-like gaze took the breath away from the sword warriors of the Namgung Family struggling from exhaustion. Jang Ilso took a deep breath and laughed.

He was delighted.

He found this dreadful scene shockingly enjoyable.

Azure Sky Namgung Family.

Aren't the eyes of those who shine with such brilliant prestige now stained with futility and despair?

Some weep in sheer frustration, others feel desolate at the realization that it's all over. Some gaze at him with eyes filled with venomous hatred, while others look at him in hope of some unlikely mercy.

All different eyes are focused on one person, Jang Ilso.

Yet, there's one thing they all have in common.

There is no longer any light of hope to be found.

Step. *Step*.

Jang Ilso stepped forward.

The pirates blocking the way of the Namgung Family retreat to the left and right with clearly frightened expressions. A surprisingly wide road opened up in a place where there were so many pirates that there was nowhere to step.

Jang Ilso nonchalantly walked down the path as if it were natural.

Finally, his step stopped in front of the Azure Sky Sword Squad of Namgung Family. Those who stood at the forefront of the formation. They were the pinnacle sword warriors that Namgung Family boasted to the world.

It was a short but fierce battle. Thanks to this, the Azure Sky Sword Squad, who were still standing, were covered in blood from cuts and stabs.

As Jang Ilso approached, they instinctively brandished their swords. And they bared their teeth like a cornered beast.

However, Jang Ilso approached them with completely unchanged steps, as if he could not even see the sword aimed at his head.

Flinch.

On the contrary, it was the sword tips of the Azure Sky Sword Squad that began to quiver.

In fact, it was a bizarre and terrifying situation where the ones holding the swords trembled, while the unarmed one smiled.

"Do- Don't..."

Standing right in front of Jang Ilso, a member of the Azure Sky Sword Squad managed to squeeze out a trembling voice. He threatened Jang Ilso, stretching out the tip of his sword as if he could pierce Jang Ilso’s neck at any moment.

But Jang Ilso knew that the sword could never pierce his neck.... No, it seemed like it didn't matter even if his throat was pierced.

When he finally stopped walking, the bloodstained tip of the sword was almost touching his throat.

Just one thrust.

Just by applying internal strength and pushing his arm, he will be able to make a hole in that pale white neck. It would take just a bit of courage.

But….

The sword couldn't go any further. It was just trembling so pitifully that it was hard to believe that it was being held by the sword of the Namgung Family. No, on the contrary, he became more intimidated and retreated.

"Hmm."

Jang Ilso, who smiled seductively, slowly reached out his hand and placed his fingers on the trembling blade of the sword.

Sarak!

At that moment, they saw it.

The tip of Jang Ilso's finger slightly split open, and a drop of bright red blood slid down the blade.

“…….”

Everyone had vague thoughts before seeing this scene. They don't think his hand will get hurt by this common sword. That's why it was terrifying.

But seeing that single drop of blood only tightened their hearts further.

A person who doesn't bleed and fears no death, or one who bleeds but still doesn't fear death.

Which one would be scarier?

Seureuruk.

The white finger adorned with lavish jewelry slowly moved up the pitifully trembling sword blade. After gently stroking the bloodstained blade, it finally reached the back of the hand of the Azure Sky Sword Squad member gripping the hilt tightly.

Jang Ilso's fingers, which climbed up his arms so slowly like a snake, finally grazed the Azure Sky Sword Squad member's shoulder, staining the pale cheek with blood before reaching his forehead.

It was nothing more than a very light and slow movement, yet everyone watched the scene, holding their breath as if spellbound.

At that moment.

Jang Ilso's hand, which was only extending a finger, fully opened.

Just when everyone flinched at the sudden change.

Tok.

Jang Ilso's large hand covered the Azure Sky Sword Squad member's head. It was like patting a little child's head.

"…Poor thing."

Jang Ilso's sweet voice, filled with pity, rang softly.

"You fought so hard..."

The Azure Sky Sword Squad member began to shiver. The sword warriors of Namgung Family, who were watching this, bit their lips until they bled.

What should they call this situation, where they receive consolation from their enemy, and find solace in that consolation for a moment?

When Jang Ilso appeared here, was there even one person who expected such a scene?

Jang Ilso shook his head slowly. And he opened his mouth again.

"And yet...”

He uttered the one line the sword warriors of the Namgung Family never wanted to hear.

"You were abandoned."

At that moment, everyone felt suffocated.

They had seen despair, then hope, and from the hill of hope, they plummeted into the abyss of hell. That was the one thing they truly wished they'd never hear.

"Poor thing…. Tsk, tsk, tsk."

Jang Ilso's eyebrows genuinely drooped as if he truly pitied them.

At that detestable scene, Namgung Hwang gritted his teeth until they were about to break. He couldn't bear to watch any longer.

"Jang... Ilso!"

Then Jang Ilso slowly turned around. He had an expression full of puzzlement as if he had forgotten that Namgung Hwang was behind him.

"…Don’t toy with us.”

"Toying?"

Jang Ilso repeated as if he had heard something amusing and then laughed.

"Yes! Toying! Martial artist may die, but they will not be insulted! If you're going to kill, do it cleanly!"

At Namgung Hwang's words, Jang Ilso raised the corners of his mouth.

"What a strange thing to say... the more I hear, the stranger it gets."

"…What's so strange about it?"

"When did I ever play tricks on you?"

“…….”

An innocent expression, as if it was really incredulous. There's no one who doesn't know that expression is an act. But that's not what matters. It was how much he could shake them with a single gesture, a single word.

"It wasn't me who toyed with you... wasn't it rather Shaolin?"

"What nonsense are you saying!"

"No?"

Jang Ilso raised his hand. The hand that had dramatically pointed to the skies slowly descended, now pointing across the river at Shaolin.

"Look."

"……."

"It's just a river. There's no reason not to cross. Wouldn't the name Shaolin cry if they couldn't cross a river just because those ships were blocking it?"

Namgung Hwang bit his lips.

"But what are they doing? They're just watching. Watching you all die here."

"Jang Ilso!"

"That's what..."

There was a clear laugh at Jang Ilso's mouth with his arms down.

"...toying is."

Namgung Hwang clenched his fists until his knuckles turned white.

Jang Ilso continued.

"They rush over as if they'd save you, like grand saviors, but they have no intention of shedding blood for you. That's their estimation of your worth."

Namgung Hwang knew that his anger wasn't because he was being toyed with.

It is so painful because there is nothing wrong with what the man says. A scream formed in his throat that he couldn't bear to let out.

"…So? You've come to mock us in our predicament?"

He spoke through gritted teeth.

"Don't be ridiculous, Jang Ilso! Namgung will never be a plaything! If death is determined anyway, then we will fight to the last man! Being abandoned won't tarnish the name of Namgung!"

It was such a wild word that he didn't even know what he was talking about.

But the voice, laden with indignation, clearly resonated with those bearing the name of Namgung. Light returns to the eyes of some who had lost focus.

“Hmm.”

Jang Ilso shook his head as if he was troubled.

“Step forward, Jang Ilso! I'll be the first to die!"

Namgung Hwang brought up all his power.

He must be the first to demonstrate that a martial artist proves himself through death, especially to the trembling sword warrior of Namgung.

Namgung Hwang and Jang Ilso looked at each other as if they were going to rush at any moment.

At the very moment when Namgung Hwang was about to rush in with his beloved sword, Jang Ilso's mouth opens very slowly.

"...Do you want me to save your life?"

Namgung Hwang abruptly halted. It was as if he had been struck by lightning.

Disbelief and astonishment, frustration and expectation.

All those emotions swept through Namgung Hwang's eyes in that short moment.

"What...?"

That was the whisper of a devil, something that should not be heeded. However, the current Namgung Hwang has no choice but to listen to those words.

He stuttered as if he couldn't open his mouth and struggled to finish his sentence.

"Wh… at...?"

Jang Ilso grinned broadly. He was like a devil that had crawled out of hell, speaking to humans with them at his feet.

With his red lips, he lightly spat out the same words as before in the same tone.

Was there anyone who was not shaken?

“…….”

A deep and heavy silence fell on Plum Blossom Island.

"Hahahaha…."

And in the midst of that silence.

The devil laughed.

"Ahahahahahahahahat! Euahahahahahahahat!”

Jang Ilso's laughter, along with the jingling of his ornaments, enveloped Plum Blossom Island like an eerie song from the ghost valley.

|Note