

Return of The Mount Hua – Chapter 995. What kind of wealth and fame am I going to enjoy? (5)

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"Hmm, then first..."

Hyun Jong caught everyone's attention. Now it was time to deal with the real issues.

"Baek Cheon."

"Yes, Sect Leader."

"How do you think Shaolin will move in the future?"

"....."

Baek Cheon, who was momentarily speechless, looked at Hyun Jong. This is because Hyun Jong has never asked such a question directly. Especially in a place like this where everyone is gathered.

But Baek Cheon quickly regained his composure.

"As Chung Myung said before, Shaolin is likely to remain inactive in the Yangtze River area for a while. For them to move, water fortress must retreat first, but water fortress still maintains its fleet."

"Hm, right."

Hyun Jong nodded, as if pleased with the response. At that time, Jo-Gol quickly added,

"Of course! The great bald head of Shaolin places great importance on face!"

"...That's also correct."

Now, even though Jo-Gol called Bop Jeong the great bald head, no one pointed out that fact.

"Then the key is when will that water fortress move?"

Hyun Jong thought hard and opened his mouth.

"Isn't Black Dragon King injured? I don't think he'll be able to stay there for long for his treatment?"

"Yes. I think so, too."

"So do I."

"So that means that this standoff won't last very long."

As soon as everyone's thoughts were gathered, Chung Myung opened his mouth.

“Probably not?”

"Huh?"

Hyun Jong looked at Chung Myung with a puzzled look.

“Did you think differently?”

“Yes, Sect Leader. At first glance, it seems correct to say that water fortress should step down because Black Dragon King is injured, but I don't think so.”

Baek Cheon asked as if he didn't understand.

“Why is that so? From water fortress's perspective, Black Dragon King needs to recover as soon as possible. In Evil Sects that respect the strong, the leader's martial art must be more important than anything else.”

"It's the opposite."

"Huh?"

“If Black Dragon King is still firmly in control of water fortress, it would have been as Sasuk said. But there's someone else here.”

Baek Cheon, who immediately realized who the ‘other guy’ was, let out a groan.

“Jang Ilso....”

“Black Dragon King has lost control of water fortress. Anyway, water fortress is a sect under the command of Evil Tyrant Alliance, and there is the Ryeonju here. Black Dragon King is injured, so there won't be a problem even if Jang Ilso temporarily takes over the command.”

"...That makes sense."

"And....”

Chung Myung smiled mockingly.

“There's no way that bastard will just leave this situation alone. He probably would have made any excuse to force Black Dragon King to withdraw from the front line. To steadily devour water fortress.”

Everyone had no choice but to agree with Chung Myung's words. How could Jang Ilso, who is nothing short of greed incarnate, miss such an opportunity?

“Will Black Dragon King stay still?”

“Black Dragon King?”

"Yes. Given Black Dragon King's personality, I don't think he would ever sit still, right? Jang Ilso is devouring all of his power."

"....."

At that moment, Chung Myung looked at Baek Cheon with a gaze that contained sorry of the world. Baek Cheon flinched and protested.

"What? Why!"

"Haa.... I call this someone as Sasuk. Aigo, Dongryong."

"Sto- Stop it, you bastard!"

Chung Myung shook his head in disbelief.

"Anyway, we'll see what happens."

Chung Myung looked at everyone and continued speaking.

"Either way, the standoff will likely last for a while. Maybe even longer than we expect."

"...Why?"

"It's long to explain."

While choosing his words, Chung Myung smiled and said.

"The thoughts of those with dark hearts tend to align."

Five Swords's eyes were still full of incomprehension. But Chung Myung just smiled softly.

* * *

From cloudy eyes to a face that has become noticeably gaunt.

Even if you wash your eyes, the once vibrant and commanding presence of Black Dragon King was nowhere to be found. The darkened face only brought about pity.

Black Dragon King looked ahead blankly. To be precise, to Jang Ilso, who was sitting cross-legged on a large chair.

"Let's see..."

Jang Ilso's lips, which were smiling as if they had been drawn, slowly opened.

"How are you feeling?"

This man has always been a threat. Like a venomous snake harboring lethal poison.

So, the reason why Black Dragon King now feels that this man is especially dangerous is not only because he lost an arm.

"Thanks to your concern..." ‘

Black Dragon King paused for a moment and lowered his head.

Because he didn't want to be seen. A face that must have been a mixture of anger, hatred, and fear.

"...I am recovering quickly."

"Thank goodness."

Jang Ilso, who was leaning heavily on the chair, looked down at Black Dragon King with a relaxed expression.

Just a few days ago, he was standing on equal footing with Jang Ilso. Although there was a difference between the positions of Ryeonju and Buryeonju of Evil Tyrant Alliance, at least the relationship was not one in which Black Dragon King unilaterally bowed down to Jang Ilso.

This is because the position of Ryeonju occupied by Jang Ilso wasn't seized by force.

It is true that he was gradually losing the initiative to Jang Ilso, but there was certainly room for counterattack even for Black Dragon King.

At least before the situation turned out this way.

"Recovering, you say..."

Jang Ilso muttered as if he were reflecting on Black Dragon King's words.

"Yes, that's right. You need to recover quickly. You have to seek revenge and reclaim your former glory, don't you?"

"....."

"For now, you'll have to focus on recovery. It will take some time to get used to using the dao with your left hand."

It felt like laughter was audible.

Although there was clearly no trace of laughter in Jang Ilso's voice, Black Dragon King kept hearing hallucinations of Jang Ilso laughing mockingly in his ears.

No, he might actually be laughing.

Although it is not evident in his voice or face, Jang Ilso might very well be bursting a triumphant laugh inside.

"No need to worry. I'll take care of the minor issues. For now, just focus on regaining your martial art."

Eudeudeuk.

Black Dragon King gritted his teeth.

Step back?

He hasn't even been able to face water fortress since he was released from Mount Hua. Even stepping down from the front line requires at least discussion and instructions. But now, Black Dragon King was thoroughly isolated from water fortress.

As the situation was like this, one thought constantly haunted Black Dragon King's mind.

Was all of this really just a coincidence?

Jang Ilso's timely support, the allowance of Mount Hua and Namgung advance to Plum Blossom Island, and the non-intervention until the Black Dragon King's life was in critical danger....

Were they really just coincidence?

At first, he dismissed it as an excessive thought. No matter how much Jang Ilso was, he couldn't have predicted that Black Dragon King would be defeated by Mount Hua Chivalrous Sword. It just so happened that everything flowed in a direction favorable to Jang Il So, and he merely did not miss the opportunity given to him.

Yes, that's what he believed.

That is, until he looked into Jang Ilso's eyes.

The moment he saw those eyes looking in his direction like a venomous snake eyeing its prey, Black Dragon King had no choice but to realize everything.

"Is there a problem?"

Jang Ilso's voice was calm. Black Dragon King managed to swallow his anger. Anger that cannot be vented is not anger. It's just the sorrow of the weak.

"...No, Ryeonju."

"Hmm."

Jang Ilso let out a small snort.

"Ryeonju, huh..."

He murmured to himself for a moment before slowly standing up.

At the same time, the accessories worn on his body continued to jingle and emit sharp sounds.

Anyone who knows Jang Ilso is bound to be familiar with this sound. However, that unremarkable sound felt more terrifying to the current Black Dragon King than the wailing of ghosts from hell.

Step. Step. Step.

Jang Ilso slowly approached Black Dragon King.

Black Dragon King's shoulders began to tremble slightly.

He is not one to fear death. If it were a matter that would simply end in death, he would have accepted death with dignity.

But Jang Ilso wasn't someone who would be satisfied with just that. He would thoroughly exploit even his death to take everything away: water fortress, his honor, everything he had built would be engulfed in the red flames of Jang Il So, leaving not even ashes behind.

Step. Step.

Finally, Jang Ilso came one step in front of Black Dragon King and stopped. He smiled at Black Dragon King. It was an extremely gentle smile.

"Why are you trembling?"

“.....”

“Do you think....”

A languid voice seeped out of his red lips.

“I’m going to kill you?”

Black Dragon King closed his eyes.

He finally understood. Why are others so afraid of Jang Ilso?

Naturally, tigers do not fear snakes. They avoid them because their venom is unpleasant and there's no real gain from them. Thus, snakes and tigers can coexist.

But...

What if the snake was so huge that it could swallow a tiger whole and still have room to spare? What if it wasn't a snake, but a huge venomous python (독망(毒蟒)) opening its huge maw wide before your eyes?

It would be stranger if the tiger did not fear the snake.

“No need to worry. I won't do that.”

Jang Ilso continued with a smile.

“I think I am a softer person than everyone thinks... and yet people were afraid of me. Do you know why?”

Before he knows it, Jang Ilso’s tone of voice has completely changed. It was now perfectly that of treating a subordinate. However, Black Dragon King could not even utter a word of protest against him.

"In their hearts..."

Jang Ilso’s eyes glowed a deep blue.

"Lies hostility."

“...”

"Dogs do not fear their masters. They find comfort and joy in them. They may fear the stick used for training, but what they offer to their masters is nothing but reverence. What a dog fears is its enemy. Do you understand?"

“...Ryeonju.”

"Then let me ask you."

A sharp smile crept across Jang Ilso’s lips.

“In your heart....”

Kkararak.

The rings hidden in his sleeves made a menacing sound.

Although it was not that loud of a noise, it sounded more thunderous than actual thunder to Black Dragon King.

“What lies within?”

Black Dragon King opened his eyes and faced Jang Ilso.

The moment he saw those two eyes, which, contrary to their bright appearance, were infinitely gloomy, something broke inside Black Dragon King.

"I am..."

"Right. Answer me."

“I, I....”

Black Dragon King's body slowly bent down.

Kuung!

Soon, his knees met the ground.

With a face filled with fear and terror, Black Dragon King trembled and lowered his head with difficulty.

"What lies within is... merely reverence."

Jang Ilso's gaze was cold as he looked down at the kneeling Black Dragon King. Jang Ilso, who had been silent for a while, leisurely extended his hand.

The white hand adorned with five-colored rings quietly touched Black Dragon King's head. At that moment, Black Dragon King's whole body flinched and convulsed briefly.

"Hmm."

A short snort escaped Jang Ilso's lips, and a smile formed at the edge of his mouth.

"Right."

His white hand slowly caressed Black Dragon King's head.

"You're a good boy."

The moon in the sky slowly hid behind the clouds. A terribly dense darkness quietly settled over the Yangtze River.

[Note