

Chapter 1272

A tiger inside a poisonous trap. (2)

The venomous serpent-like swords, coiled with hunger, lunged forward. If it were a regular sword, one could twist their body to evade, but now there was no such option. The whip-like snake swords could change direction at any moment. Even if one tried to dodge, they couldn't prevent the sword from coiling around their body. If those sharp chains of the snake swords wrapped around the body, the inevitable outcome was as clear as day.

Thud!

In that crucial moment, Chung Myung forcefully stomped the ground. The inner strength, dormant deep within, surged like a dragon, swirling through his entire body. Gathering the purest energy from all under heavens, his inner strength generated an explosive force in an instant.

With a resounding bang, the coiled snake swords around Chung Myung's sword tightened as if they were about to snap. In that moment, he forcefully pulled the Dark Plum Sword towards himself.

Thud!

A heavy sound reverberated. Simultaneously, those who were holding Chung Myung back with all their might were sent flying like arrows.

For a moment, confusion flashed in their eyes, which were previously cold and composed. Is it because despite the efforts of more than five individuals, they were easily thrown away due to the formidable momentum?

No.

It's because they knew what is flying towards the place they were pulled to.

The Blood Sword Squad's members who were being dragged hastily released their swords and tried to pull away. However, the strong suction force from the snake swords riding on them prevented their hands from letting go.

'Oh, no...'

Even as they were being dragged, Chung Myung's face, sneering sarcastically, was visible. His face looked more sinister than a demon's.

Thunk! Thunk! Thunk!

The snake swords, flying like vipers, plunged into the backs of the Blood Sword Squad's members.

«Guh...»

They stared down in disbelief at the snake swords protruding from their abdomens. Shaking uncontrollably, they reluctantly raised their heads. Their gaze met with Chung Myung's smiling face.

«It was quite impressive, but...»

Paaah!

The descending Dark Plum Sword severed a Blood Sword Squad member vertically in front of them.

«That's not enough.»

Chung Myung rushed forward, drenched in pouring blood. Despite the agile snake swords reaching out towards his entire body, Chung Myung was not one to be hit twice in a row.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!!

Dark Plum Sword, flying through the air, swiftly struck the heads of the snake swords. The once wriggling snake swords were sent backward like powerless serpents pierced through their heads.

While snake swords could exert tremendous force when pulled, they couldn't muster even half the strength of a regular sword when piercing through something.

With their momentum lost after being caught once, snake swords were no longer a threat to Chung Myung.

Paaah!!

Chung Myung kicked the ground with even greater force, accelerating further.

Before him lay only five Blood Sword Squad members remaining and beyond them, the vast expanse of the sea. And there, disappearing into the distant horizon, were Cheonumaeng's ships.

Rushing forward like a released arrow, Chung Myung reached the vicinity of the Blood Sword Squad's members fiercely wielding their snake swords. In that moment, confusion flickered in their eyes.

Paaah!

Chung Myung, twisting his body and sidestepping swiftly, swung a fierce slash. The momentum behind his sword seemed capable of cleaving through anything that dared to oppose it.

An impossible strike for the Blood Sword Squad's members to block with their skills alone! Yet, in that moment, a sinister gleam flickered in their eyes.

Shalalalalak!

Snake swords aimed at Chung Myung swiftly withdrew like flashes of light, enveloping the bodies of the Blood Sword Squad's members.

Thunk! Thunk!

As the snake swords wrapped around the bodies of the Blood Sword Squad's members, crimson blood spurted forth. It was an act beyond comprehension, akin to self-harm. Yet, without a single blink, one of them threw themselves in front of Chung Myung's sword.

Chung Myung's eyes widened ever so slightly in that moment.

Kwaaaang!

The bodies of the Blood Squad's members, entangled by the snake swords around them, were torn apart in an instant. It didn't matter that the snake swords were wrapped around

them like armor, or how much internal energy was infused into those swords, it was impossible for swords connected by mere steel wire to block Chung Myung's full-force strike.

Their torn bodies unable to withstand the force, were violently propelled backward. The Dark Plum Sword, which had shattered the bodies of three people in an instant, did not lose its momentum and struck the fourth body.

Kwagagagak!

The sword blades and tendons intertwined with Chung Myung's sword. Even the muscles and bones of the human body felt like tough rubber as they constricted around Dark Plum Sword.

Kwaaaang!

However, Chung Myung's sword relentlessly cleaved through the fourth body without hesitation. Suddenly chilling sensation crept up Chung Myung's spine.

Instinct. No, perhaps intuition.

Something indescribable detected the danger approaching from behind. In the heat of battle, had Chung Myung's focus wavered just a little more, this stealthy approach would have gone unnoticed.

But as Chung Myung attempted to shift his gaze backward, the last Blood Sword Squad member standing in front rushed forward, plunging their body onto the Dark Plum Sword.

Kagagak!

The snake sword, now wrapped around the body pierced by the Dark Plum Sword, began to tighten and twist. It was a resolve that showed no intention of letting go of the sword, even if it meant becoming minced inside out.

Chung Myung's gaze reflexively turned back. At a speed beyond the word «fast,» the figure of Goe Yang, the Blood Sword Squad's leader, flying towards them, came into view.

Swooaeeak!

The world seemed to blur hazily as if fading away. Amidst the distorted reality, the only thing visible was the ominous, darkened tip of Goe Yang's sword rushing towards him.

Pudddeudduk!

The Blood Sword Squad member, perhaps sensing the impending danger, grabbed hold of Chung Myung's sword with all his might. Whether he managed to extract even the small amount of innate energy or not, a stream of crimson blood gushed like a waterfall from his mouth.

Yet, in that moment, Chung Myung, with a smile tugging at the corners of his lips, simply let go of the Dark Plum Sword he had been gripping.

Kwaduk!

As the balance of power collapsed, the Dark Plum Sword, receiving the force with which the Blood Sword Squad member had been pulling, impaled itself into his chest, only hilt protruding from his body.

Chung Myung didn't miss a beat. He swiftly spun his body, utilizing the recoil to lash out with the elbow towards the hilt of the Dark Plum Sword.

Clang!

With a brief but powerful blast, the Dark Plum Sword pierced straight through the Blood Sword Squad member's chest.

Like the swaying of a willow tree, Chung Myung brushed past the man's side, effortlessly catching the handle of the Dark Plum Sword and smoothly pivoting his body.

At that moment, the menacing gaze of Goe Yang, who had approached within arm's reach, and Chung Myung's chilling eyes clashed in the air.

Shoaaaak!

Like a brushstroke drawn across the air, the clash of swords painted a scene of confrontation between Goe Yang's and Chung Myung's swords.

Kwaaaang!

The seawater, unable to overcome the aftermath of the collision of physical power and inner strength, erupted into the air, as if the sky and earth were being overturned.

The surging seawater momentarily blocked the view of everyone witnessing the spectacle.

Shoaaaaaa.

The seawater soon cascaded down like rain. When the coast reappeared, only Goe Yang stood there alone.

Thud.

Goe Yang, shaking, knelt down, one knee giving out.

From a gash that ran from his left shoulder to his right side of the abdomen, blood flowed into the blue sea.

«Danju!»

A Blood Sword Squad member rushed over in surprise, but Goe Yang paid no attention, his gaze sharply fixed on the distant sea.

In the blink of an eye, Chung Myung was soaring above that sea, so far away that there was no chance of catching him.

«...Hwasan Geomhyeop.»

Goe Yang chuckled. Between his twisted lips, blood-soaked teeth were revealed.

«As formidable as ever.»

Having thrown his subordinates as a bait and seizing the opportunity for a surprise attack with all his might, yet this was the outcome.

However, he was neither disappointed nor discouraged.

«This is just the beginning...»

Goe Yang grasped his chest tightly. The wound was so deep that his internal organs could spill out if he coughed, yet it didn't endanger his life. For now, it was enough. If he hadn't died, it meant there was still a chance.

«Prepare for a chase.»

«Yes!»

Goe Yang surveyed the coastline stained with battle.

«... Well, this turned out pretty bad.»

Though it was a prepared event, seeing the outcome with his own eyes made him burst into a bitter laugh.

The dazzling white sandy beach, typical of the Southern Sea, was now soaked in deep crimson blood. And the bodies scattered across it were so gruesome that even someone with a strong stomach would feel a chill.

Finding an intact corpse among them was difficult. Even if two evil sects had fought with the resolve to annihilate each other, the outcome wouldn't have been this grim.

«Keuhhh.»

What made Goe Yang even more incredulous was that most of these corpses were members of Maninbang. While some bodies of Haenam's disciples were scattered among them, they were so few in number that they were hardly visible unless intentionally sought out.

It was a scene of unparalleled one sided massacre, where the only expression was one of overwhelming defeat.

«It's almost laughable.»

At the chilling voice from beside him, Goe Yang turned his head. Ho Gamyong, his face smeared with blood, was approaching him. He spoke coldly.

«If the God knew, he'd laugh it off as absurd.»

«No, he'd praise it.»

«...»

«Hunting is just like that,»

Goe Yang said, almost whispering, as he grinned menacingly.

There's a difference between hunting animals and hunting humans. Animals hunt weaker prey, but humans hunt stronger prey. You don't necessarily have to be stronger than your prey to hunt them.

Soon, Hwasan Geomhyeop would understand this too. It's about instilling the fear of being hunted by those weaker than oneself, and the humiliation of being trampled by those who are weaker than you.

«Now, all we have to do is track them down properly. They're like mice trapped in poison.»

«Or like a tiger inside a poisonous trap.»

«Either way, it's poisonous for them.»

«Hmm.»

Ho Gamyong didn't offer any rebuttal and instead gazed out at the sea.

The direction the ships were heading was Gangnam. While it might seem like a wise choice compared to going elsewhere, either way, it's a death trap.

«We need to tighten our grip,»

Goe Yang said, just as he was about to nod.

«C-commander!»

«What?»

Those who had pushed the boat to pursue the ships came running in contemplation.

«The bottom of the ship, it's been punctured! All of them!»

«If this continues, even if we push them out of the sandbank, the ships will...»

Ho Gamyong stared intently at the messenger before shifting his gaze back to the sea. The ships were now much farther away.

«You've taken a hit.»

Ho Gamyong wasn't one to usually fall for such obvious tactics.

'No matter how composed I try to be, the appearance of Hwasan Geomhyeop was quite surprising.'

A rare hint of annoyance flickered in Ho Gamyong's eyes.

«Dispatch a search group, arrange the ships! Immediately!»

«Yes, commander!»

With a stern gaze, he watched the ships drifting further away.