

Chapter 1264

Don't let them live. (4)

The silence that descended upon the tumultuous battlefield could be considered an extraordinary event. Amidst the chaos of clashing swords and biting each other, the situation halted with the presence of one person and a single word.

‘Is that even allowed?’

And Gwak Hwanso felt not only the shock but also a profound sense of unease at Chung Myung's words.

Who was Ho Gamyong? He was not only a military commander of Maninbang, but also undoubtedly the most important person within Maninbang after Jang Ilso.

No, at this moment, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call him the Second in Command in Sapaeryeon, the infamous rulers of Gangnam.

Despite numerous prominent figures present in the world, when considering their importance throughout the entire Gangho, he was undoubtedly someone whose significance couldn't be ignored, even if not within the top ten, he would definitely be among the top twenty.

But who? Who was he?

‘Is that guy really out of his mind?’

No matter how dense a person may be, with consistent observation, some level of understanding is usually attained. However, the more he observed, the less he seemed to comprehend.

«...It seems like we have met.»

Now, he was staring at Ho Gamyong with his head tilted, utterly bewildered. Looking at such Chung Myung, he suddenly found himself questioning the fundamental nature of «understanding.»

«Um... Chung Myung-ah.»

In the chilling atmosphere, Yoon Jong approached Chung Myung cautiously and whispered to him.

«It's Ho Gamyong, Ho Gamyong.»

«...Ho, what?»

«Ho Gamyong!»

«Who's that?»

Yoon Jong's face contorted strangely.

«Ho Gamyong! You bastard! Ho Gamyong! That's the name that came up every time we had a meeting! The military commander of Maninbang!»

«Oh!»

Chung Myung's eyes sparkled as he clapped his hands.

«I know who he is!»

«Finally remembered?»

«That annoying guy who always followed that bastard Jang Ilso around and kept bothering us!»

«...»

Yoon Jong instinctively covered his eyes with one hand.

‘Well, it’s a relief that he knows now, even if it’s like that.’

Better than not knowing.

Where was it, that...?

«Ah, sorry.»

Chung Myung chuckled apologetically and looked straight at Ho Gamyong.

«I’m not usually bad at remembering faces...»

«You’re pretty bad.»

«It’s really bad. Chung Myung-ah.»

«No, you’re not. That guy just doesn’t consider those kinds of people as human.»

«...That’s a reasonable point.»

Regardless of what was said beside him, Chung Myung chuckled and continued,

«Every time I see him, there’s always someone who stands out too much with him. Sorry about that.»

«...»

«To be honest, it’s the truth. There is a man dancing in front of me with make up on, how could he not catch the eye? It’s not my fault.»

Once again, a strange silence descended.

It was, how should one put it, a very misguided thing to say...

‘But it makes sense.’

‘Honestly, Jang Ilso is the one at fault here.’

‘It’s not a sin to be plain...’

Chung Myung grinned and looked at Ho Gamyong.

«It seems like you sometimes go around separately, without Jang Ilso. Are you okay by yourself? Lonely?»

All eyes turned towards Ho Gamyong.

In truth, it was a rather humiliating remark. No matter what anyone said, Ho Gamyong was the unwavering commander of Maninbang. Such words couldn’t help but bring a sense of disgrace to him. It was nothing short of an insult being poured directly onto his face.

Especially... In a world of evil sects, the fact that Ho Gamyong, who wasn’t particularly exceptional in martial arts, had reached his current position was only possible because of Jang Ilso’s absolute protection.

Though Chung Myung’s words were few, they carried an implicit insult: «You’re nothing but a fox under protection of a tiger named Jang Ilso.»

Upon closer examination, considering the truth behind those words, the humiliation felt by Ho Gamyong would only deepen.

Everyone watched for Ho Gamyong's reaction. They were curious to see how he would express his anger.

Yet, even under everyone's eyes, Ho Gamyong remained expressionless. With his usual cold gaze, he casually parted his lips.

«Though it's quite rude... if the other party is Hwasan Geomhyeop, rudeness can't be avoided.»

It was blunt, yet somehow, it made the voice more resonant in their ears. Chung Myung's eyes narrowed slightly.

Ho Gamyong nodded quietly with a composed expression.

«Actually, it's an honor that renowned Hwasan Geomhyeop remembers my face.»

There was no trace of sarcasm in his voice. He simply accepted Chung Myung's provocation calmly.

And with those words, he compelled those present to reconsider the image of Hwasan Geomhyeop once again.

The military commander of Maninbang, or rather, now to be called the military commander of Sapaeryeon, Ho Gamyong, isn't he expressing gratitude to Chung Myung for acknowledging him? Those words made those standing with them realize just how remarkable it was to be in their presence.

«But... it's a little surprising.»

Ho Gamyong's gaze shifted away from Chung Myung and landed on each of the other prominent figures of Cheonumaeng. It was a penetrating stare, as if seeing through them.

«Why did you come all the way to this distant land of the Southern Sea?»

The air chilled suddenly. Chung Myung clicked his tongue disapprovingly.

«What a dull fellow.»

He tried to shake him slightly, but he didn't budge at all.

Chung Myung knows from experience, this type is the most difficult to deal with.

«No fun in surprising you.»

«No.»

Unexpectedly, Ho Gamyong shook his head slightly.

«I'm quite surprised, actually. I never imagined I would meet you all here.»

«...»

«Ryeonju's words were not wrong. It's not the strong that are truly terrifying, but the madmen...»

He can't understand. Neither this situation nor Cheonumaeng's intentions.

No. It's not accurate to say he doesn't understand the intentions.

He understands the intentions. They probably wanted to save Haenam. Whether for their righteousness or to secure more forces to confront Sapaeryeon in the future.

What Ho Gamyong doesn't understand is not that aspect.

«May I ask a question?»

«Of course.»

«Haenam, one of Gupailbang, is undoubtedly important. But... do you really think that your lives here are less significant than Haenam?»

Some of their expressions changed at his words.

It was a calm statement, yet it struck at the heart of the matter even more.

«To say that one should not make mistakes is, to put it bluntly, wrong. Because no matter who you are, people are bound to make mistakes. What's important is not to avoid making mistakes altogether, but rather, not to make fatal mistakes.»

«...»

«In my opinion, what you've done now seems to fall into that category of fatal mistakes.

What do you think?»

Was he not surprised?

There was no falsehood in any of Ho Gamyong's words. He can't remember the last time he was so taken aback.

Even when signals were seen behind him, he thought it was just Haenam playing tricks. He never imagined he would see those Cheonumaeng bastards and Hwasan Geomhyeop here.

But one moment of surprise is enough.

«I don't particularly like saying things like this...»

For the first time, a faint smile appeared on Ho Gamyong's lips.

«It seems that unexpected gains are made precisely at times like this. Who would have thought we'd come to deal with petty bastards like Haenam and end up seeing you?»

Baek Cheon's expression hardened.

‘Ho Gamyong... Jang Ilso's military commander.»

He thought for sure they would be greatly surprised.

He expected them to attack in panic as soon as they saw the situation here.

But instead of that, Ho Gamyong slowly halted the battlefield and observed them. This fact exerted a different kind of pressure on Baek Cheon.

Jang Ilso is a capricious beast.

And Demonic Cult is a beast soaked in madness.

That's generally how it was. Until now, the people they faced were unpredictable, frightening individuals whom ordinary people couldn't fathom due to their madness.

But Ho Gamyong is different.

There is no trace of madness in those cold, calm eyes, unlike what is seen in Jang Ilso or a Bishop.

All that is visible is a rational intellect and an astounding composure that sends shivers down the spine.

‘So... Is he a hunter?’

Being chased by a hungry beast from behind is indeed a frightening thing.
But what about being chased by someone who hunts you from behind?
Can it really be said that it's better than being chased by a hungry beast?
It was at that moment when Baek Cheon thought that the fact that someone like Ho Gamyong had come here might be an even greater misfortune.

«A mistake?»

Chunf Myung's sharp voice echoed.

«Well, it could be.»

He chuckled and took a step forward.

«But there's something you might not know.»

«Hmm?»

«A mistake, you see.»

Chung Myung's lips parted slightly, revealing his gleaming white teeth.

«It only holds meaning for someone who has the ability to spot and exploit it!»

Swish!

In an instant, Chung Myung's Dark Plum Sword whirled like lightning. Crimson aura burst into the air like a flash of blood.

Swish!

The sword energy soared toward Ho Gamyong's neck at an incredible speed. However, Ho Gamyong, without any intention of dodging, stared calmly at the approaching aura.

«Hah!»

At that moment, with an excited voice, someone near Ho Gamyong leaped forward at a terrifying speed.

Just as he blocked the path in front of Ho Gamyong.

Boom!

The sword and sword energy collided, and the crimson aura scattered in all directions like fireworks.

«Charge!»

«Got it!»

Baek Cheon, who came to his senses, grabbed the collar of Haenam's disciple who was still dazed and shoved him backward.

«Get on board! Right now!»

«Yes? Oh... Yes!»

Finally regaining their senses, the disciples of Haenam rushed toward the ship in unison.

Meanwhile, the disciples of Hwasan, since the moment Chung Myung unleashed his sword energy, were sprinting towards the ship.

«Don't let them escape!»

«Yes!»

At the cry from somewhere, the main force of Maninbang also surged forward with all their might.

The once silent battlefield erupted into chaos in an instant.

Goe Yang, the leader of the Blood Sword Squad, quietly watched Chung Myung's back as he ran, tapping his wrist.

«...Hwasan Geomhyeop.»

As he murmured, a cold voice echoed in his ears.

«He is not someone you can handle.»

Tap, tap, tap.

Goe Yang let out a chilling laugh.

He is the Danju of Maninbang. Unless it's Jang Ilso, there's no reason for anyone in the world to hear such words. However, instead of feeling bad, he seemed rather pleased, almost as if he were enjoying himself.

«Who knows? He is a monster.»

The throbbing pain in his wrist confirmed this fact.

The clash between the sword energy casually released and the powerfully swung sword resulted in an unexpected outcome. Of course, it's difficult to draw conclusions about one's power based solely on this, but it was enough to indicate how strong the opponent was.

«But... there's no need for that.»

Goe Yang revealed this with a smile.

«We're not fighting, we're hunting. It's like a pack of wolves tearing apart a tiger. We are not here to compete.»

At his words, Ho Gamyong nodded slowly.

«Exactly.»

Whatever it takes, it doesn't matter.

This is Hainan, the southernmost tip of the Central Plains. Whether it's a tiger or a dragon... No, even something surpassing a dragon, anyone who sets foot here will meet only one fate.

«Make sure to kill him.»

«Don't we report it first to Ryeonju?»

«...Even if we report after killing him, it won't be too late.»

At that, the leader of the Blood Sword Squad showed a sinister smile.

«If you take responsibility, then I welcome it.»

Turning his head to look at Chung Myung, his eyes glinted with murder.