

Reaper of the Drifting Moon

Light Novel: Volume 3 Episode 14

Manhwa: N/A

Chapter 64

Gongseon's death soon became known throughout the White Flower Room.

It was not an issue that they could hide. And Jeonghwa also had no intention of hiding the news. Jeonghwa was more angry than anyone at Gongseon's death.

She summoned her former disciples and ordered them to prepare for war.

If it were the usual, she would have informed her master, the Abbess of Nine Calamities, and asked for permission. But it was impossible for her, who is now blinded by revenge, to think logically.

The Emei sect and the White Flower Room immediately entered a wartime stance.

It was Yong Seol-ran who was most perplexed by the sudden situation.

Yong Seol-ran, who had been preparing to return to the Emei sect for a while, ran to Gongseon's residence. Gongseon's corpse was cleaned up, but the traces of the blood she shed remained.

Yong Seol-ran looked at the bloodstains on the floor for a moment, then looked around.

'Where the hell did the assassin infiltrate?'

No matter how much she thought about it, the only place the assassin could enter was the ceiling.

Yong Seol-ran flew and climbed up the girders.

If an assassin had infiltrated this place, there would certainly be traces of it. However, no matter how much Yong Seol-ran turned on the light and searched, no trace of the assassin was found.

There was dust piled up on the girder.

If anyone had been up here, there should have been some smashed marks of dust.

But no such trace was found anywhere.

"Then where did he infiltrate?"

After that, she spent a long time looking for a place where the assassin might have infiltrated. However, no trace was found anywhere.

"How?"

Yong Seol-ran felt goosebumps rising up her spine. It was the first time she felt such emotions since that day, seven years ago.

"Could it be him? No! He's definitely dead. The Qingcheng sect's Mu Jeong-jin definitely finished him off."

Agave denied her imagination.

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Gongseon's death was also passed on to the Black Cloud Mercenary Group.

Now that they are on the same ship sharing a common destiny, Zhang Mu-ryang reacted more sensitively to Gongseon's death than anyone else.

"A great disciple was assassinated? A direct disciple of Jeonghwa, who is a key figure in the Emei sect, that kind of person was assassinated? Furthermore, within the confines of the White Flower Room?"

When Zhang Mu-ryang first heard the news, he thought it was absurd.

The White Flower Room might be made up of women, but it was a sect that could never be looked down on. Moreover, with the full support of the Emei sect, the level of force each disciple had was beyond normal.

Of course, the security of the White Flower Room was also strict.

Infiltrating a place with such strict security without leaving a trace and taking a life of a disciple in public? Even Zhang Mu-ryang himself couldn't do that.

"It's impossible unless you're an assassin with professional training."

"As far as I know, there are no assassins who have reached that kind of level in Sichuan."

"Are you sure?"

"Since the collapse of the Blood Shadow Group seven years ago, a new group of assassins has not come down in Sichuan Province."

Yang Woo-jeong answered in a confident tone.

"Is that so?"

"It may be possible for the assassins of Hundred Wraith Union, but they are not active even in the distant Sichuan Province.

"Yeah. There's no reason for them to intervene in the Sichuan conflict."

Zhang Mu-ryang shook his head.

Hundred Wraith Union was the number one assassin group in Jianghu. They appeared suddenly after the War of Demons and Heavens and succeeded in the quest that everyone said was impossible.

Once anyone becomes their target, no one would survive.

As assassins of the Hundred Wraith Union, they said that even if their target hides in a place like Cheolongseong¹, they can always find them and kill them.

However, their field of activity was thoroughly fixed at the center of Jianghu. No evidence has been found that they have been active in Sichuan for at least several years.

"Then who is it? Did the Qingcheng sect really send an assassin?"

"The Qingcheng sect is a prestigious faction that everyone knows. Even though they say they are in a dispute, hiring an assassin against the Emei sect is not in line with the Qingcheng sect's philosophy. They would rather moved directly than hiring an assassin or else their reputation will fall."

"Hm!"

Yang Woo-jeong's words made sense, so Zhang Mu-ryang could only utter a muffled voice. Hiring an assassin is easy, but if the truth is found out, the Qingcheng sect will be criticized by Jianghu.

It was too risky for a prestigious sect, such as a Qingcheng sect, to choose.

The harm was far greater than the gain.

No matter how much he thought about it, it was unlikely that the Qingcheng sect would have hired an assassin.

"Then who? Did a third party intervene?"

Zhang Mu-ryang felt a strong sense of crisis.

One of the reasons he survived long rolls on the battlefield was the insight he gained from his many experiences. His insight, which produced the best results by instantaneously combining instinct and reason, was close to the level of prophecy.

Thanks to this, he was able to detect a crisis in advance and escape from many dangers.

Now his insight was warning of a crisis.

At that moment, there was a figure that popped into Zhang's mind.

"Call Maun right now."

"Are you saying Maun?"

"Yeah! Right now."

"Alright."

Yang Woo-jeong immediately executed Zhang Mu-ryang's orders.

After a while, Maun, who was watching Pyo-wol from the guest house came in.

"Did you call for me, Captain?."

"What did he do last night?"

"Are you referring to the first-class surveillance target?"

"Yes."

"He not once left the guest house."

"Have you not missed any of his movements?"

"Four people took turns monitoring. But none of them detected any anomalies."

"Really? You never took your eyes off of him?"

"It's true. In the last four days, he's never been out of the room. He only goes out of his room for dinner."

At Maun's answer, Zhang Mu-ryang frowned.

'Does he really have nothing to do with this incident?'

Then Maun said cautiously,

"To be honest, I don't know why I should be monitoring him. In the last four days, he hasn't been out of the guest house even once. He also never had any contact with outsiders. I don't see any reason to monitor him anymore."

Maun omitted the story that he was unable to detect Pyo-wol presence while he was in the room. If he did, it would seemed like Maun was revealing his own incompetence.

Without knowing that, Zhang Mu-ryang asked.

"Is there any chance he noticed your presence?"

"That's almost impossible. No, it's impossible. As you know, we don't make mistakes in this kind of thing. That's why you entrusted us with this mission, didn't you?"

"Huuu!"

Zhang Mu-ryang let out a sigh.

'Is it not really him? No! Something is still strange. For him to not go out for four days? Is that possible?'

Zhang Mu-ryang felt a strong sense of incongruity. However, he did not know exactly what the source of his feelings was.

'There's no point in monitoring him any more than this.'

Maun and his colleagues had already lost their motivation. If they continue to monitor Pyo-wol in their current state, they will not be able to concentrate and they will not get the results Zhang Mu-ryang wanted.

Above all, now was the time to strengthen their surveillance on the Qingcheng sect.

"Maun!"

"Yes, Captain!"

"Let's put on hold observing the top-level monitoring targets for the time being, and focus on identifying the movements of the Qingcheng sect."

"Alright."

Maun answered in a loud voice. Now he thought he had done his job properly. The last four days have been difficult for him. It was the first time he realized that monitoring can be so tedious and difficult.

That was then.

"Sir!"

A voice was heard from the outside.

"What's going on?"

"A messenger has come from the Emei sect."

"Messenger?"

"Yes! They're asking you to come into the White Flower Room right now."

"Alright."

Zhang Mu-ryang realized that the time has come. He got up from his seat and said to Yang Woo-jeong.

"Be prepared for any fight at any time."

"Okay, Captain! Don't worry and go."

"Hm!"

Zhang Wu Liang nodded and went outside. Outside, the Emei sect's messenger was waiting for him. Things were becoming more urgent than he thought.

Zhang Mu-ryang brought Yang Woo-jeong and the Go Dosa into the White Flower Room. The White Flower Room was bright as daylight because of the numerous lanterns illuminating the area.

The Emei sect and all the disciples of the White Flower Room thoroughly searched the area to catch the beast that killed Gongseon.

However, no traces of the assassin were found anywhere.

It is not even known how the assassin infiltrated. Because of that, the entire White Flower Room was turned upside down.

Go Dosa whispered.

"This looks serious. I don't know if we boarded the wrong ship or not. But we can't go back now..."

"It's more of a good thing for us. If this happens, they'll depend on us a lot, so we'll be able to get more out of it."

"I guess so too. But we have to be careful."

"I know."

Zhang Mu-ryang nodded and moved forward.

He could feel the stinging gaze of the White Flower Room and the Emei sect's disciples.

Some even looked at them with hostility.

The Black Cloud Mercenary Group and the assassin had nothing to do with each other, but just because they were outsiders, they received their wrath.

Zhang Mu-ryang and his party went to the audience hall under the guidance of a disciple of Emei.

"Others are waiting here, please go inside alone, Captain Zhang."

"Alright."

Zhang Mu-ryang meekly followed the instructions of the Emei disciple. He told Yang Woo-jeong and Go Dosa to stay, and went into the empty auditorium.

Another disciple of Emei was waiting for him in the empty audience. She led Zhang Mu-ryang to the largest room in the guest hall.

In the room were Jeonghwa, Seonha, and a middle-aged woman who looked elegant. The middle-aged woman was Geum Ha-ryeon, the ark of the White Flower Room.

In front of them lay an object covered with a white cloth. Zhang Mu-ryang recognized that it was a corpse because of the smell of blood.

Jeonghwa was desperate and immediately went on to business,

"Captain Zhang. A disciple of our sect was attacked by an assassin."

"I have heard the news."

"I called you to see the scars of my disciple."

"Why me?"

"At first I thought it was just a swordsman."

"So?"

"If you can see it for yourself, you'll see why I'm doing this."

Jeonghwa pointed to the corpse covered in white cloth.

Zhang Mu-ryang frowned and held up the white cloth. Then, Gongseon's body appeared, with her neck half split.

Gongseon looked peaceful as if she died while sleeping. She had shed so much blood and had been dead for quite some time, so she was pale but she had no painful expression on her face.

Zhang Mu-ryang carefully examined Gongseon's neck wound.

As time passed, Zhang Mu-ryang's face stiffened.

'What is this?'

It was then that he understood why Jeonghwa had said that.

The wounds of Gongseon were smooth.

It was sharply cut as if looking at a cross section of glass. At first glance, it may seem that the wound was from the use of an ordinary sword, but he knew from experience that a sword could never inflict such a wound.

'What? Not a sword or a dagger. Is it some kind of gift? But no matter how sharp a gift is, it would not be able to prevent the skin from curling up.'

Zhang Mu-ryang felt goosebumps rising all over his body.

He spent most of his life on the battlefield. He naturally saw a lot of corpses, and confirmed that many wounds with his own eyes. But none of the wounds he saw were as smooth as the cut on Gongseon's neck.

'Isn't this... isn't this an art in itself? The art of death.'

But he didn't put his thoughts out of his mouth.

It was because Jeonghwa was staring at him with scary eyes even at this moment. She asked,

"Have you ever seen a wound like this?"

"Honestly... no."

"Even for someone as experienced as you, you've never seen this kind of wound before?"

"That's right."

At Zhang Mu-ryang's answer, Jeong-hwa's impression became more venomous.

"Disappointing!"

"I'm sorry, but I can't say that know things when in fact I don't know—"

"Do you have any guesses?"

At that moment, Zhang Mu-ryang remembered Pyo-wol.

He had a strong feeling that he was somehow related to this case. However, Maun and his colleagues who were monitoring Pyo-wol said they did not see him move. In the end, there was no evidence anywhere that he was involved in this case.

"I'm sorry I couldn't give you the answer you wanted."

"Okay. I didn't expect much from you."

For a moment, Zhang Mu-ryang felt a rush of irritation.

'Then why the hell did you call me?'

With superhuman patience, Zhang Mu-ryang suppressed the swearing that was rising through his throat. Whether or not she knew that fact, Jeonghwa continued.

"When will the rest of your troops arrive in Chengdu?"

"We will gather all of them within two days. But if the cavalry enters the city, the Qingcheng sect will be on alert immediately."

"It doesn't matter. We just have to trample them before they start on being on the lookout."

“Are you going to start an all-out war right now?”

"I'll give you enough compensation."

“But you have to make a plan first...”

"This is what I, the next sect leader of the Emei sect, have decided. Are you sure you won't listen to my orders?"

"That's... I see."

Zhang Mu-ryang had no choice but to agree. The Black Cloud Mercenary Group had already signed a contract with the Emei sect.

Before breaking the contract, they had to obey their orders. If they recklessly cancel the contract, from that moment on, no one in Jianghu will trust the Black Cloud Mercenary Group.

In the end, Zhang Mu-ryang had no choice. Jeonghwa's voice resounded through his ears.

"I swear I will never live under the same sky as the Qingcheng sect."

Everyone in the room trembled.

It is said that if a woman harbors a grudge, frost can fall even in May and June.² Even more so for Jeonghwa was considered to be the next sect leader of the Emei sect.

As long as she wills it, she can cause a snow storm even during summer.

The people shuddered.

So they didn't manage to hear.

Srreuk!

The faint sound that was emanating from the ceiling.

Editor's Notes:

1. Cheolongseong. Raws: 철응성. An iron castle or fortress built in Yeongbyeon-gun, North Pyongan Province, during the Goryeo Dynasty.
2. If a woman harbors a grudge, frost can fall even in May and June.
 - a. Raws: 여인이 한을 품으면 오뉴월에도 서리가 내린다고 했다
 - b. Meaning: If you treat a woman recklessly, you'll get in trouble. A woman's vengeance knows no bounds.