

Chapter 1038

You'll find out soon enough. (3)

«Sa, save...»

Thud!

An indifferent foot crushed a person's head, bursting it like a watermelon. The one who ended a life so casually, Danjagang, continued forward, treading on blood and brain matter. Soon, he glanced back.

The path he had walked was littered with nothing but corpses.

The local troops had tried to assess the situation and hurried over. For ordinary people, this was pure terror. Even the mighty government troops couldn't easily approach Danjagang, they looked like a swarm of flies to him.

Only a hellish landscape that looks like it has been swept by a war remains.

Of course, this blood-soaked spectacle didn't bring any pleasure to Danjagang. He was just wiping away the entities that needed to be eliminated.

There was no room for pity or questions. He merely wiped out everything in his path.

Indeed, they were no longer human.

On the surface, they looked like people, but they had become nothing but scum who had thrown away the opportunity of faith given to them.

The Heavenly Demon had already given them a chance to believe in his existence and submit before him.

However, they rejected that opportunity. They refused the God who had descended, leaving only death and the eternal suffering that followed.

'In the end, it was their choice.'

Danjagang, who was gazing indifferently at the blood-soaked land, was about to turn his head.

His gaze suddenly turned to the side. Faint sounds of a child crying reached his ears. His brows furrowed slightly.

Amid the dead and dying, he had missed the small movements.

With every step he took, he pondered the realization that he wasn't accustomed to this kind of slaughter.

«Please... please...»

Eventually, something unusual caught his eye.

Beneath a pile of brutalized corpses, a woman was covering a child with her body. She used one hand to desperately muffle the baby's cries while trembling violently.

As Danjagang observed this, his eyes widened.

«Please...»

The woman, who had been trying to do whatever she could to quiet the baby's crying, somehow sensed Danjagang's presence and started to tremble in fear. Her frightened eyes met his.

«Please...»

The words hadn't changed, but the focus was unmistakably different. Her first pleas were directed at the child, but now, she was addressing Danjagang.

«Please, spare this child... please!»

Danjagang continued to look at the woman and the child with his usual indifferent gaze. How foolish. How foolish, and again, how foolish.

Why didn't they understand that this was the outcome of their own choices? Why did they not realize that Danjagang was not the one to ask for forgiveness?

How could they not see that?

Danjagang raised his hand without much emotion.

But in that moment, the child in the woman's arms began to cry as if struggling for breath.

«Ha-a... Ha-a... Please. Ha-a.»

The woman held the child tightly against her chest, eyes tightly shut.

Danjagang continued to look at them with an expression that was hard to read.

And then...

His hand slowly lowered. He watched the woman and the child intently, still with an inscrutable expression.

Before long, his hand returned to his side. Without a word, he turned away from the woman and distanced himself.

It wasn't about sympathy. In this place, people would die anyway. There was no way that a weakened woman and child could survive here. They were doomed to die, even without Danjagang's intervention.

He simply didn't want to soil his hands further with the blood of these filthy unbelievers. That was all. That was it.

Sploosh.

Walking on the ground stained with blood, Danjagang briefly paused as his subordinate approached at a rapid pace.

“Reporting!”

Jeogil, unfazed by the blood-soaked earth, was about to start his report, but he suddenly raised his head. Apparently he sensed something behind Danjagang, and his eyes twisted into a malevolent glare.

“I'll listen while I walk.”

But at that moment, the words that came from Danjagang's mouth made it impossible for Jeogil to act rashly.

“Yes!”

In the end, Jeogil silently rose and followed behind Danjagang.

“Over 90% of the operations have been completed.”

“You’re late.”

“Apologies. The city being what it is... there are too many who have gone underground.”

“Excuses are a convenient cover for incompetence, but they don’t hide a lack of faith.”

Upon hearing these words, Jeogil’s face turned ashen.

“By any means necessary, I will finish within three days.”

“Two.”

“...”

“Two days. Within that time, eradicate everything that exists here.”

“As you command!”

Jeogil bowed deeply.

Whether it’s possible or not isn’t important. What matters is that he received the Bishop’s order. The Bishop’s orders must be carried out at any cost, as it’s the law of the Church.

As Jeogil reaffirmed his determination, Danjagang’s voice reached him.

«Jeogil.»

«Yes, Bishop.»

«I have one question.»

Jeogil bowed his head and waited for Danjagang’s words.

«Their deaths are merely the price for their sins.»

«That’s correct.»

«They rejected the outstretched hand of salvation from the Almighty One. They knew of the existence of the Heavenly Demon but did not submit to the Church, and they dared to oppose the him.»

«That’s correct.»

«Those who knew of the Great One’s presence but chose not to follow have no hope of salvation. Those who couldn’t choose due to ignorance also have no way to escape their sins.»

Jeogil nodded without a hint of doubts — it was one of the fundamental teachings of the Church.

«But Jeogil...»

At that moment, Danjagang spoke with an indifferent expression.

«What about those who do not know of the existence of the Heavenly Demon, who haven’t even had the opportunity to choose?»

«What do you mean by that?»

«I mean exactly that. Should even those who are unaware, such as children, bear the same punishment?»

Jeogil’s face contorted in a peculiar way.

«Perhaps they bear no sin themselves, but isn’t it natural for children to bear the sins of their parents?»

«Is that so?»

Danjagang nodded silently.

‘Choice... Is it truly a choice?’

Can one truly call that a choice?

Danjagang wiped his face in silence. His chapped lips brushed against his palm.

When one was living according to the doctrine, there was no need for such doubts. They all believed in the same things, thought the same way. Anything deviating from that was thoroughly excluded.

One could find peace just by believing.

By accepting unquestionably the preachings of the Bishops who spread the divine Gospel [복음(福音)] of the Almighty One.

But...

Danjagang gazed up at the cloudy sky.

The world he had just encountered seemed as hazy as the sky above. The clear, doubtless sky he had seen from within the Church did not exist here.

«I have one more question.»

«Yes, Bishop.»

«If we were to achieve all of this... and yet...»

Danjagang hesitated for a moment, as if it was difficult to continue. Then he spoke.

«If He does not answer our pleas... what will you do?»

«...»

«Will you return to the Church and wait for His arrival for eternity?»

«I... I do not know.»

Jeogil, who had been hesitating, bowed his head as if in repentance.

«All I know is one thing. The joy of the believer lies in following and adhering to His word. I believe that seeking pleasure by deviating from His word is nothing more than heresy.»

Danjagang nodded with satisfaction.

«A good answer. Your faith is beyond doubt.»

«Thank you, Bishop.»

«Finish in this place.»

«Yes.»

“Oh, and...»

Danjagang’s resolute voice made Jeogil pause.

«It seems that person bothers you.»

«Are you referring to the words he mentioned earlier?»

«Yes, that’s right. I can’t recall his name.»

Danjagang chuckled. There was no need to remember the name.

«He doesn’t seem like one to give up easily. He will undoubtedly be aiming for us again.»

«Yes.»

«It may just be his futile struggling, but it doesn't hurt to be vigilant. Check if there are any approaching threats and be prepared in advance.»

«The followers of the cult who were following us have just arrived. I will assign them to be on surveillance.»

«I will leave the details to you.»

«Yes, Bishop!»

Jeogil swiftly moved away, just as he had come. Danjagang's indifferent steps continued, but they appeared somewhat slower than they had been a moment ago.

'The doctrine is not perfect.'

Yes, that's only natural.

If the doctrine was perfect, there would be no unbelievers. The concept of doctrine exists not to distinguish between the ignorant and the wise but merely as a measure to differentiate believers from non-believers.

So, the doctrine should not be perfect. A doctrine without room for doubt cannot be a gauge of true faith.

Isn't it true that to have true faith is to believe even when there is room for doubt?

So, do not doubt. Just believe.

But why is knowing and doing so different? Even though he knew that all these doubts were consuming him, once a doubt bloomed, there was no way to quell it.

'Perhaps I'm just seeking confirmation.'

Danjagang's purpose is not to witness with his own eyes the illuminated world that He will open. It's merely to confirm His existence with his own eyes.

Even if the price for these deep doubts is eternal hellfire, as long as he can confirm the existence of the Heavenly Demon, he will be able to laugh forever within the flames of Hell.

So... so...

'Please answer.'

Tell me. Tell me that all the doubts and suspicions were in vain.

Thus, condemn this faithless one.

Please, do not abandon these pitiful and wretched people who only worship and continue to worship the Heavenly Demon on this desolate land.

Danjagang would become the spark.

His existence would turn into a spark, and his doubts would dissolve into conviction. And finally, eternal peace would find its way to this world.

With a face that mixed joy and disbelief, love and hatred, Danjagang let out a triumphant laugh.

'I am a contradiction.'

He doubts but believes, believes but doubts. He cannot believe without doubting, yet he earnestly hopes and hopes that all his doubt are in vain.

Isn't this all so ironic?

‘Forget it.’

Now was the time to just do what needed to be done.

As Danjagang was about to lift his foot again, he suddenly turned his head sharply.
Northwest.

There was nothing visible. Nothing registered in his senses.

But what was it? The sensation he felt just a while ago?

Danjagang clenched and released his fist slowly.

‘To the northwest...’

His eyes sank into a gloomy gaze.

‘We might have to cross the river...’

After gazing at the northwest with dark eyes for a while, Danjagang resumed his slow pace.