

Chapter 1042

Kill or be killed. (2)

The sight of those approaching over the ground covered in corpses was nothing short of terrifying. Clad entirely in black robes, emitting a sinister aura as they charged, had any ordinary person witnessed them, it alone would have instilled fear and awe.

However, the individuals here were not just ordinary people. They were Hwasan's disciples, Red Dogs of Maninbang and the elite of the Black Ghost Fortress. They could confidently assert that their combat experience was unmatched in the world.

Proficient in battle and murder, accustomed to sharp blades flying towards their throats. Trained swords, hardened like tempered steel, that would not lose themselves no matter what kind of enemy they faced.

So, they should have been unshaken by such a spectacle...

But something strange happened. All of them, who were so accustomed to combat, clearly displayed a sense of «hesitation.»

Even the elite from Red Dogs, who were known to charge headlong into Hell's fire pit if ordered by Jang Ilso, involuntarily stepped back.

Even Black Ghosts, who had painted the night of Gangnam with fear, shivered inexplicably. Their faces revealed a mixture of embarrassment and subtle fear.

The Sapaeryeon, who had half the world under their control, especially these carefully selected elites, were cowering before a mere hundred enemies?

Even if someone had claimed they hated Sapaeryeon the most in the entire world, it would have been a laughable statement. But now, this unbelievable situation was unfolding right here.

«Ugh...»

A low moan escaped someone's lips, bypassing the restraint of the clenched lips. Even those who wouldn't utter a single whimper when a blade was thrust into their throats found themselves unable to prevent their mouths from falling open, just by witnessing someone approaching. It was a scream of the soul, unrelated to the level of training, something uncontrollable.

Even the disciples of Hwasan, who had faced Magyo before, gripped their sword handles with queasy faces.

Baek Cheon unconsciously bit his lower lip.

«Sasuk...»

«...Yeah.»

Baek Cheon answered without needing to hear the rest. It was as if he knew what was being said without hearing it.

«...It's different.»

It felt like sinking into a thick, dark swamp. The momentum they exuded, the atmosphere they radiated, and their very presence seemed to gradually constrict the airways.

It was clearly different from before.

Even though Magyo encountered in the frigid lands of the Northern Sea had left Baek Cheon in fear, the sensation he felt at that time was far from this.

Moreover, Baek Cheon had become significantly stronger since then.

The feeling they gave off... it was as if they were not human. What would it feel like to witness the scene of the gates of Hell opening, with demons pouring out, right in front of one's eyes? It wasn't about their momentum or their sheer strength — it was their very presence that made the living shrink back.

'This is the real Magyo,'

Baek Cheon thought to himself, lips tightly pressed together.

Now, he seemed to understand why Chung Myung had spoken disparagingly of the Northern Sea's Bishop, and why he had been so critical about the ruthless Magyo followers who followed him. His body was telling him that they were far more dangerous than the Magyo followers he had known.

Clack! Clack!

A horrifying sound echoed while the approaching cultists trampled over the scattered corpses. The disciples of Hwasan trembled. The multitude of meanings hidden in that eerie noise reddened their eyes.

Rather than approaching, it felt like an overwhelming assault. As the black mass surged across the blood-red ground, and they began to emit thick cloud of demonic energy.

As everyone began to prepare for action, the speed of the oncoming cultists inexplicably started to slow down.

Doubts flickered in everyone's eyes. Why were those who had been charging towards them moments ago now stopping in their tracks?

Most of them felt suspicion from this sight, but a few here saw something entirely different.

The eerie sound of Jang Ilso's ring scraping against his hand as he gazed at Magyo, seemingly intrigued, caught their attention.

The ones he had brought with him were Red Dogs, his carefully trained creations from Maninbang. However, even these Red Dogs were now unable to move as smoothly as expected.

'It's bizarre.'

In Jang Ilso's eyes, it was a scene that defied common sense.

Could you imagine a group of starved predators lined up and waiting for prey placed right in front of them?

Those consumed by a ravenous hunger should be uncontrollable. Hunger exists outside of reason.

Yet strangely, these individuals emitted horrifying hunger and hatred while remaining perfectly controlled. It was difficult to comprehend how such a thing was possible.

‘Fanatics...’

It felt like everything encapsulated in these words had seeped into them. There was just a hundred Magyo followers clad in black robes, with black masks covering their faces, but the number «one hundred» didn’t feel small at all.

At that moment, a figure slowly emerged from the midst of the seemingly indistinguishable cultists.

Step by step, he walked forward.

The person, now in the center, surveyed the vigilant Hwasan and Sapaeryeon with an unyielding expression. Then, he slowly lifted the mask that concealed his face.

«You filthy unbelievers...»

His eyes held a deep sense of disgust and disdain, as if he was beholding something vile.

Those oppressed by his eerie gaze discreetly bit their lips.

«The Heavenly Demon did not grant the right of life to unbelievers like you.»

The voice of the figure resonated solemnly.

«But, at the same time, the Lord is infinitely merciful. His mercy is fair even to the foolish and the unworthy.»

His voice was reverent, as if delivering sacred scriptures.

«Even now, those who realize their sins and are willing to dedicate everything to the Heavenly Demon, step forward. He shall grant you forgiveness for your sin.»

«Hmm?»

The first to react to these words was, naturally, Jang Ilso. His brows furrowed with evident displeasure.

«Forgiveness for sins?»

Silence followed.

«By whom? By what right?»

Clink, clank.

The rings on Jang Ilso’s hand produced a harsh metallic sound.

«Who dares to claim they can forgive my sins? You, of all people? Or perhaps...»

Jang Ilso paused for a moment, and a cunning smile curled on his crimson lips.

«That Heavenly Demon or whatever you worship, the one thrown down a century ago?»

«This... this!»

The cultist who had been speaking calmly until now suddenly exuded an overwhelming killing intent.

«The wretch who wouldn’t rest even after being torn apart, whose flesh would be eaten to the bone! You dare to call His name in vain, with that filthy mouth of yours?»

Yet, even in the face of this tremendous pressure, Jang Ilso remained undaunted.

«Oh, of course. My mouth isn’t exactly clean either. I won’t deny that.»

Casually extending his hand, he soon burst into an overtly mocking smile.

«However, at least I am still alive, aren't I? Filthy as I may be, it's better to be alive and filthy than to be a clean corpse. I bet that heavenly demon you worship would envy my survival in hell, wouldn't he?»

«No... no!»

The cultist could no longer contain his anger, and his trembling hands grasped his mask, hiding his face once more, as if even sharing the same air as these people was abhorrent.

«These filthy unbelievers, dare they insult the Great One without even knowing their place?»

The cultist's eyes gradually filled with madness. Even the Red Dogs, who had encountered numerous madmen and villains, felt the sinister aura emanating from those eyes. It was otherworldly and unsettling.

«...I will kill you!»

The cultist's face turned even more red, and he shouted with veins popping in his neck.

«I will kill you! Erase the presence of these filthy unbelievers from this world. Tear their flesh, grind their bones, pluck their tendons, and spill their blood!»

His proclamation seemed more like a curse than a declaration, not a blessing but a prayer. As if retching, the words left his mouth.

Once he finished, the cultists behind him gathered in line and their malevolent aura grew stronger.

«Without leaving a scrap of flesh, I shall render them as food for the beasts! How dare they insult the Heavenly Demon? Do you know how much the wrath of our faith...»

But a chilling voice interrupted his prayer-like recitation.

«You, damn, talk a lot.»

The cultist slowly closed his mouth, turned his head, and glared at the speaker. The air grew tense.

Chung Myung continued without caring in the slightest, tilting his head from side to side while addressing the cultist once more.

«I don't want to agree with what the Sapa bastard is saying, but...»

He turned to glance at Jang Ilso and sneered.

«He's not entirely wrong. Isn't it better to be madman with makeup over his face than to be a fool who got his throat cut?»

«You...»

«So...»

Sssrrung.

Chung Myung slowly drew his Dark Plum Sword from its sheath, the blade radiating infinite sharpness, aimed at the cultist.

«If you're itching to fight, go ahead. I can't remember when Magyo started acting like a bunch of blowhards.»

The cultist just glared at Chung Myung.

A short silence followed.

The cultist, who had been keeping his mouth shut, appeared even more menacing without his prayer-like recitation. Although he remained silent, his aura was even more sinister than when he was cursing.

After holding back his boiling rage, he finally spoke. His hoarse voice spread out into the surroundings.

«You... You'll be the one to die a particularly painful death among them.»

«Oh, that...?»

Chung Myung let out a sly chuckle.

«I've heard that line quite a few times.»

“...”

«But... how long should I wait?»

Kwooong!

As soon as Chung Myung finished speaking, the cultist brought his heel down the ground with terrifying force. The solid ground crumbled under the pressure, sinking like mud.

His voice reverberated with enormous intensity.

«Do not spare a single one of these non-believers here! Kill them all!»

«The Second Coming Of The Heavenly Deamon! Ten Thousand Demons Pay Homage!»

The deafening shouts of the demonic cultists echoed through the surroundings. Those who were barely controlled by leash of faith were now freed from these shackles that restrained them.

Just a short distance away, demonic cultists, who had recently seemed controllable, now charged forward with a fervent bloodlust.

Kraaaaack!

Their howls were beastly, and the followers, driven by the frenzy of their fanaticism, couldn't hold back. They grabbed each other, pulling and pushing to reach their prey. Their desperation was palpable as they seemed ready to bite into their comrades' throats in their pursuit.

«Sasuk!»

«Yes!»

Baek Cheon, witnessing this almost insane sight, gritted his teeth and took a step forward.

«Stay behind me! Don't get separated from your fellow disciples by my side!»

«Understood!»

Baek Cheon, unleashing the boiling fury inside him, finally shouted,

«Show these beasts that the natural enemies of Magyo are the plum blossom swordsmen!»

A resounding battle cry followed Baek Cheon's words.

A huge fierce battle known later as the Hangzhou Demonic Disaster[항주마화(杭州魔禍)] was about to begin.