

Chapter 1064

Is this how it's done? (4)

«G-guh... G-guh...»

Thick frothy bubbles of blood kept oozing from Danjagang's mouth. It seemed as if he was experiencing an unimaginable level of agony, causing his body to convulse without rest. This sight was nothing short of shocking to everyone. It was something beyond understanding or acceptance.

No matter how abnormal his state was, after being attacked by Chung Myung, Danjagang was still Danjagang. How could they possibly understand and accept a being who had effortlessly subdued the ruthless Bishop who had brought both Chung Myung and Jang Ilso to the brink of death?

«H-how...»

With every mumble from Danjagang's mouth, the sound of boiling blood gurgled. You had to listen closely to even realize that he was trying to say something.

But the man in white attire, the Heavenly Execution Demon Emperor [천살마제(天殺魔帝) — cheonsalmaje], seemed to understand what Danjagang was attempting to say as he grinned knowingly. His casual smile, while he had his hand thrust inside a person's body, was deeply unsettling to those who witnessed it.

«Why do you think I'm here?»

«G-guh...»

With a slight tilt of his head, Heavenly Executioner [in general he is an executioner because he has techniques and authority to be one, it'll be clear further in the chapter] sighed as if pitying Danjagang.

«Ah, my child.»

«...»

«Why don't you understand? You doubted the teachings, you doubted the Heavenly Demon. Why didn't you doubt the obvious?»

«...»

«The Heavenly Demon never said we shouldn't head to the central plains. He was never one to give such orders. People may provide food to ants, but they don't give them commands, do they?»

Danjagang's body began trembling even more. His bloodshot eyes, which had already lost their ferocity, unintentionally turned towards Chung Myung.

After gazing at him for a while, Danjagang's quivering voice emerged once more.

«T-then... why...»

«Tsk, tsk. That's why it's not suitable to appoint an unqualified child as the Bishop. What's the hurry with the Archbishop?»

«...»

Heavenly Executioner chuckled lightly.

«In serving Him, there's no need for logic. What we desire is the obedience to Him itself, not any reward He might bestow upon us. Do you understand?»

«Well...»

Blood-soaked Danjagang grasped Heavenly Executioner's hand, which had pierced through his chest.

«G-guh... G-guh!»

Then, instead of Heavenly Executioner's hand, Danjagang tore into his own body in a gruesome and horrifying manner. After finally pulling himself off his hand, Danjagang collapsed to the ground.

«Ho-o?»

Upon witnessing this, Heavenly Executioner burst into laughter.

«Impressive. So, you believe you have the right to bear the title of the Bishop?»

Danjagang, who had been groaning on the ground, forcibly raised his head. His pupils, filled with bitter poison, glared at Heavenly Executioner as if they could kill.

«In that case...»

With bloodshot eyes, Danjagang screamed desperately.

«Then, what have we endured all this time for? What have we endured for, if it wasn't the command of the Heavenly Demon? Answer me, Second Bishop! Why have we been wasting our lives, bound to a doctrine we didn't even have to follow? Answer me!»

«Hmm.»

«Answer meeeee!»

Even after hearing his desperate screams, Heavenly Executioner's eyes remained cold, showing no reaction. If anything, they became even colder.

«Why should I explain that to the likes of a filthy apostate like you?»

«...»

«Apostate?»

Danjagang, as if he had heard something he should have never heard, wore a stunned expression.

«...Am I an apostate? Me...?»

«Didn't you know?»

Heavenly Slaughterer laughed heartily.

«Doubting the teachings of the Heavenly Demon, doubting His holiness, and deviating from the doctrine to lead the disciples to the Central Plains. If you are not an apostate, then who in the world could be called one?»

«That... That teaching is false!»

«Who said that?»

Danjagang was momentarily at a loss for words.

«Who told you that everything is false? Have you even personally seen the Heavenly Demon?»

«You...»

With no response, Danjagang shivered, unable to even comprehend the pointlessness of an answer. Heavenly Executioner leisurely took another step toward him.

«Ah, you'll never be able to understand.»

Another step.

«You've forever lost that chance. Those who have seen God with their own eyes and those who haven't can never have a conversation. You have lost the opportunity to see the God with those two eyes forever.»

«I...»

Danjagang's body collapsed weakly. It seemed that the pain caused by the word «apostate» was greater than the physical agony he endured.

«I haven't! I haven't apostatized! I haven't forsaken my faith. You are not the representative of the Heavenly Demon! My belief is solely...!»

«Shut up.»

As if tired of listening, the Heavenly Executioner interrupted Danjagang. At the same time, tiny black flames, like sparks, flickered from his fingertips. They fell onto Danjagang's forehead.

Kwaaaaah!

In an instant, an incredibly thick black flame wrapped around Danjagang's entire body, surging upward.

«Keeeeeah!»

A desperate scream too unbearable to hear echoed across the desolate wasteland, where hardly any signs of life remained.

«There's only one death given to apostates.»

The Heavenly Executioner's emotionless voice flowed from his lips.

«Die while feeling the extreme agony. Your soul will never be saved, even after death.

Eternally, absolutely eternally, you will wander the Nine Hells, regretting your sins again and again.»

The punishment of Karmic Fire [업 화(業火)], which can only be delivered to those who practice demonic arts.

«Keeeeeah!»

As demonic energy surged in reverse, it incinerated everything within Danjagang.

Even Danjagang, who had been so formidable, writhed on the ground, screaming and twisting in agony before the suffering. He cried like a little child, rolling on the ground and twisting his body.

No one dared to speak out hastily. Not even the disciples of Hwasan, who harbored nothing but hatred for Danjagang, could bear to witness the gruesome sight. They turned their heads away, avoiding the scene.

However, the only emotion present in the cold eyes of the Heavenly Executioner was pure malice. In the Demonic Cult, unbelievers were always considered as targets for annihilation, but apostates were regarded as even filthier.

«Keeeeah! I... I...»

From Danjagang's mouth, engulfed in a burning black flame, came agonized, tearful cries. Experiencing terrible pain without the release of death, being unable to die despite excruciating pain, it was a hellish torture. That's why Magyo uses it as a punishment specifically for apostates.

«I... I...»

Danjagang's flesh was slowly crumbling away.

«I'm not... I'm not an apostate...»

In a thin, fragile voice resembling a whimper, he spoke.

«Heavenly Demon... Heavenly Demon! Why...»

«Tsk.»

«Why... my cries...»

Kwaaaah!

Almost completely consumed by fire, Danjagang's head was crushed mercilessly under the foot of the Heavenly Executioner. He furrowed his brow in distaste before lifting his foot, as if he was stepping on something filthy.

«I'm sick of hearing this.»

Danjagang.

The Bishop of the Demonic Cult, who had turned Hangzhou into a place devoid of life, and who had led Chung Myung and Jang Ilso to the brink of death, met a death so pitiful — it was almost unbelievable.

Having brought about this gruesome death, the Heavenly Executioner shifted his gaze away from Danjagang as if he had nothing more to see. He immediately looked elsewhere.

A tremble ran through the air.

In the chilling gaze before them, demonic cultists prostrated themselves on the ground.

Every one of them trembled like a willow. It was as if they had just met the Lord of the Underworld.

The Heavenly Executioner furrowed his brow in displeasure, and in that moment, the prostrated law enforcer crawled closer, groveling.

«Th... The Internal Law Enforcer Jeogil, dare I, your humble servant, have the honor to meet with the Second Bishop.»

The voice was filled with sincerity. The fervent appeal was even more pronounced than the grief of losing Danjagang and the terror of facing the Heavenly Executioner.

«All these events are entirely my responsibility for not properly serving the Bishop. Please, may the Second Bishop take my life as a punishment for my sins, and in the spirit of forgiveness as vast as the ocean, kindly spare these believers. This unworthy one dares to, dares to beseech.»

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Jeogil relentlessly knocked his head on the ground. Yet, the Heavenly Executioner watched the scene with an indifferent gaze.

«Responsibility, you say.»

The Heavenly Executioner chuckled softly, and despite the faint, muted laughter, Jeogil trembled as if struck by lightning.

«Is it because you entrusted the diocese to someone who isn't even qualified? Your diocese's appearance is in shambles. How dare someone like you, a mere enforcer, discuss responsibility.»

Jeogil, not knowing what to say, was reduced to freezing like a corpse.

«No fool blames their hands for a mistake, much less a mere law enforcer like you. It would be meaningless to punish you, whose hands are worth nothing.»

Jeogil remained silent.

«The Bishop's sins won't be exacted from you or the believers. It was impossible for someone as lowly as a law enforcer to oppose the Bishop's will.»

«Th-thank...»

«However.»

The Heavenly Executioner spoke emotionlessly.

«The mere law enforcer, daring to discuss responsibility without understanding the matter, should still face the consequences of their actions, don't you agree?»

Jeogil's pupils trembled. Upon seeing the faint smile on the Heavenly Executioner's face, he understood what he had to do.

«The...»

He clenched his lips and then shouted as if his throat would burst.

«The Second Coming of The Heavenly Demon! Ten Thousand Demons Pay Homage!»

Thwack!

In silence, Jeogil swiftly shattered his own head with his own hands. His headless corpse fell to the ground. The Heavenly Executioner, watching with displeasure, turned his gaze to the kneeling cultists.

«Return to the Church.»

«Th-The Second...»

«Silence.»

The whole space was heavy with tension.

«Though you may not bear any responsibility in terms of doctrine, the sins of following an apostate cannot be dealt with by doctrine alone. Reflect on your own wrongdoings without saying a word for thirty days and nights, as the sun rises and sets.»

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack!

The cultists dared not oppose this command, they hit the ground with their heads in silence. They all stood up from the ground and began to move in one direction as if compelled. With his cold gaze, the Heavenly Executioner observed their obedience.

«Hmm.»

Danjagang had become a mere pile of black ashes, and only his traces remained. The Heavenly Executioner's face briefly displayed an enigmatic expression, then he shifted his gaze towards the tense disciples of Hwasan.

«Indeed...»

An almost cheerful voice filled with excitement echoed.

«Central Plains is an interesting place. Even though he was a worthless youngster... the Bishop ending up in such a state? It's beyond belief.»

He laughed with apparent joy as he looked at Chung Myung and Jang Ilso.

It was at that moment that his eyes, which did not show anything particularly hostile, completely changed. The once gentle gaze was transformed into something entirely different upon touching Chung Myung.

«You...?»

Chung Myung and the surrounding group, who were protecting him, felt the clear expressions of animosity and malice in Heavenly Executioner's eyes. His face began to show something that they had never seen until this moment — disgust and unbearable malice.

Rumbling.

The growling was so ominous that even the sky seemed to hold its breath.

«Hwasan... That accursed sect?»

Heavenly Executioner's voice seemed like a growl of a beast, making even the heavens tremble.