

Chapter 1049

I must have been crazy too. (4)

The difference was stark from the beginning.

Demonic cultists they had encountered until now were like beasts, horrifying creatures that had just escaped from hell.

However, the figures revealed before them now felt distinctly different. If the average demonic cultists were heavy blunt weapons, these ones were finely crafted blades. An eerie, well honed aura was already piercing through their bodies.

«Monk!»

«I know, Siju.»

Back Cheon's voice roared, and Hye Yeon shot up from the ground with terrifying speed. In mid-air, he thrust his fists forward with an immense force.

‘Hundred Step Divine Fist [백보신권(百步神拳) — baegbosingwon].’

Jo Geol saw it and clenched his fists.

It was one of the seventy two techniques amongst the martial arts of Shaolin they so much like to boast about. One of the most renowned in the world.

As it was, Baegbo Shingwon was an impressive display of martial prowess. What more could be said about the power of this technique in the hands of Hye Yeon?

Thunderous energy surged forward, barreling towards enforcers.

And then, in that very moment...

Pa-aaa-at!

An enforcer extended their hand into the air. From that motion, a pitch-black line, darker than the surrounding shadows, emerged. It instantly sliced through Hye Yeon's powerful energy, splitting it into two separate streams.

‘What...?’

Upon witnessing this astonishing sight, doubt filled the hearts of those watching.

The pure Buddhist energy was meant to dispel all evil [파사(破邪) — destroying evil — pasa], much like the immortal qi [선기(仙氣)] of Taoism. Despite that, they had effortlessly countered Hye Yeon's tremendous power.

The significance of this sight was too overwhelming.

‘Strong!’

It wasn't just about strength, it went beyond that.

When law enforcers revealed themselves, the seemingly defeated demonic cultists began to rally their spirits, possessed by madness.

A sinister aura covered them like a storm, increasing their momentum.

‘Wh-what is this?’

The Ogeom were taken aback by the sudden shift. In that moment, Jang Ilso extended his hand. The bracelet on his wrist rotated fiercely.

“Where...”

As the bracelet spun at a tremendous speed in front of Jang Ilso’s face, it soon became a beam of golden light, soaring towards the enforcers.

A brilliant streak of gold light cut through the night sky. Jang Ilso’s attack was astonishing, and even Hwasan’s disciples, who were aware of the situation and knew they some day would become enemies again, couldn’t help but marvel at the incredible blow.

Kwa-aaaaaaah!

The overpowering bracelet, full of a menacing force, had precisely targeted the upper body of the leading enforcer. Seeing the approaching bracelet that seemed capable of piercing through him, the enemy’s eyes contorted with cruelty.

Pa-aaat!

Jeogil extended his arm, and the end of his sword and Jang Ilso’s s bracelet collided in midair, creating an enormous explosion.

Kwa-aaaaaaah!

A deafening roar reverberated, and simultaneously, golden energy and black demonic energy exploded in all directions.

In that moment, Baek Cheon saw it — the bracelet hanging from the end of a thin rapier.

‘That...?’

For a brief moment, a chill ran down his spine. To simply repel an object with that much force was no small feat. Especially if your sword of choice was a thin rapier, it could be a struggle to protect it from shattering under such force, let alone disabling it.

However, this enforcer not only deflected Jang Ilso’s bracelet but also nullified its power and snatched it.

‘It’s a whole different level.’

Some of those present had already faced a demonic general during their battles in the Northern Sea. However, the enforcer they encountered there and those approaching them now were only similar in rank. In terms of skill, there was no room for comparison.

‘There are ten such people.’

Baek Cheon bit his lips unknowingly. In the meantime, the enforcers who had been closing in on the demonic cultists descended before them.

Thunk!

The enforcers, having stopped in their tracks, raised their heads and stared at Chung Myung and Jang Ilso’s group. Their number was exactly ten.

Behind them, the demonic cultists gathered, breathing heavily, as the imposing gaze of the enforcers fell upon them.

From their appearance alone, it was evident that the demonic cultists were more afraid of the enforcers than the disciples of Hwasan, who they would have to face. And more than the Red Dogs, who glared at the enforcers like vicious dogs that have spotted an intruder.

‘Are they afraid of allies?’

It might not be immediately understandable, but in Demonic Cult, this was common sense. The enforcers managed and commanded the ordinary believers, commonly known in central plains as Majol [마졸(魔卒) — demonic soldiers]. However, the law enforcers had a bigger mission, which was to identify the apostates within the sect and correct any deviations from the doctrine.

So, it was only natural for the demonic cultists to fear the internal law enforcers more than external enemies. The doctrine of Demonic Cult was the sacred word of the Heavenly Demon, and there was only one price for those who violated the gospel.

But there was one more thing that was certain.

No matter their role in punishing the cultists, the cultists themselves were formidable warriors. The fear they displayed only served to confirm the power held by these enforcers. Kagagak.

The leader, with a rapier in hand, lightly scratched the ground.

«I acknowledge it.»

A clear voice resonated.

It was an ordinary voice, but that, in fact, made it all the more unsettling. Since arriving here, the sounds they had heard from the cultists had been threats and cries. Hearing such a composed voice was a first.

The leader of the cultists stared at the united forces of elite warriors with a cold, sinking gaze.

«Among these lowly unbelievers, there are some worth considering.»

Everyone’s faces stiffened upon hearing these words.

It was mockery disguised as acknowledgment, praise veiled as scorn.

«But that won’t change anything.»

Jeogil slowly lowered the mask covering half of his face. Rough skin and dark lips were revealed. His eyes were gradually turning red.

«Your only fate, according to your words of resistance against the doctrine without understanding the subject, is one: death.»

The dark lips trembled.

«But there’s no need to feel sorry. Your deaths won’t be entirely without value. Your deaths will echo throughout the world. The fear of the church, the greatness of the Divine One, and your weakness...»

«Gosh, he’s really blabbering.»

Chung Myung cut off Jeogil’s words sharply.

Silent, Jeogil glared at him intensely, but Chung Myung didn’t care and let out a cold smirk.

«If you want to chat so much, why don't you answer my question?»

Enforcer's lips twisted.

«Just by talking to unbelievers, the Divine One's favor is swayed, but the church is inherently merciful. Tell me, foolish one. What do you want to know?»

«Why did you infiltrate the Central Plains?»

«What?»

«With just one Bishop, this many cultists... it seems like a single diocese is operating independently. You wouldn't have the authority for that, would you?»

Jeogil's eyes shook visibly. It was an unexpected question. Weren't they form central plains?

«You... Who are you?»

How did mongrels like them know about such things?

Chung Myung let out a dry laugh.

«Could it be that you're... apostates[배교자(背教子) — baegyoja]?»

At that moment, an immense aura erupted from the cultists. Not just the enforcers but also the cultists behind them exuded terrific demonic energy and murderous intent.

The intensity was so severe that even Red Dogs shivered.

«How dare... How dare!»

Jeogil, who had been maintaining his composure, suddenly lost his sanity and his eyes turned white.

«To utter such nonsense! How dare you! A creature that's less than a worm! How dare!»

It was almost a scream.

No one around Chung Myung understood the intense reaction that had suddenly burst forth.

In the martial arts world, no one knew what apostasy meant.

«No, no.»

Chung Myung casually spoke with a slurred voice.

«Small flies like you wouldn't even have the ability to apostatize, would you? If someone apostatized, it would be your leader.»

Chung Myung briefly glanced at the lonely pavilion.

«How about it? Did he apostatize?»

«Shut up, you dog!»

Jeogil lost his composure and roared.

«How could the likes of you understand the deep thoughts of the Bishop? You, unbelievers who can't even imagine the feelings with which the Bishop set foot on this dirty land!»

«Ho...»

Chung Myung's eyes momentarily darkened.

‘That's right.’

This confirmed it. If it was indeed the whole cult moving, then just one bishop wouldn't have led a diocese following him to set foot in the central plains. That means this is a solo operation by their Bishop.

Discovering this fact alone fulfilled desired goal. If they could somehow deal with these forces, it meant that the cult's invasion would be halted.

However, to do that...

«Amusing.»

Chung Myung displayed a cruel smile.

«It seems the cultists are divided. Well, well thought out. Wise choice. It's been over a hundred years since the Heavenly Demon's head was cut off, but those who still lick his feet are the world's idiots.»

«Grr...»

Veins on Jeogil's neck and face started to bulge, and the anger completely consumed his sanity. He glared at Chung Myung with murderous intent.

The reason he couldn't rush out immediately wasn't because he thought he needed to suppress his anger. It was the overwhelming rage that had bound his very movements.

«Don't worry. Even if an emergency arises, I'll be there to help.»

Chung Myung smiled and flicked his sword.

«Even if the Great One returns, there's no guarantee that his severed head won't be cut a second time, right?»

«Noooooooo!»

With a fierce roar, Jeogil charged forward without looking back.

His original plan was to maintain composure, prepare to counter the charging heretics, and encircle them. Dealing with a strong minority would require nothing more than this tactic.

Demonic Arts are fundamentally a discipline that robs people of their sanity. There's a significant difference between charging like a beast and acting under someone's command.

If he had calmly directed the followers, it might not have been too difficult to deal with these few strong individuals.

However, with Chung Myung's provocation, all of the plans that had existed in his mind were burned by anger, leaving behind only white ashes.

«I'll tear that mouth apart!»

Since Jeogil himself had lost his sanity the most.

Like a furious dragon with its scales pierced, Jeogil, who had stepped into the sacred domain of the Divine One, transformed into a beast and charged at Chung Myung .

The cultists who had been lurking behind also rushed forward like a black tsunami, their eyes turned white with rage.

It was a frenzy of madness where no trace of reason existed.

It would be a terrifying sight for anyone, but Chung Myung, on the contrary, laughed brightly.

His sword emitted a bright crimson glow.

«That's why I like cultists.»

Kwaang.

Chung Myung hit the ground hard welcoming Jeogil, who was charging straight at him. Fighting an enemy is a war. But facing an irrational beast is merely a hunt. Chung Myung's sword, which had hunted countless demonic cultists, shone even more vividly in the darkness.