

Chapter 1054

I must have been crazy too. (9)

Kwaaaaaaah!

The storm of demonic energy raged on. Violent gusts of wind tore through the ground, uprooting trees and flinging debris and gritty dust into the air. The storm, fueled by shattered buildings and an acrid dust cloud, continued to expand and sweep across the surroundings. As Baek Cheon witnessed this astonishing spectacle, an indescribable terror overcame him. 'This... This is...'

It was an actual storm. Something that no human could create — or, more accurately, something no human should create.

Kwaaaaaaah!

The ominous black currents engulfed everything, tearing through the world as if to shred it to pieces. Demonic energy pressed down on Baek Cheon's entire being, choking his breath, making even the slightest movement impossible.

In the face of this overwhelming power, Baek Cheon's presence seemed pitifully weak.

'This is the real Bishop...'

It became clear. It was understandable why, even now, people hesitated to use the title of Bishop and why it was shunned. Why the orthodox sects buried the cursed existence of the Bishops deep in their minds, not even allowing themselves to think about it.

And he also understood why Chung Myung referred to the Bishop from the Northern Sea as nothing more than a fragment of the past.

The real Bishop wrenched the earth apart and made the heavens tremble with his demonic energy. It was different from any level of martial arts he had ever imagined, an indescribable force of destruction.

... It felt as if his spirit might break.

Even Baek Cheon, who had faced countless crises with Chung Myung and overcome them, felt the urge to let go of everything when confronted with the existence of the Bishop. No matter the situation, he had believed that at least his spirit would not break. But now, he realized how arrogant that thought had been.

Before the all-encompassing power of the Bishop, he realized how powerless human will was.

«Ugh...»

«Ugh...»

Even Red Dogs had taken a step back. Hounds who would gleefully accept being torn apart in the name of their owner were retreating. Or rather, they were running away. They couldn't bear to turn their backs on the Bishop.

They didn't fear death, but wasn't there something even more terrifying in the world?

Though their reputation for cruelty was well-known, Baek Cheon couldn't mock them. He couldn't mock them because he was now using all of his mental strength to keep his feet from retreating.

A stinging pain cut through his lower lip, and it split open, allowing blood to flow. The raging wind scattered the blood into the air.

Yet Baek Cheon endured.

He had already experienced this once before. He knew to some extent how monstrous the Bishops, or those claiming to be Bishops, were. But for those who were encountering the existence of the Bishop for the first time in their lives, the scene unfolding before their eyes was even more shocking. It was a catastrophe that couldn't be described with the word «despair.»

Ah...

Namgung Dowi unconsciously took a step back, his eyes trembling as if struck by lightning, lost and uncertain.

'How...'

How could such a thing exist in the world?

As the eldest son of the Namgung clan and the future head of the Nangong family, he had encountered many powerful individuals who ruled the world. But this Bishop was different. It was distinct from the powerful figures he had known until now.

'...how'

Different from the leader of the Ten Great Sects and the powerful heads of the Five great families who influenced the world.

Even the absolute leaders who had wielded power surpassing all of them. This kind of immense power was something he had never felt before. That's how overwhelmingly despairing it was.

The thought naturally surfaced in his mind. What could anyone do in the face of that? That... «Eugh...»

Nangong Dowi, who had unconsciously been retreating, suddenly felt someone gripping his shoulders from both sides. Startled, he turned around and mumbled.

«Yo, Yoon Jong Dojang... Jo Geol Dojang...»

It was Jo Geol and Yoon Jong who held his shoulders so tightly that he could feel the pain, making sure he couldn't retreat further.

«...Don't back away, Young Lord.»

Yoon Jong, his lips bitten until they bled, spoke with determination.

«Endure it.»

Namgung Dowi's eyes quivered at Yoon Jong's steadfast words. Endure it? How? How could he say such a thing even after seeing that sight? If they were really witnessing the same horrifying spectacle, how could anyone say such words? Weren't they terrified?

'Aren't you scared?'

Seeing that and still saying «endure it»? Even now, Namgong Dowi felt as though his mind was about to shatter before his physical body. With his inner spirit spiraling out of control, how could he possibly endure? Or was it suggesting that he should silently endure what seemed to be an imminent death?

‘I can’t do it!’

The moment Namgong Dowi was about to shout with a bloodshot gaze, he suddenly shut his mouth. What calmed him was... the small trembling he felt in Yoon Jong’s grip on his shoulders.

Namgong Dowi looked at Yoon Jong, taken aback.

‘Are you trembling?’

His gaze slowly descended. Yoon Jong’s legs were trembling as if they might give way any moment.

Namgong Dowi couldn’t suppress a whimper.

‘How...?’

It wasn’t that they weren’t scared. They weren’t acting out of pride. They, too, were trembling. They, too, were human, just like Namgong Dowi. In fact, perhaps they were feeling even greater fear than Namgong Dowi.

Yet despite that, they stood their ground, not retreating from the presence of the Bishop.

“Retreating...”

Yoon Jong bit his lip.

«Do not leave any memories of retreating... for your own sake!»

Namgong Dowi’s jaw trembled.

When he forced himself to look away, he saw Chung Myung’s back in the lead.

Even standing behind felt like his will might break down. If that’s the case, how enormous of a burden was Chung Myung handling head-on?

Namgong Dowi looked at the others.

‘Dojang...’

He clenched his fists, nails digging into his palms.

Gritting his teeth he anchored himself into the ground.

Courage to fight back? It was still absent. If that demon charged at him, Namgong Dowi’s resolve might crumble in an instant.

But...

‘No matter how inadequate I may be.’

There’s someone holding the frontline in front of him, so how could he think of escaping?

With bloodshot eyes, he tightly gripped the sword in his hand, as if it might break.

“Even if I can’t be of help...”

Namgong Dowi’s voice, tinged with blood from his throat, came out.

“...at the very least, we will die together.”

Only then did the strength seep out from the hand that had been gripping his shoulder. However, Namgung Dowi, unaware of this fact, kept gazing through Chung Myung's back. 'Dojang, please!'

His gaze held an indescribable earnestness, much like the gaze someone from a distant past used to send to his back. That look pushed Chung Myung's back forward.

Kwaaaaaah!

Just the touch of it tore through the skin, wreaked havoc inside, and the venomous energy swept in all directions at an astonishing speed.

Facing the explosively spreading demonic energy head-on, Chung Myung revealed a grin for no apparent reason.

«So... that's it...»

Laughter erupted involuntarily.

'Did I really deal with something like that?'

Every time he felt a crushing sensation on his fingertips, a hollow laugh escaped his lips.

"This is it..."

Squeaky, croaky laughter pierced through Chung Myung's distorted lips.

«I must have been crazy too...»

He has experienced this demonic energy countless times. But they say people see things differently depending on where they stand, right? The presence of the Bishop that he used to look down on from a higher position in the past and the Bishop he now looked up to from a lower position were as different as heaven and earth.

The overwhelming power felt despairing. Simultaneously, a fiery fighting spirit began to boil in Chung Myung's eyes.

'It's the difference in power...'

Like a beast growling, he revealed his fangs.

«Just a mere Bishop brat spouting nonsense.»

Chung Myung's intense aura began to sharpen his posture. At that moment, a muttering voice came from the side.

«...Creepy.»

The wind that blew caused Jang Ilso's long hair to flutter wildly, as if possessed. However, Jang Ilso stood firm, facing the oncoming demonic energy head-on.

He casually raised his hand to wipe his face.

«The world is indeed vast. I never knew such guys would exist.»

Chung Myung chuckled.

«Why? Are you scared?»

«Scared?»

Jang Ilso turned his head to Chung Myung, and his long, narrow eyes drew a smile as if he found it amusing.

«You're a naughty kid. You should stop saying things that you don't mean.»

«You're not the one to talk, you lunatic.»

«Kukuku.»

Jang Ilso laughed cheerfully. Meanwhile, his eyes flickered with a deep blue light. Despite having his ultimate enemy right in front of him, his composure remained unshaken.

«It's certainly something that deviates from my calculations. And I don't particularly like variables.»

A bright smile full of charm graced his face.

«If there's an unusable variable, it needs to be destroyed, no matter what.»

«I don't particularly want to agree with your words.»

Chung Myung, who had reversed his grip on his sword, chuckled.

«I can agree with that tho.»

The eyes of Jang Ilso, shining with a menacing light, and the cold gaze of Chung Myung clashed in the air.

«Then let's find out.»

Jang Ilso slowly lowered his hand and spoke. Then, he extended both hands and casually took a step towards the horrific maelstrom of demonic energy.

«Let's see how sharp the fine sword I prepared is.»

«Don't waste my time, you miserable idiot.»

Chung Myung, with his sword drawn, also took a step forward.

The two figures, black and red, distanced themselves from each other and advanced together towards the raging black storm. Two polar opposites who could never walk the same path were now focused on the same point.

Kagagak!

Clatter!

The moment Chung Myung's sword scraped against the ground — Jang Ilso's rings clashed, the sounds resonating simultaneously.

As if they had made a pact, the two of them threw themselves into the storm of raging demonic energy, driving the ground with all their might.

Chung Myung's sword, the sword of the Violet Mystic Divine Arts [자하신공(紫霞神功)], emitted a sunset colored glow. Meanwhile, Jang Ilso, raising both hands, ignited Unyielding Azure Slaughtering Flames [창염살강(蒼炎殺剛)].

Two streams of red and blue light surged towards the darkest place in the world.