

## Chapter 1091

I might have gone a bit too far with my words. (1)

On the eaves of a large pavilion, Chung Myung, holding a bottle of liquor in one hand, was absentmindedly gazing at the moon. A bit further away, Ogeom watched him from their usual spot. Normally, Tang Soso would have dashed over at the sight of a patient drinking, but this time, she could only watch without running to him.

«What do you think he's pondering about?»

«Well.»

In response to Tang Soso's question, Baek Cheon raised his head.

«He's someone whose thoughts are unfathomable.»

«...Indeed.»

Yoon Jong and Jo Geol both sighed simultaneously. The gazes of Hwasan's disciples directed at Chung Myung were quite complex.

«Sahyeong.»

«What?»

«How on earth does Chung Myung know all that?»

When Yoon Jong didn't respond, Jo Geol, glancing at him, continued.

«No... Isn't it a bit strange? Of course, considering Chung Myung's background as someone who had a grudge against the Demonic Cult in the past... It's not too odd that he knows some details about them.»

Jo Geol stopped speaking and bit his lip. Originally, he wanted to say, 'Even considering that, doesn't he know too much?' However, he couldn't bring himself to say it. Discussing Chung Myung's past was something they implicitly avoided.

It wasn't a formal agreement that no one should bring up such stories. However, subtly, everyone had come to avoid mentioning it, knowing that it would only make each other uncomfortable.

After going through this recent event, what confused Jo Geol the most was Chung Myung's reaction when he saw the Second Bishop.

'It looked like he recognized him.'

There were plenty of scenarios to consider. For instance, Chung Myung's ancestor being associated with Hwasan, fleeing from the unbearable burden just before the battle with the Heavenly Demon at Hundred Thousand Mountains, unable to overcome the pressure.

Or, having knowledge of Hwasan's martial arts from the past but never returning due to the guilt, like Yu Iseol's father. In the context of a declining and collapsing formerly glorious sect, it wasn't surprising to find someone with a complicated history.

Therefore, everyone had refrained from digging into Chung Myung's past until now. But at this point, Jo Geol started to have slightly different thoughts.

‘Even in such cases... can one really recognize the Bishop from a hundred years ago? Would someone conveying the past truly describe the appearance of the Bishops from a hundred years ago in such detail?’

It was unknown. However, one thing was certain — Chung Myung’s knowledge of the Demonic Cult went beyond a mere recollection.

«What if it’s strange?»

«... Yes?»

At that moment, Yoon Jong turned to Jo Geol with a stern gaze.

«Why? Are you trying to doubt Chung Myung now?»

«No, no, I just...»

Yoon Jong cut him off sharply with a furrowed brow.

«Don’t talk nonsense. Regardless of how he knows that, Chung Myung has done his best to help us. That is an undeniable fact.»

«I know that too...»

Jo Geol lowered his head with a sulky expression. Yoon Jong’s words couldn’t be denied, and Jo Geol had no intention of denying them.

‘Come to think of it, it feels like it was just yesterday when I first got beaten up and hung from the ceiling because of that guy.’

Looking back, time had truly flown by swiftly. At that time, who could have imagined that Hwasan would end up like this?

«... When you think about it, everything that happened in Hwasan is because of him.»

«Huh?»

«Isn’t it? If it weren’t for him, would we have been worrying about the future of Gangho right now?»

As Yoon Jong pondered, he looked at Chung Myung with a newfound perspective.

If it hadn’t been for Chung Myung, Jo Geol might have returned to his family. Yoon Jong would have guarded the desolate sect after people left. Yu Iseol might have found a way to stay in Hwasan somehow, but Tang Soso wouldn’t have come to Hwasan, and what would have happened to Baek Cheon was also uncertain.

No, even before that, Hwasan could have collapsed and everyone would have been scattered going their own way.

«Everything started when he suddenly entered Hwasan.»

«... True.»

Yoon Jong, who answered softly, fell into a brief contemplation.

What was Chung Myung thinking back then? Looking back now, it’s clear that Chung Myung wanted to make Hwasan a formidable faction like it used to be. How could he have thought such a thing while entering a sect that had already fallen into ruin?

«... I really have no idea.»

Just as Jo Geol was expressing his doubts, Yoon Jong turned around with a very uneasy expression.

«Hey... Sasuk.»

«Yeah?»

«...I know it's a bit strange for me to say this after telling Jo Geol to keep quiet, but... I've been thinking about something that seems somewhat reasonable or, not reasonable, but just... well, I've had a thought.»

Yoon Jong's words were vague, and his tone was strangely hesitant.

«What's going on?»

«Well... it's about what Chung Myung said.»

Baek Cheon's eyes subtly hardened. Bringing up a topic that had already been discussed once made him uncomfortable.

«Well... the reason we are somewhat suspicious... no, looking at Chung Myung with uncertain eyes is because he knows too much about the past Demonic Cult, right?»

«Is that so?»

«He knows too much about the war from a hundred years ago. So, I was thinking... perhaps...»

As Yoon Jong fell silent, everyone swallowed dryly.

«P-Perhaps...»

When an urging voice was heard, Yoon Jong nervously glanced at Chung Myung and finally spoke.

«Uh... Chung Myung... Could he be... from the Demonic Cult?»

Everyone fell silent. Baek Cheon's eyes widened. Those standing nearby also widened their eyes and opened their mouths in surprise.

Baek Cheon stuttered with a bewildered expression,

«N-No... No... This kid... making sense...»

However, at that moment, someone nearby clapped their hands with a resounding sound.

«It's convincing!»

«...All the mysteries have been unraveled.»

«Huh?»

Baek Cheon turned his perplexed face to look around. Samae and Sajils all had expressions of great enlightenment.

«Thinking about it, he does seem more suited for the Demonic Cult than an orthodox sect.»

«...Then it makes sense that he knows so much about the Cult.»

«His personality too.»

«Exactly, his temperament!»

«Oh, no...»

Cold sweat started to trickle down Baek Cheon's determined forehead.

This is absurd, ridiculous, and strangely plausible... No! Damn it! Plausible! What was I thinking!

«Say something sensible! Who in the world hates the Demonic Cult more than Chung Myung? His aversion to the Demonic Cult is at a level that requires medical attention.»

«Look at this, Sasuk.»

At that moment, Jo Geol spoke after clicking his tongue.

«It seems like Sasuk grew up so nicely that he doesn't know.»

«Why does it sound cheeky when you say it?»

«...Let's move on.»

Jo Geol pointed at Baek Cheon arrogantly with his chin and asked.

«What faction does Sasuk hate the most?»

«Southern Edge.»

Without a hint of hesitation, an immediate answer came out. Jo Geol nodded as if to say, 'See that?'

«Where is Sasuk originally from?»

«...Southern Edge.»

«Anything else to add?»

Wow... this is an unrefutable argument.

«Originally the people who turned away are scarier. If that guy was originally from the Demonic Cult and then ran away because he got fed up with it, I can understand everything. With his messed-up personality and ridiculous martial arts.»

Listening to Jo Geol's words, Yoon Jong stared at him with a serious expression.

«If it was someone else, I wouldn't know, but if it's that guy, I might think about going to Hwasan, the place Demonic Cult hates the most, and causing it to rise again. That's the kind of guy he is.»

Baek Cheon fell silent.

Even Baek Cheon, who had a history of infuriating Jin Geumryong and Southern Edge and rushing into the place they hated the most, had no right to say whether this was possible or not. If he carelessly said it couldn't happen here, he might hear something like, 'Oh, really? So, who's the one who did the things even those Demonic Cultist bastards wouldn't do?' It was certain that he would be caught in a crossfire.

«...Well, let's stop the nonsense.»

«Is it possible?»

«It's not just possible, it's highly likely.»

«Confirmed.»

Baek Cheon pressed his temples. It was now impossible to discern whether these guys were sincerely making such remarks or just joking. It was all too confusing.

He let out a deep sigh.

«Anyway... if there's something needed to be said, he will tell us. You guys know it too. Chung Myung won't mention anything not relevant, but he'll definitely tell us what's necessary.»

«That's true.»

«He knows about the Demonic Cult but hasn't mentioned anything about it to us until now. Do you know why?»

«Yes.»

Everyone nodded. It couldn't be helped. If they had discovered the true power of the Demonic Cult three years ago, their spirits might have been crushed.

Even now, facing the gap between the Cult and themselves, they were left dumbfounded. How much more so at that time?

Chung Myung still stared at the moon with the bottle in his hand. Observing him, Baek Cheon spoke calmly.

«In other words, he probably thinks that now we can handle the truth, even if we know everything. So let's wait a little longer. If a situation arises that we need to know, he'll definitely tell us.»

«Yes, Sasuk.»

Yoon Jong nodded, then glanced around before lowering his voice a bit.

«More importantly... I'm not sure if it's just me, but I found the conversation between Sect Leader and Chung Myung a bit confusing. If you understood, could you explain it to me?»

Baek Cheon remained silent, and Yoon Jong, with an air of nonchalance, scratched his head.

«I felt like it was going well, but then it ended ambiguously. I'm not sure what the conclusion was. If you understood, could you let me know?»

«Well... that's...»

Baek Cheon's face was somewhat troubled. In truth, he, too, didn't quite grasp the significance of the final exchange between the two. What exactly did 'just follow what Cheonumaeng used to do' mean?

«To be honest, I'm not quite sure...»

«I'll explain!»

«Oh, geez! You scared me!»

Startled by the sudden voice, Baek Cheon stepped back. Im Sobyong had appeared from nowhere, swaying a fan gently in his hand.

Im Sobyong continued to laugh with the fan covering part of his face.

«Why are you doing this? There must be a reason.»

«Oh, sorry. I just found it amusing when I thought about it.»

Im Sobyong shrugged and got to the point.

«It's not that big of a deal. Hwasan Geomhyeop, or should I say, Chung Myung Dojang, has declared that they will unify Gangho under the banner of Cheonumaeng.»

«Oh, so that's what it was... What's wrong with this crazy guy?»

Baek Cheon's pupils shook greatly.