

## Chapter 1105

If it's such a reward... Well, it's worth accepting. (5)

Chung Myung asked Tang Gunak,

«What is it?»

«Well...»

Instead of an immediate answer, he smiled cryptically.

Chung Myung furrowed his brow for a moment. It wasn't because he was upset. It was because he recognized in that face someone who had smiled like this at him before.

'Is it all about blood ties?'

Families are frightening for this reason. Unlike sects where different people carry on a shared will, families are bound by blood. Hence, at times, glimpses of past figures can be seen in them.

«Nothing particularly difficult?»

«If that's the case, it's fortunate...»

Tang Gunak trailed off, glancing at the bottle in his hand.

«It doesn't seem that way to me.»

«...»

«In fact, from your perspective, my son is nothing more than a minnow that doesn't warrant any attention.»

He smiled, examining Chung Myung's seemingly unruffled face.

«Yet, despite exhausting yourself all day, teaching and correcting people, aren't you checking up on things from here?»

«Just looking for a good place to drink.»

«Is this the place?»

Tang Gunak glanced around the desolate rooftop.

«Your taste is quite peculiar.»

«I hear it all the time.»

Chung Myung chuckled, brushing it off. That's why one shouldn't underestimate people from the Tang clan — they casually poke right at the core.

Certainly, that man was a peculiar type even within such a clan.

«You've done well enough.»

Chung Myung glanced at Tang Gunak, surprised by the words that came out of nowhere.

«You've raised Hwasan to this extent, created the Cheonumaeng, and ultimately stopped the advance of the Demonic Cult. With just your achievements so far, you could be hailed as a hero. If those idiots from Gupailbang showed you some respect, your reputation would have echoed far and wide across the nation.»

«...»

«Sometimes, watching you, I wonder what on earth I am doing.»

«Oh, come on. Why say that?»

«But isn't that the truth?»

Tang Gunak stifled a bitter smile.

«Care for another drink?»

«Yes.»

They lightly clinked their bottles together and simultaneously took a long sip.

«Phew.»

Chung Myung grinned, setting down the bottle and wiping his mouth.

“Come to think of it, it's not common to see the head of the Tang clan drinking straight from the bottle, is it?”

“Well, unless I'm drinking with you, it doesn't happen.”

Tang Gunak glanced at the bottle in Chung Myung's hand with an odd look in his eyes.

“But I don't feel bad about it.”

“Well, then it's fine, isn't it?”

“Indeed.”

Tang Gunak nodded slowly. Gently swirling the bottle, he spoke again after a moment.

“Yeah, it's impressive. What you've done so far. But...”

He tilted his head slightly.

“You seem to aspire for more.”

“...”

“Sometimes, I worry you're forgetting one thing.”

“What might that be?”

He turned to Chung Myung, staring intently.

“That you're also human.”

“I'm not foolish, you know.”

“No, you're not a fool. So naturally, you should already know that.”

The quiet of the night amplified the sound of the liquor sloshing inside the bottle.

“But oddly enough, it's usually not the fools who forget that fact. It's the excessively clever ones who tend to forget.”

Chung Myung chose not to respond.

«Reasons, well... there could be many. Believing in oneself, doing something that you think only you can do, various personal circumstances... there could be reasons for everything.»

“Hm...”

“But no matter the reason, it doesn't change the fact that you might be pushing yourself too hard, right?”

Chung Myung's expression shifted subtly, and Tang Gunak chuckled lightly.

“What's on your mind?”

“Well... Depending on how similar words are expressed, the feeling can be quite different, that’s what I’m thinking about.”

“Huh?”

Chung Myung scratched his head.

— Damn, if you don’t rush in, those brats will all fall. No, wait! Who cares if those punks die or not? It would be great if those jerks who usually get into trouble got beaten up! But why on earth are you running to save them? The idiot who’s acting like his dangling arm is not about to detach from his body... Wait? Me? Hey, you! Over there! Are you not going? Looking back, that guy was definitely insane.

Luckily, he didn’t inherit those traits. It’s fortunate for the family that such traits didn’t pass down.

“It’s kind of funny when you think about it.”

“What?”

“You’re the only suitable person to train the Tang clan. That’s something I don’t really need to think too much about.”

As Tang Gunak spoke, a melancholic expression washed over his face.

He knows the limits of his abilities and is someone who understands Chung Myung’s abilities. He knows this is the best for the family.

«Would you like to do it yourself if you’re not comfortable?»

«No, it’s not like that.»

Seeing Chung Myung glancing discreetly, Tang Gunak burst into laughter. He thought to himself that this person had changed a lot. When he first saw him in Sichuan, he wondered how someone could be so indifferent.

«It’s not wounded pride, it’s bitterness. We don’t have much time. So, we have no choice but to proceed most efficiently. The problem is... the person creating that efficiency will ultimately be you, and as you pursue efficiency in everything, everything will end up relying on you.»

«...»

«That’s not a good direction, isn’t it?»

Listening that, Chung Myung burst into laughter. The way of speaking may differ, but indeed, naggers are all the same.

«The reason why you’re now trying to teach them...»

«Hwasan has its limits. So, the entire Cheonumaeng needs to become stronger. Yet, the one doing that doesn’t even consider their own limitations and tries to take on everything alone. How foolish.»

«...»

«Is that what you’re trying to say?»

Tang Gunak smiled broadly.

«Don’t be foolish.»

«Oh, what a bad temper.»

Chung Myung chuckled and shrugged his shoulders.

«Don't worry. I'm not that stupid. I've realized that for a while now.»

«What do you mean?»

«That one-sided relationship where only one is giving and giving — isn't what you can call a friendship.»

«...»

«It's an obvious fact.»

Tang Gunak nodded.

«You know it well.»

«As a matter of fact, I was just about to make a request.»

«To me?»

«Yes.»

Tang Gunak looked at Chung Myung with an intrigued expression.

The reason he came here was that he wanted to share Chung Myung's burden a bit. He had taken on too much until now, not even extending a hand to ask for help from Hyun Jong or Tang Gunak.

Tang Gunak had come here to say that this couldn't continue. However, Chung Myung had boldly mentioned having a request of this sort.

'I'm curious.'

Whether it's something prepared, or just casually made up, listening to Chung Myung's words would lead to a conclusion.

«What is it?»

At that moment, the corners of Chung Myung's mouth twisted into a sinister smile.

«It's undoubtedly not easy for the Head of the family to teach the disciples. Eventually, you will end up repeating what you have been taught.»

«That's true.»

«But... if you change your perspective just a bit, even the Head of the family could easily become a devil.»

«Hmm?»

Chung Myung began to reveal his thoughts. The corners of Tang Gunak's mouth, as he listened to the story, oddly began to resemble those of Tang Bo.

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Leaving the room, Jo Geol stretched broadly, gazing at the newly rising sun.

«Feels good.»

He involuntarily whistled. As he energetically stepped forward, a gruff voice resounded from behind him.

«Why are you in such a good mood from the morning breeze?»

«Oh, Sahyeong!»

Jo Geol turned around cheerfully, smiling at Yoon Jong.

«My body feels so refreshed these days.»

Yoon Jong was about to say something but shook his head instead. Truth be told, he too had been feeling a bit more comfortable lately.

«Isn't it because Chung Myung is busy bothering people somewhere else? Hahaha.»

«Is that something to laugh about?»

«It's not something to laugh about. But what can we do when we're in a good mood?»

Yoon Jong shrugged as if to say he couldn't argue with that.

Actually, the biggest bully in Hwasan is Chung Myung... no, the one enduring the most intense training were none other than Ogeom. Even when training alongside fellow disciples of Hwasan, Ogeom had relentlessly practiced at a level several times higher.

There were countless times when no one envied the affectionate special treatment they received.

However, lately, due to Chung Myung focusing on Nokrim and Tangga, he hadn't been properly tormenting them. Thanks to this, Ogeom, who only needed to train like the other disciples, found themselves in a situation where they still had some energy left.

“Ah, if it had been like this from the beginning, how nice would it have been?”

“It's not a good thing, you know.”

“I understand. I know. You need to train hard to become strong. But Sahyeong, aren't there days in life where you should have moments like this?”

“... That's not entirely wrong.”

In the end, Yoon Jong also chuckled softly.

Both Jo Geol and Yoon Jong knew well that this situation wouldn't last long.

Chung Myung's persistence surpassed common sense. It was unlikely that he would keep watching Ogeom enjoy life carefree. Perhaps it might be better to rest comfortably when there's a chance.

Arriving at the training grounds, Jo Geol whistled upon seeing his Sahyongs already there.

“Ah, as expected, everyone's full of energy.”

Thinking of Nokrim and Tangga, also Namgung, being sacrificed, brought tears to his eyes... but what could be done? People have to experience such moments in life.

Jo Geol cheerfully greeted Baek Cheon.

“Sasuk, you are here?”

“You're late!”

“... Ah, well, Chung Myung hasn't come out yet, anyway.”

Seeing Jo Geol being so cheerful, Baek Cheon let out a deep sigh. That guy is like an active puppy — if he doesn't expend his energy through sufficient training, it's unbearable.

«Even Sasuk looks cheerful, doesn't he?»

«Hmm...»

«On the other hand...»

Jo Geol glanced subtly at those standing on the other side. Nokrim and Tangga had completely grim and lifeless expressions. Namgung clan seemed slightly better, but it was a tiny difference — they all looked exhausted.

«Quite pitiful...»

«...Hold back, Geol. What if Chung Myung starts bothering only us again?»

«Is that a problem? We've always been at the receiving end.»

«Listening to you, it does seem so.»

«Stop scaring us. I'm just living today and ready to die. Can't I even say it's good? Haha.»

Baek Cheon just gave up and shook his head. He wasn't someone you could reason with from the start.

At that moment,

«There, it's Chung Myung.»

Yu Iseol spoke softly. When Baek Cheon turned in that direction, indeed, Chung Myung was approaching, clearly showing signs of being annoyed with everything.

«Hmm?»

It wasn't particularly surprising — Chung Myung was always like that. The reason Baek Cheon was puzzled was that there was someone else beside him.

«Who's that?»

«Seems like it's the Lord of the Tang clan?»

The disciples of Hwasan furrowed their brows in confusion.

Tang Jan looked at Tang Pae standing beside him. There was a question in his eyes as to whether his brother had given the Lord of the family a word. But Tang Pae shook his head as if he had no idea what was happening.

“Good morning.”

Tang Gunak arrived at the training grounds, greeted everyone lightly, and smiled.

“From today onwards, I'll also be participating in training, so I hope you'll take care of me.”

“...Are you teaching?”

“Then are you going to learn, you idiot?”

Yoon Jong wasted no time to scold Jo Geol, who was blabbering again.

Chung Myung looked at Tang Gunak and said,

“I'll leave it to you then.”

Tang Gunak exchanged a smile and confidently walked up to the disciples of Hwasan.

Baek Cheon, with a puzzled expression, calmly spoke to Tanggunak,

“Lord Tang, the Tangga is over there...”

“This is the right place.”

“Um, excuse me?”

Tang Gunak gave a strange smile.

“Do you know why I don't directly teach the Tangga?”

“Well... that's...”

“There are several reasons, and one of the significant ones is that the Tang clan focuses on poisons and flying daggers. Poisons can cancel each other out, but if throwing the flying daggers goes wrong, it can lead to irreversible consequences.”

“I guess so.”

Once hidden weapons are unleashed, they don't come back. A slight misjudgment of someone's abilities could lead to death.

“So, I've chosen to observe whenever possible. But... Hwasan Geomhyeop mentioned something.”

“What are you talking about?”

“He said you've spent the past three years learning only how to survive enemy attacks. So now, you're supposed to be so skilled that not even a single breath would escape?”

“...”

Wait, seriously?

“It's a good thing, for me too. Besides... finding an opportunity to practice hidden weapon techniques with people isn't easy for me either.”

Tang Gunak chuckled and pulled out his hand from his sleeve. Four bluish gleaming daggers were held in his grip.

“I can throw them at ease. Won't it be mutually beneficial?”

“It might not be a good idea...”

“Trust me.”

“But shouldn't we not trust you?”

“Alright, then let's begin!”

“No, please listen! Lord!”

“Hahaha! Don't be so uptight!”

“Please listen!”

A bright smile lit up Tang Gunak's face. While Chung Myung had compared it to Tang Bo's, the truth was the smile resembled Chung Myung's.

The heated blade of a flying dagger sliced through the air.