

## Chapter 1027

But please understand (2)

Words are merely a means to convey the underlying meaning, but sometimes, more than the meaning, it's the emotions carried within those words that speak louder. This was true of what Chung Myung had just said.

The meaning within was significant, but what resonated even more was the emotion conveyed through his words. The price for merely waiting for one day.

Who could remain silent in the face of the weight carried by those words? Hyun Jong slowly opened his eyes and accepted Chung Myung's gaze. It was a calm, steady look, devoid of reproach or urgency.

However...

'It's different.'

A decision might not change, but there was a world of difference between making a choice with an understanding of what it might sacrifice and making one in ignorance. Chung Myung was telling Hyun Jong that he needed to be prepared for everything that might unfold as a result of his decisions.

That's why he said it. Just understand. Just understand how many things hang in the balance with this seemingly casual deferred choice.

«Thousands...»

Hyun Jong's voice weighed heavily.

«...of lives.»

Those slowly uttered words hung heavy in the air, suffocating everyone.

How could one not tremble at those words? Even if there were those who could remain composed, they wouldn't be welcome here, not in Cheonumaeng.

«Lord Tang.»

«Yes, Alliance Leader.»

Hyun Jong, looking at Tang Gunak, spoke.

«What do you think about the words spoken by the young disciple just now?»

«Well...»

Tang Gunak glanced briefly at Chung Myung before answering.

«Considering the past actions of Magyo, it's not an incorrect statement.»

«...»

«Of course, we haven't accurately assessed the scale of the current Magyo we're facing, so the impact might be different... but we can't deny that civilian casualties will increase as time goes on.»

“So...»

«Even if it's not thousands...»

The unspoken part of the sentence was clear. It's certain that hundreds of lives would be lost. Hyun Jong gently pressed his eyelids.

«So that's it.»

He had moments of resentment. Moments of sighing with frustration deep inside.

He had wondered why anyone would stand at the forefront, giving their lives until the end, when everyone else had withdrawn. He had quietly resented the ancestors for not looking further into the future.

But now he understood. They didn't have the luxury for such considerations.

He knew what it meant for Heasan to wither. Hence, the ancestors had sacrificed everything to kill the Heavenly Demon and defeat Magyo without thinking about the consequences.

So then...

If the ancestors had made such a choice, having witnessed the results of that choice, what decision should Hyun Jong make now?

Hyun Jong, removing his hand from his eyelid, looked at Chung Myung.

«Chung Myung-a.»

«Yes, Sect Leader.»

«...Just speak your mind.»

«...»

«So, tell me. What do you think Hwasan and Cheonumaeng should do from now on?»

Chung Myung looked at him intently for a moment and then spoke heavily.

«It's not about waiting for information from beggars.»

After a brief pause, he turned to everyone.

«Sapaeryeon is the one who holds the information. If we want to obtain that information, we must inquire it from those who are the most informed.»

«Sapaeryeon...»

A sigh escaped from Hyun Jong's lips. He knew exactly what it meant to get information from Sapaeryeon.

With the current situation of Gupailbang's pleas about Sapaeryeon's alliance with Cheonumaeng, it would only strengthen Shaolin's claims if Cheonumaeng was to be the first to request information from them.

Chung Myung was well aware of this fact. Nevertheless, he insisted that they needed proper information from Sapaeryeon, no matter the cost, even if it gave strength to Shaolin's claims.

«...As you say, Sapaeryeon might be the first to obtain information about Hangzhou, but can we trust them?»

Chung Myung nodded in response to Tang Gunak's question.

«I'll say it plainly.»

«And what's the reason for thinking so?»

«They have no reason to lie. If they give us information, it's their way of involving us one way or another. But there's no need to downplay the enemy's strength. If we exaggerate, we exaggerate.»

«But...»

Chung Myung looked directly at Tang Gunak.

«While we hesitate, another person dies.»

A sigh of frustration escaped from Tang Gunak's mouth. He was slowly understanding how unreasonable the situation was.

Despite the presence of beggars in Hangzhou, ordinary beggars had their limits in assessing Magyo's power. Moreover, the experts from the Beggars Sect who could accurately assess Magyo's strength had retreated from Hangzhou due to the Gangnam non-aggression treaty. Ultimately, at this point, it meant that Sapaeryeon was the only source that could provide accurate information about the current extent of Magyo's power.

«But...»

Those who held this information were the least trustworthy individuals in the world. Tang Gunak found himself in a dilemma.

They couldn't trust Sapaeryeon, so they needed to verify the information. But the longer they took to verify, the greater the suffering of the common people.

How could they possibly resolve this situation?

«...So, are you suggesting that we trust Sapaeryeon's words and walk into Gangnam now?»

«I'm simply describing the situation as it is.»

Chung Myung's gaze shifted from Tang Gunak to Hyun Jong.

«The choice is yours, Sect Leader.»

His eyes bore down heavily on Hyun Jong.

«There's no such thing as a right choice, Sect Leader.»

Chung Myung spoke with a growl.

«The ways of the world are never so clear. Making a choice is not about finding the right answer, it's just about deciding the direction you want to go. Seeking the right choice is no different from saying you won't make a choice.»

Hyun Jong's trembling hand, hidden in his sleeve, shivered.

«There's no such thing as a wrong choice, only different ones.»

«...»

«The reason why Sect Leader and the Alliance Leader must exist is because there are moments when they must choose matters where right and wrong don't divide. There must be someone to handle those tasks. It's better to make any decision than to postpone without deciding.»

Hyun Jong nodded. It was a sound argument.

«So, just make a choice. That's enough. The members of the alliance will follow your decision.»

Hyun Jong's heart finally found some ease.

«In that case...»

He was about to respond at that very moment.

«Let me ask one thing.»

Baek Cheon, who had maintained silence until now, spoke up. Hyun Jong's eyes, as he looked at Baek Cheon, seemed brighter for a moment.

Baek Cheon rarely spoke up first in the meetings of Cheonumaeng, let alone interrupting Hyun Jong's speech.

There was something about his face, stiff and cold, where even signs of life seemed to flicker weakly.

«If Sect Leader decides not to confront the Magyo but to watch from here...»

«...»

“What will you do?”

The question was directed at Chung Myung. However, he remained silent. Instead, he kept his gaze fixed on Hyun Jong, not even glancing at Baek Cheon.

“Answer me.”

“Sect Leader.”

When Chung Myung only called out to Hyun Jong, Baek Cheon raised his voice.

“Not Sect Leader, answer me, you bastard!”

There was an undercurrent of anger in his tone. It was indeed an impolite action, but no one here blamed Baek Cheon for it.

Chung Myung's silence conveyed the answer to everyone.

That guy was going.

Even if it meant leaving everyone behind, even if he had to go alone, he would head to where Magyo was. While those at Tangga might not understand, the people of Hwasan clearly grasped his intent.

Eventually, Baek Cheon grabbed Chung Myung's collar, pulling him towards himself.

“Do you think the disciples and members of the alliance will follow Sect Leader's orders?”

“...”

“Then you? Are you not a member of Cheonumaeng? Are you not a member of Hwasan? Do you not need to do that? You damn idiot!”

Baek Cheon's face contorted in a way that was unfamiliar while it seemed like he might lift Chung Myung off the ground. It was a face he hadn't shown before – one filled with anger.

«Answer!»

Chung Myung looked at the irate Baek Cheon with an indifferent gaze.

«Let go of me, Sasuk.»

«Sasuk? Do you really think of me as Sasuk?»

«...»

«You damn...»

«That's enough! What kind of disgrace is this?»

In the end, the unprecedented situation reprimanded them. Baek Cheon bit his lip tightly and reluctantly released his grip on Chung Myung's collar, taking a step back. However, his gaze, still directed at Chung Myung, showed no signs of softening.

It wasn't just Baek Cheon.

The other Ogeom who had been standing behind him also fixed their gazes on Chung Myung, similar to Baek Cheon's.

Hyun Jong surveyed everyone with a stern face.

In this situation, he couldn't afford to show any signs of wavering. Hyun Jong understood this and remained as determined as he could be.

His mouth opened, and his commanding voice echoed.

«As the Master of Cheonumaeng and the Sect Leader of Hwasan, I command.»

«Yes, Alliance Leader.»

Hyun Jong's gaze suppressed the unrest. It was a dignified demeanor befitting the role of the Leader of Cheonumaeng.

«The situation in Gangnam is urgent, but entering without proper information is too dangerous. To make our next move, we need at least some basic information.»

Chung Myung's gaze darkened.

«The most reliable information will somehow come from the Beggars Sect. While we negotiate with them, we should also contact the nearby Gupailbang for cooperation. If we can't obtain proper information from them, we won't hesitate to make contact with Sapaeryeon.»

«...»

«One day.»

Hyun Jong declared firmly.

«All of this will take no more than a day, and after that, we'll decide Cheonumaeng's response. From this moment, I strictly forbid any disciples to leave their positions. Everyone must stay here and await further orders. This is my command as the Alliance Leader. Those who disobey will be severely punished!»

«We receive the Lord's command.»

Everyone in the room lowered their heads towards Hyun Jong.

But only one person, Chung Myung, did not bow. He gazed at Hyun Jong with a cold, unyielding look.

No one knew what he was hiding behind those deep eyes.