

Chapter 1044

Kill or be killed. (4)

Squish!

A monstrous hand burst through someone's back, the blood-soaked fingers still gripping a pulsating heart.

«Gruuk...»

The gaze of the dying and the one who watched their death closely met within arm's reach. Disbelieving eyes, as if they couldn't fathom the impending demise. The one who faced death coming close, his face twisted in terror, was met with a cruel, mirthless smile from the other.

Crack!

In an instant, the figure that should have fallen lifeless was kicked away, and the cultist, with the heart in hand, squeezed it until it burst.

«Huhuhuhuhaha! You filthy unbelievers!»

Fear has a peculiar quality.

People tend to muster more courage in numbers compared to when they're alone. Isn't there a clear difference between walking a dimly lit path at night alone and doing so with others? But once fear begins to spread...

From that point on, it's often the case that a larger, more overwhelming fear inundates, rather than when one is alone. The fear initiated at the forefront rapidly disseminated throughout the Black Ghost elites.

What was lacking wasn't power but rather their mindset.

The difference between Magyo, who had carried the venom from a century-old catastrophe, and those who had forgotten everything in the sands of time and history, was starkly apparent in this very moment.

«Second Coming of The Heavenly Demon! Ten Thousand Demons Pay Homage. Second Coming of The Heavenly Demon! Ten Thousand Demons Pay Homage.»

The chanting mantra pierced through their ears as if it was a spell.

Someone screams as they die, their cry of agony mixing with the maniacal laughter. In the midst of it all, curses and an unrelenting torrent of anguish are poured forth. Who could possibly maintain their sanity in the face of this?

«Ugh... Uh...»

«No, this can't be...»

It crumbles.

The unwavering determination they've built up over time, the perfect restraint, the pride in the name of the Black Ghost elite, all collapsed like a rotted tree trunk in an instant.

What's left are just humans overwhelmed by fear, desperate to live.

«Aaargh!»

Someone is screaming, turning away and starting to flee. Initially, it was just a few spontaneous actions, but its ripple effect was tremendous.

For those who couldn't think of anything other than fighting back, the option to «run» suddenly appeared in their minds.

Those who succumbed to temptation turned their backs on the enemy. Even those who were somehow holding their ground found their resolve dulled by the overwhelming force.

The hungry wolves, recognizing their opponent's weakness, intensified their attack on the fleeing prey. They wanted to devour every bit of flesh, leaving nothing behind.

Fear and despair settled on the blood-soaked ground.

«No, please...»

The elites of the Black Ghosts, facing the sight of their comrade losing their composure, stood frozen as if turned to stone. They knew they had to fight, they knew they had to resist, but it was as if their entire bodies refused to move.

«Uh... ugh...»

With their eyes spewing bloodshot rage, the approaching demonic beast howled like a madman, bringing their hands down towards their comrade's head.

«Die...»

In that moment...

Paaang!

With a fierce thud, the head of the oncoming cultist was sent soaring into the sky.

For a moment, it felt as if the world had stopped. The elite of the Black Ghosts, who had been on the verge of accepting their deaths, stared blankly at the cultist's head, now spinning and splattering blood.

Even in death, there seemed to be a twisted sense of pleasure on that face.

Demonic cultist probably didn't even realize their own death as they achieved their salvation in the very moment they died.

Thud!

The head that had flown through the air landed on the ground.

It was just one death amidst countless others on this battlefield. Insignificant and trivial.

Yet, the consequences were tremendous.

Narrowly escaped death, the elite of the Black Ghosts shifted his gaze downward. Slightly below his eye level, someone now stood, who had not been there a moment ago.

Clad in a black uniform.

Hair tightly tied back.

And a sword gleaming with a white aura in one hand.

«Hwasan...»

Before his mind could comprehend, his lips opened first. His voice, almost a whimper, hardly finished when the one who stood before him showed no delay.

Swoosh!

Their foot stamped into the ground, they swung their sword like a lightning.

Crack!

Another cultist instinctively moved to defend, raising his arm, preparing to intercept the flying sword and snap its blade off, but just before the sword and arm collided, it spun and swerved like a bird of prey, slipping past the sorcerer's arm.

And in an instant, it was embedded into their throat.

Graaaaargh!

The cultist's body, which had endured countless attacks without flinching, was now rendered helpless. Their head soared into the sky, and what remained crumpled to the ground.

The battlefield froze.

In an instant, Chung Myung had beheaded two demonic cultists, and his clear eyes slowly opened.

«...I'll give you a tip, kids.»

Chung Myung raised his sword again, and the blade began to emanate a brilliant aura. The red aura scattered like petals, covering Magyo completely.

«Gah!»

«What is this...?»

Faced with a storm of petals that engulfed the entire front, demonic cultists instinctively attempted to retreat. Even if they were willing to risk their lives and charge at the enemy, they could not simply rush forward with their vision entirely obstructed by the flying plum blossom petals.

Kaaah!

They retreated while raising both arms to defend. Their goal was to fend off the flying petals. However, when the hands infused with overwhelming demonic energy touched the petals, it disappeared like an illusion, vanishing entirely.

'What?'

Then...

Crack! Crack! Crack!

During that fleeting moment, red plum blossom sword energies quickly pierced through the cultists' throats.

«Grrk!»

Looking down, there was no neck to see. All that could be seen was blood spewing violently from the throats of the demonic cultists.

Crunch! Crunch!

The cultist with his throat pierced, the one with the clear Plum Blossom Sword Seal [검인 (劍印)] on his forehead, collapsed like rotted straw doll.

The pinnacle of Illusionary Sword [환검(幻劍) — Hwan Geom] technique. It was a sword skill where the boundary between reality and illusion was incredibly thin.

It was belittled as a sword art out of the orthodox norms, derogated as closer to an evil sword, which deceived and manipulated their opponent. But to Magyo, who crushed their opponents with brute power, Hwasan's swordsmanship was like poison.

«Go for the neck,»

Chung Myung said, twisting the corners of his mouth.

Even though it was different from the madness of the cultists, it was a sinister smile, somewhat similar in its peculiar malevolence.

«Or shatter their heads.»

Stomp.

Chung Myung took another step. Extreme killing intent, anger, and a bizarre fervor gleamed in his two eyes.

And at that moment...

Qwooooo!

With a terrifying sound, something flew and was thrust into the cultist's head.

Thud!

Then, with a loud explosion, demonic cultist's head crumbled.

'What?'

The large golden object that had flown out quickly spun around and returned to where it came from.

Clack!

Jang Ilso reached out and lightly picked up his bracelet.

«Head and neck... If you had such information, you should have told us earlier. Anyway, I knew you had bad personality.»

Chung Myung ignored Jang Ilso's words and continued forward.

Despair that had completely shrouded the Black Ghost's elite warriors began change into a glimmer of hope.

Head and neck.

Of course, these are not easy targets. Everyone is thorough in protecting their head and neck. However, the difference between having no way to bring the opponent down and having a difficult way to do so was significant.

«This...»

But the perspective of demonic cultists was entirely different.

Having watched their fellow believers dying in front of them, they began to feel even stronger hatred as a result.

«This disgusting bastard...»

Chung Myung smiled, as he looked in their eyes.

«That's right. I like that look in their eyes.»

Chung Myung's eyes were bloodshot.

«The look of fear... it's the most enjoyable.»

Kwaaah!

With a ghastly smile, Chung Myung surged forward, and his sword was enveloped in a bright crimson aura.

Once, this sword had cut their throats, and now it was targeting their necks again.

«Kill him!»

Demonic cultists also rushed at Chung Myung, crying out in a frenzy. They instinctively understood who the most dangerous presence here was.

«Ten Thousand Demons..! Pay...»

«Shut up!»

Chung Myung's strike severed the attacker's arm and plunged his sword into the mouth of a cultist who was about to chant his mantra. With that one blow, he snapped the sorcerer's neck, and pulled the rotating sword upwards splitting the cultist's head in two.

Paat!

Before the sword could be fully withdrawn, Chung Myung's feet moved. With just one step, he advanced nearly a zhang, slipping between the startled demonic cultists and slammed the ground heavily.

With the strength harnessed from his charge, Chung Myung swung his sword at full speed and struck the waist of a cultist.

Crack! Crack!

It was not so much cutting as it was a cessation. The resilient rubbery flesh of demonic cultist's body couldn't withstand the force of the sword, and it gave way with a resounding snap.

Paaaah!

The upper body, which was cut through at the waist, spun like a top. Chung Myung swiftly kicked away the lower half, then spun in place, dispersing the blossoming sword energy in all directions.

Darkness that concealed the sky and the heavily stained ground.

Figures draped in entirely black garments.

Within this gloomy world, a single plum blossom tree reached out, as though thriving on spilled blood, its blossoms exuding a deep crimson hue.

Rustle!

The scattered plum blossom petals spun wildly, as if hit by a tempest, sweeping through Magyo forces with great strength.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

These seemingly fragile petals were incredibly potent. They effortlessly pierced the resilient demonic aura and bodies of the cultists, rendering them powerless.

“Uaaaaaagh!”

For the first time, cries of agony erupted from the mouths of demonic cultists. Their bodies did not readily permit death. Thus, even with numerous wounds, they could not easily meet their demise. In other words, it meant that every injury had to be felt acutely, with all the pain it could bring.

The sword energy tore through flesh, severed tendons, and ground bone. The vivid pain scrambled the sorcerers' minds, and finally, it grew unbearable.

Demonic cutists' bodies, which surrounded Chung Myung, continuously sprayed blood. Their blood intensified the color of the red plum blossoms created by Chung Myung.

A rain of blood fell upon them, and within it, Chung Myung alone remained untouched.

He revealed his pristine white teeth. The warm scent of blood, pungent enough to make his nose tingle, helped him remember. The unfamiliar sensation returned rapidly, and he could once again sense it clearly at his fingertips where he held his sword.

Everything had changed. But this sensation remained, clinging to his fingertips.

«... You shouldn't have forgotten me.»

Chung Myung whispered, raising his head, his smile was as eerie as a demon's.

«Isn't that right?»

Chung Myung kicked the ground with a bizarre laugh.

Those who are hunted and those who hunt.

It was the moment when that position was reversed.