Return of The Mount Hua – Chapter 828. Where are the others now? (3)

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The consciousness sinks deeper and deeper.

As it sinks endlessly down and down, the body and consciousness become separated from each other and become increasingly distant.

A hazy, dreamlike consciousness, which was blurry but not completely disconnected, constantly looked for something.

'Cheong Mun...'

Ttaaaaak!

"Aaaargh!"

At the sudden pain, Chung Myung‘s eyes snapped open, clutching his head.

"Ouch! Just which bastard!"

"It's me."

“…….”

He rolled his eyes and was about to throw a fit, but when he saw the person sitting in front of him, he quietly shut his mouth.

"Chung Myung-ah."

"Yes?"

"People may doze off in life. It's not that I don't understand that."

"Yes, that’s right. Well, it's not that big of a deal."

"Indeed. However…"

The one sitting in the front.

An indescribable feeling of emptiness fell on the face of the Great Wise Sword ((대현검(大賢劍))) Cheong Mun, Sect Leader of Mount Hua Sect.

"It’s not like I have lived long, but this is the first time in my life I’ve heard of someone dozing off while being disciplined, you stupid punk!"

"…How can that be my fault! It’s because Sahyung is droning something obvious on and on.…."

"What, this punk?"

When Cheong Mun gritted his teeth, the Sajes, including Cheong Jin, who were watching, yelled in surprise.

"Calm down, Sect Leader Sahyung!"

"Don't beat him!"

Chung Myung smiled delightedly at the heartwarming sight.

Although they speak bluntly, those bastards still have quite a lot of respect for him...….

“Then he will beat us later!”

"If you're going to save us from being hit, then don't hit him! We'll get hit twice as much!"

"You might as well expel him from Mount Hua! You won't even do that!"

“…….”

‘I saw who the last one was. I don't know about anyone else, but you're done for.’

Cheong Mun sighed deeply, holding the back of the neck.

“Are you a Taoist? Huh? Are you a Taoist?”

"Our Sahyung’s sight must’ve deteriorated. I'm clearly dressed as one."

“Are you a Taoist just because you wear the uniform, you punk?!”

Cheong Mun shouted.

"I sent you to subdue the demons tormenting the commoners!"

"I did subdue them. Did everything you asked, even wrecked them all. Then, instead being like this, you should be praising me!"

"Right. Well done, my Saje."

Cheong Mun asked with a warm smile on his face.

“So, what did you receive from the grateful people?”

"Yes?"

"It seemed like they gave you something?"

"Oh, that?"

Chung Myung laughed shyly, scratching the back of his head.

"Well, I was about to leave, but they kept thanking me… said many would've bled from the demonic bandits if not for me."

"So?"

"So they wanted to repay me, and I thought it'd be rude to decline their sincere gratitude. So, I…"

Chung Myung glanced around sheepishly.

"Took a little compensation for my hard work... Aaaah!"

Chung Myung fell flat on the spot, avoiding the inkstone that flew as fast as lightning. The inkstone that passed by and narrowly grazed his head got embedded in the wall.

"No, are you trying to kill me?"

"If you could die that easily, I won’t have to go through all this trouble, you damn bastard!”

Cheong Mun now picked up the tea table in front of him and hurled it.

When Chung Myung quickly rolled to the side and avoided, fire blazed in Cheong Mun's eyes.

"Damage? Damage? Come, Let's see who dies, you or me today! Cheong Jin! Go get the whip!"

"Yes!"

"You. Bring it here if you dare."

"…Yes."

"I said bring me the whip!"

"Yes!"

"You better think carefully. Think reaaaally carefully."

Cheong Jin, who was stuck between two giants… No, between a giant and an evil spirit, was torn apart without being able to do this or that. Soon after, he looked at Cheong Mun and said,

"That… Sect Leader Sahyung."

"What?"

"I think... I've been kneeling for so long that I have a cramp in my leg. Maybe you should send someone else..."

Cheong Mun glared dagger, but Cheong Jin only looked away, bowing his head.

‘Authority is distant, but a fist is near.’

If Chung Myung's calves catch fire, it is obvious that Chung Jin's chin will catch fire later. Even if he gets hit, it would be better to get hit by Cheong Mun. That person beats someone mercilessly, so the situation will be even more serious.

"Ugh..."

Looking at the Sajes avoiding their eyes, the sound of pain leaked out of Cheong Mun's mouth.

"These commoners are already exhausted from the terrors of horse bandits! Instead of giving money and not receiving it back, you're taking money and not returning it?"

"So, you're saying you won't take the offered money? Ei. Ignoring goodwill isn't polite, right? Hahaha."

"Kkeuk."

Cheong Mun gripped the back of his head, which felt like it was being zapped.

"Se- Sect Leader Sahyung!"

"Calm down! You might fall over!"

"It’s not like something like this rarely happens, why are you so upset?"

‘This bastard has been making the final blow from earlier?’

‘I'll make you pay later, really.’

Chung Myung rolled his eyes towards the Sajes. Unable to control his anger, Cheong Mun reached out but then realized he had thrown his table away just moments ago and yelled at Chung Myung.

"Water! Refreshing cold water!”

"Yes!"

Chung Myung quickly answered and turned his head.

"What are you doing? Run, you son of a beast!"

"You go, you! You piece of shit! You... Ugh..."

"Aigoo, calm down, please.”

"Now, now. Breathe deeply. Slowly, slowly. There you go."

When Cheong Mun began to fall backward with a choking sound, Chung Myung quickly ran outside.

In a flash, he brought back water and offered a glass to Cheong Mun, who hesitated before attempting to gulp it down.

“…….”

Looking down with a blank face, he could see steam rising from the cup.

"……Chung Myung-ah."

"Yes?"

"…Why hot water?"

"Uh…. I thought you might get indigestion from drinking cold water in a hurry. I did good, right?"

“…….”

“…….”

Cheong Mun's eyes were full of emptiness.

He can't really kill this thing.

‘Oh, Yuanshi Tianzun. Why are you doing this to me...?’

He looked like he was about to say something but soon gave up, lowering his head in defeat.

"Chung Myung-ah."

"Yes, Sahyung."

"Why did you receive the money?”

"No, well... They gave it to me."

"Be honest!"

"Hng."

Chung Myung stuck out his mouth in disapproval and gruntled.

"I honestly don't understand."

"What?"

"Frankly, that's originally something the officials should have done. But we take our precious time to go there and help."

"That's right."

"Then isn't it right to have a reward?"

“…….”

"It's a problem if you always expect others to solve things for you. In life, when you give, you receive in return. But it’s not like we've received anything great. It's just a few coins."

A sigh involuntarily came out of Cheong Mun's mouth.

“Was it that big of a deal for you to beat up some of those demonic bandits?”

"……Not really."

"Right, it'll be over with just one swoop, right?”

"Are you going to save me and ask for hard work even if I'm in a situation where I'm going to be beaten by the bandits?"

Cheong Mun, who stared at Chung Myung, who seemed not to understand at all, asked.

"Are you going to save me and ask for a reward even if I'm in a situation where I'm going to be beaten by the demonic bandits?"

"Ei. Can Sahyung be compared to them? Don't worry. If Sahyung is attacked by the horse bandits, I'm going to chop them into pieces. No way they'd get to Sahyung!"

Chung Myung made a serious resolution. Cheong Mun sighed and just looked at him.

‘What should I do….’

It is not that difficult to enforce Chung Myung's actions. He might grumble, but Chung Myung usually obeys.

But that's not the solution.

This is the Taoist Sect. It's a place where one has to do as their heart goes. So what Cheong Mun needs to do is not to control Chung Myung's behavior, but to change his mind.

‘I specifically sent him to feel the hearts of the powerless.'

If that great talent was accompanied by Chivalrousness, there would be nothing more to ask for. But Heavens don't give everything to one person.

"Chung Myung-ah."

"Yes?"

"Do you know why Mount Hua emphasizes Chivalrousness?"

"Because we're of the Righteous Faction."

"Then do you know why the Righteous Faction emphasizes Chivalrousness?"

"…I don't know. Because it looks good?"

Cheong Mun shook his head.

"Because we are people with swords."

"……."

"We are the ones who try to be strong through training. Of course, that training is also a way to realize Tao, but the essence of those who develop their power doesn't change."

"Yes, of course."

"And... when one holds a sword, they want to swing it, and when they have power, they want to use it. It means that those who decide to tie a sword around their waist will surely pull it out someday."

Chung Myung nodded quietly.

What Cheong Mun said is certainly correct. Few people end their lives by repeating training within their sect all their lives. One way or another, accumulated force is bound to be expressed.

"And who bears the brunt of that power?"

"……."

"We're also people, Chung Myung-ah."

Cheong Mun's eyes sank gravely.

"Power without direction becomes oppression and violence. The reason for the Chivalrousness is not because of compassion. It is to set one's own path properly. Power that forgets righteousness will eventually destroy oneself."

"So... you mean..."

Chung Myung shrugged.

“You just have to beat up the bad guys.”

“…….”

"Okay, okay. It's okay if they don't pay for the trouble. It's just a few coins. I'll be careful from now on."

Cheong Mun sighed deeply at Chung Myung's reply.

As expected, Chung Myung does as he is told. But it's not because he understands. It's simply because Cheong Mun wants it.

That's not what Cheong Mun wants.

If Chung Myung only wanted to live with Mount Hua's sword, that would be enough, but what Cheong Mun really wanted was for Chung Myung to stand upright as a person of the Tao.

Even if it's unspeakably hard.

"Chung Myung-ah."

"What?"

"Yes, you may forget everything else. But remember this one thing."

"Yes."

“You can't do everything on your own.”

“…….”

“No matter how strong you become, no matter how grand a height you reach, there are things you can't do alone. If one day you are in such a situation, you, too, may be eager for someone's help.”

“Me?”

Chung Myung tilted his head as if he couldn't understand.

It would be hard for the current Chung Myung to understand. For now.

One who has never lost, never felt desperation from lacking, can't understand the warmth of a selflessly offered hand.

“When the day comes that you feel powerless, that you despair in front of something you can't do, then you'll understand. You'll understand how those commoners you helped felt.”

“…….”

"Can you promise me that you will brandish your sword in Chivalrousness when that time comes?"

"Hng."

Chung Myung scratched his head with a still unsure look on his face.

"Honestly, I don't know, Sahyung."

“I know. It's not an easy concept for you.”

“But still.....”

Soon after, he nodded in agreement.

“Right. If I come to feel that way... if I truly experience it, I'll do as Sahyung says. But I can't guarantee it.”

“That's fine. That's enough.”

Cheong Mun smiled and nodded in return.

"Now go and return the money you've received.”

“...Uh, about that…”

“I know you spent it on drinks. Take the money you’ve hidden away and return every single penny..”

“…….”

“Your answer?”

"Yes."

Chung Myung pouts his mouth, but Cheong Mun just laughs.

"Good."

“Then, I'll be off.”

Chung Myung turned around. Then Cheong Mun added softly to his back.

"Oh, and...…”

"Yes?"

“Return all the wealth you embezzled from the bandits to the commoners.”

“…….”

Chung Myung's body hardened like a stone statue on the spot.

After a moment, he turned back with an expression of utter despair.

"How, how did you...…”

"Cheong Jin-ah."

"…Yes."

“Follow him and keep an eye on him to make sure not a single penny is stolen. Chung Myung, if you steal again this time, I will hang you upside down, so behave yourself!”

“…….”

“Don't contemplate whether being hanged or keeping the money is better. We'll retrieve the money and hang you too if needed.”

"…Evil spirit."

"Tsk."

When sullen Chung Myung left the room first with his shoulders slumped, Cheong Jin sighed and asked carefully.

"Sect Leader Sahyung. Aren't you expecting too much from Chung Myung Sahyung? Sahyung isn't like us, is he?"

“I know. It won't be easy. But…”

Cheong Mun looked silently at the door that Chung Myung closed.

‘But one day.....’

The day will come when Chung Myung understands the meaning behind his words.

Because he is, after all, Chung Myung.

A warm smile crept on Cheong Mun's mouth.

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