

## **The Tower 102**

### Chapter 102: The Rescue

The valley lay surrounded by towering cliffs, with the ominous Demon Realm looming overhead. Tetir soldiers erected an iron-barred prison in the heart of the valley to hold Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju captive and then started to set up their camp near the prison.

"Have you contacted Narden?" asked the knight guarding the entrance to the valley.

"The messenger has gone, so the Merteng people will probably find out soon," a soldier replied.

"Their expressions will be worth seeing," the knight replied.

Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju were bait to lure out the Saviors hiding in Narden. The trap had been carefully laid to ensnare the Qualified individuals who had revived Merteng thus far.

"They won't have a choice but to come here," said the knight.

"But would this be enough? After all, we will be fighting those who overcame that hellish situation and took over Windsor," said the soldier.

"Hey, the situation now is completely different from back then," said the knight, looking at the soldier.

He put his hand on the soldier's shoulder.

"Right now, there's no Park Joo-Hyuk or Baek Hyun in Narden. The people with real power and strength are all in Windsor, so there's no reason to fail."

"Oh right, that's true," the soldier replied.

Having confirmed the information from Ji Eun-Ju, Tetir planned to use this opportunity to significantly reduce the enemy's forces.

"Reinforcements will soon arrive from Cormir and Aman, so we must kill and reduce the number of our enemies this time with their help," said the knight.

While the trap was being set up in the valley, Narden received news of the situation through a messenger.

"Ugh! These damn bastards...!" Lord Shane Seymour, the Castellan of Narden, shouted and slammed his desk with a contorted face.

Bang!

Lord Shane was at a loss because forces from Tetir and Aman were besieging Narden, and the enemy forces held a decisive numerical advantage. If Narden's essential forces were to retreat, Narden itself could be demolished.

However, Lord Shane could not stop the essential forces from leaving. As the Lord of the castle and the defender of this place, it made no sense for him to walk into such an obvious trap, but the Savors did not think that way.

Ever since Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju were taken away, they had been suffering in despair.

"Call in the Savors," Lord Shane ordered.

Shortly after, Kang Ji-Hoon, Shin Ha-Neul, and Baek Hyun-Ah—having received the news from the messenger—entered Shane's room.

"You all know this, but two people are currently being held captive by Tetir," Lord Shane said.

"We have to go rescue them."

"The enemy is openly luring you in," Lord Shane warned the challengers.

"Sometimes you have to move even when you know it's a trap, Lord Shane," Baek Hyun-Ah said calmly, drawing Shane's gaze to her.

"It was the same when we revitalized Merteng and forcibly extended the front line to Aderta."

"We had Park Joo-Hyuk, Baek Hyun, and Kim Kang-Chun back then," Lord Shane said with a fierce, cold glare.

Lord Shane's words carried an implicit meaning: 'You do not belong among the three.'

"We were also there." Baek Hyun-Ah's determination and confidence shone through that sentence.

"No matter what you say to us, my lord, it doesn't matter. We will make a move," said Kang Ji-Hoon.

"Please don't underestimate us, my lord," said Shin Ha-Neul.

Lord Shane recognized the strong will of Kang Ji-Hoon and Shin Ha-Neul, whose conviction radiated from their voices

"I'm sorry, but do you even think you can succeed?" Lord Shane asked the challengers.

"My lord," said Kang Ji-Hoon.

"What is it?" Lord Shane asked.

"There's one thing you don't know yet," said Kang Ji-Hoon.

Lord Shane tilted his head after hearing those words. He wondered what it was that he didn't know.

"Our master has come up, and he will kill us if we don't save these two people here," Kang Ji-Hoon said, looking at Lord Shane.

"Ugh... honestly, I'm more afraid of the master than those enemies." Shin Ha-Neul exaggeratedly shook his body, but the fear on his face was real.

"Are you guys talking about the Qualified named Lee Shin? Is he your master?" Lord Shane asked the challengers.

"Yes, my lord. This is a really serious problem," said Baek Hyun-Ah, who could keep his calm during anything, with a hardened face.

Looking at Baek Hyun-Ah's face, Shane couldn't figure out whether their words were real or a joke.

"Why so serious?" Lord Shane asked the challengers.

"Didn't you hear the news that our master destroyed Delbet alone?" Baek Hyun-Ah replied.

"I've heard it. But to be honest, I still can't believe that," Lord Shane replied.

"It's probably true. And that would mean that our master has already acquired the Yellow Pattern," said Baek Hyun-Ah.

She gulped.

"This means our master could come here even sooner. So, we don't have time to waste like this! We need to finish this quickly, before the master arrives!" Her voice grew more aggressive, and an unsettling tension radiated from her attitude.

"Calm down! Why are you guys acting like this just because some Lee Shin is coming here?" Their reaction puzzled Lord Shane.

"What do you mean why? Didn't you hear what Shin Ha-Neul said earlier? If we can't save those two people, we'll have to go through Hell Training! Hell Training!" Baek Hyun-Ah shouted.

At the mention of the word 'Hell Training,' Kang Ji-Hoon and Shin Ha-Neul shivered.

"No... we can't do that... Please, not that again."

"We have to save them... we have to move right now!"

As the challengers suddenly panicked, Lord Shane began to see Lee Shin in a different light.

'Lee Shin must be a terrifying person... Jayden and the King did not say anything like that, but I guess I'll have to be careful.'

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As darkness enveloped the blue sky and the bright sunlight gave way to moonlight, six figures dressed in black scaled the walls of the castle.

"Even though it's already pretty dark outside, this plain area makes it hard to escape the enemy's eyes."

"Don't worry, if I use my skill, we can sneak away unnoticed," said Baek Hyun-Ah as she activated her mana.

[The Curtain of Darkness]

Baek Hyun-Ah's mana enveloped those around her, covering them up in the darkness.

"Don't get more than five meters away from me," said Baek Hyun-Ah.

"Okay."

"First, we have to go into the mountain range," said Baek Hyun-Ah.

Three other members of the Korean Challengers Association's Task Force had joined Kang Ji-Hoon, Shin Ha-Neul, and Baek Hyun-Ah on this mission. Therefore, a total of six people moved as a team to complete the special mission: rescue Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju.

Baek Hyun-Ah used to be the deputy team leader of the Task Force under Park Joo-Hyuk's guidance, so she had taken charge of this team.

"Let's go," said Baek Hyun-Ah.

The team slid down the wall of the fortress, kicked off the wall, and soared over the moat. After exchanging glances, the challengers immediately headed into the mountain range.

Fortunately, the enemies did not notice them. After hiding among the trees, Baek Hyun-Ah lifted the Curtain of Darkness.

"We need to hurry if we want to go to the valley."

"If we encounter the enemy, we have to deal with them before they can alert the others," said Baek Hyun-Ah.

Everyone nodded and set off again. The valley was surrounded by cliffs, with the Demon Realm over it. Therefore, it was impossible to infiltrate from almost all directions.

The one direction they could use was surely under tight security, guarded by soldiers stationed on that path. To respond to the enemy's trap, these challengers also had to prepare something on their end.

"Shh." Baek Hyun-Ah signaled the challengers to stop, raising her hand, and looked through the darkness at the enemies.

While Narden had tall trees and plants, the open area here made it hard for the challengers to hide from the enemy, whose field of vision was much broader here. Lying down on a small hill, the special operations team communicated with each other through subtle eye signals as they observed the enemies slowly approaching.

Three of them would deal with the soldiers approaching from here, while the other three would handle the soldiers still far away. If the challengers failed to incapacitate them all simultaneously, they would be caught.

Shin Ha-Neul and Kang Ji-Hoon moved about 100 meters away and looked at the finger Baek Hyun-Ah was holding up.

Baek Hyun-Ah raised her fingers one by one, and as soon as the third finger went up, the three of them ran toward the patrolmen. Kang Ji-Hoon dealt with the first soldier, and Shin Ha-Neul dispensed the soldier a few steps behind the first one.

The other patrolman, still far away, noticed the challengers and tried to shout.

Woong— Slash!

However, a dagger that Baek Hyun-Ah had thrown pierced his throat, and he began to fall. Kang Ji-Hoon darted, grabbed the falling patrolman, and carefully put him on the ground to prevent any noise from the impact.

After hiding the dead bodies in one place, the special operations team moved carefully along the path near the Demon Realm, as instructed by Baek Hyun-Ah. Baek Hyun-Ah lay low on the ground near the cliff's edge and caught a glimpse of the iron-barred prison below.

'There they are!'

When Baek Hyun-Ah turned back, the other challengers nodded, as they had also seen the prison ahead. Since they had a plan in place, Baek Hyun-Ah activated her mana after exchanging a few glances.

Since it was late at night, only three soldiers were guarding the prison. The other soldiers were patrolling the outskirts or doing other tasks, and the rest seemed to be in the barracks.

If the challengers were to descend from this high cliff, they would be caught long before reaching the prison, even at night. Besides, the only place to infiltrate from was this, so the enemy's attention was also focused here. However, Baek Hyun-Ah knew what to do.

‘There is a way.’

[Dark Leap]

This skill allowed one to make a short-distance leap only at night. Baek Hyun-Ah jumped into the darkness, leaping over the cliff, and instantly appeared in the prison with her first jump.

‘Oh no.’

Baek Hyun-Ah narrowed her eyebrows as she saw the two bound people. Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju's conditions were far worse than she had thought.

Crackle! Crackle!

Without giving Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju a chance to notice her approach, Baek Hyun-Ah swiftly cut the handcuffs that restrained their mana. Baek Hyun-Ah then activated her mana.

The noise alerted the three soldiers, who quickly drew their swords.

"Activate your mana!" Baek Hyun-Ah cried out.

As Baek Hyun-Ah shouted and started cutting through the bars, a deafening explosion rang.



Baaaang!

The iron-barred prison exploded, and the three people were swept away by the flames.

"Oh my god!"

The other members of the special operations team, who had also jumped off the cliff, cursed. Baek Hyun-Ah had been in the cell when the explosion occurred.

"What the hell! What's going on!"

"It's the enemy attack!"

"The prison exploded? What are the knights doing!"

The Qualified individuals and knights who hurriedly rushed out of the barracks tried to assess the situation. The valley was occupied not only by Tetir's soldiers, but also by six Qualified individuals from Aman and one from Cormir. In addition, there were more than ten knights.

The WOFP alliance's forces encircled the raging fire, aware that the trap alone wouldn't halt the enemy's advance. As they strategized their next move, a dark silhouette emerged from the thick dust and black smoke.

Swish! Thud.

Thud! Splash!

The two knights couldn't even react before they lost their lives to the sudden attack. However, Baek Hyun-Ah's sudden attack didn't move further and ended there.

Clang—!

A Qualified individual from Tetir had blocked Baek Hyun-Ah's sword. He smirked and licked his lips.

"Well... what are you going to do alone?" asked the Qualified person.

Baek Hyun-Ah took a few steps back and disappeared into the smoke again.

"Be careful, everyone! I think we have Baek Hyun-Ah here, looking at her fighting skills!"

"Watch out for sudden attacks! Look for the mana waves!"

At the same time, the noise from behind grew louder and the soldiers started to shout.

"More enemies are coming down again!"

"They are coming down from the cliff!"

The five challengers rushed forward, mercilessly slaying the soldiers. However, their path was soon blocked by Aman's Qualified individuals and knights.

"We'll take care of them," said the qualified individuals and the knights of Aman.

"Move aside!" Shin Ha-Neul swung his fist, thinking that he needed to save Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju quickly.

Baaam—!

Shin Ha-Neul punched a Qualified individual, his strike producing a sonic boom. The Qualified individual staggered backward with a low groan and glared back at Shin Ha-Neul.

"It looks like Shin Ha-Neul is here as well," the qualified individual muttered.

The challengers of Merteng had become so famous that their abilities and techniques had become common knowledge to the people in the same trade.

A Qualified individual with a Navy Pattern and two knights with similar abilities blocked Shin Ha-Neul's path. And the ten knights and even more soldiers were to fight Kang Ji-Hoon and the other three challengers.

"Darn it..."

"I don't think we have any other choice but to break through now."

"Do you think we can do it?"

Kang Ji-Hoon looked over their shoulders at the flickering flames. As the smoke cleared, they could see the battered and bruised Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju. Baek Hyun-Ah also seemed to have suffered significant damage from saving the two of them.

The Pattern of the Qualified individuals surrounding the three of them began to shine.

The challenger with the bright, shining Purple Pattern looked at the three people engulfed in flames and smirked.

"Well, let's put an end to our annoying fate."