

The Tower 104

Chapter 104: The Regret

In the Eltse Castle, Jaden, who had been waiting for news of the battlefield, could not sit still and kept walking back and forth in his room.

"Would Alan have done a good job, Chancellor?" Jaden asked, looking at the Chancellor.

"He should have. Alan is someone who does things orderly," the Chancellor replied.

"Still, it's fortunate that everything went as planned, especially making an alliance with Wildes. I never thought it would succeed," said Jaden.

"You're right. I think Mr. Lee Shin is truly an amazing person. How does he know so much and how is he so strong?" the Chancellor muttered.

"Who would have imagined that Lee Shin could infiltrate that vast Demon Realm and bring down Delbet by himself? He's truly an extraordinary human being," Jaden said, looking at the Chancellor.

As Jaden spoke, he unconsciously smiled.

"I hope Wildes' soldiers arrive on time," said Jaden.

"Don't worry. Even if they don't get there from Wildes on time, wouldn't Mr. Lee Shin be able to get out of there easily?" said the Chancellor.

"That's true. But still, I can't stop worrying," Jaden muttered.

"Currently, neither Tetir nor Aman knows that Wildes has joined our side, so if we succeed in contacting them, we can pass through the border smoothly," said the Chancellor.

"Yes, well that would be nice. And I heard that the Saviors of Narden had gone to save Kim Kang-Chun and Ji Eun-Ju, who were taken hostage," said Jaden.

"Besides, Mr. Lee Shin went to Tetir for the purpose of saving those two, so wouldn't he be aware of that as well? Maybe he'll rescue them," Chancellor replied.

"Ha..." Jaden sighed and approached the window to look outside.

The reason why this city had looked so peaceful was the efforts of the Qualified. This time as well, if it weren't for Lee Shin, they might have been facing an even worse situation by now.

'I feel like I've been getting too much help from you Lee Shin... But still, please help me just one more time.'

Jaden closed his eyes and prayed.

The air in the valley suddenly became heavy. The atmosphere of the battlefield was completely changed with the appearance of one person.

Rumble— Crack!

Suddenly, dark clouds covered the sky and lightning flashed through them, making the air tremble with electricity, as if showing off its ability to strike at any moment.

"Master!" Suppressing the emotion that rose in him, Kang Ji-Hoon called out to Lee Shin.

"Ah... ah... ugh... Sob..." Baek Hyun-Ah released the tears she had been holding back upon seeing Lee Shin.

"Is that... Lee Shin?" said a person from the enemy group.

"That person is Lee Shin?" another person asked.

Gulp—

The Qualified and the knights' gulps could be heard clearly in the battlefield that suddenly became quiet. The enemies and challengers felt, for the first time, that even just one person's presence could change the atmosphere of the battlefield.

Those who were meeting Lee Shin for the first time felt the oppressive pressure in the air and froze. They could feel a sense of foreboding, as if lightning would strike them bone-deep if they moved.

Crunch—!

Lee Shin's expression changed as he scanned the battlefield and gritted his teeth. What the enemies felt after seeing Lee Shin was not their hallucinations. Lee Shin was angrier than ever since he arrived in this place; his enemies could feel his visceral anger hit them like waves on the shore.

"Are you Lee Shin?" A Qualified with a Purple Pattern asked Lee Shin.

"And who are you?" Lee Shin asked back with a cold voice.

That was a voice cold enough to freeze the surrounding air. The man answered without a smile this time.

"I'm Michael Taylor. You're more amazing than I expected," the Qualified with a Purple Pattern introduced himself to Lee Shin.

"Why did you kill them?" Lee Shin accused Michael Taylor.

Taylor narrowed his eyebrows at Lee Shin's assumption that he had killed them.

'Did he notice that just by looking at the situation...?'

Taylor was going to make an excuse and look for a way out, but he soon realized that it would not work for Lee Shin.

"Well, is there a problem? They are nothing more than my enemies," Taylor replied.

"Is that why? Alright then," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin's calm voice, as if he understood the other's perspective, made Taylor feel even more uneasy. The pressure he was sensing from Lee Shin was too much for him to handle.

Was there anyone else who made Taylor feel such a sense of danger since he had come up here? Taylor's senses were sharpened.

"Well... if you don't want to die here, drop your weapons and surrender. I'll give you five seconds," Lee Shin said.

It was a statement that could hurt the pride of those who were listening. Many were already dead or injured, but the majority were still on the side of the WOF. However, these enemies did not openly rebel against the statement Lee Shin made.

The enemies only glanced at each other. At that moment, a smile flickered across Taylor's lips as he swung his sword.

Swoosh! Clang!

The extended blade swung toward Baek Hyun-Ah, but a thunderbolt from the sky struck the sword, neutralizing the attack.

"Don't be afraid! We'll all die if we just go along with his words!" Taylor shouted.

As Taylor shouted, Baek Hyun-Ah and a challenger beside her was swept away by the shockwave of the lightning bolt. The challenger made a move out of reflex, accidentally reigniting the fight.

Boom! Crack! Thud! Crack!

However, successive lightning strikes attacked them all, and the rebellion was suppressed in just a few seconds.

"Ugh...!"

"Keugh!"

Lee Shin kept his relaxed expression even while maintaining that enormous electric current. It was impossible for one to estimate just how much mana Lee Shin had.

"How dare you," Lee Shin said.

[Thunder Explosion]

Crackle! Crack!

The thunderbolt exploded before Taylor's eyes as he tried to retreat. At the same time, Taylor's mana transformed into demon power. The blackish-red demon power swallowed the thunderbolt. Taylor transformed into black fog and flew toward the Demon Realm that was located on top of the cliff.

'So, he's a demonized human?'

As Lee Shin's gaze quickly fixed on Taylor, who was now a cloud of black fog, he sent his mana to where Taylor was.

[Frozen Wall]

Crack—!

Ice began to form a wall around Taylor on the cliff. At the same time, the divine power of Lee Shin had awakened.

'I can't let him escape.'

Although Lee Shin could not do much, he thought that compared to any other species, his attacks could be a more critical blow to the demons.

[The Sacred Cross]

Lee Shin thought he had trapped Taylor. Lee Shin raised his index and middle fingers and drew a cross in the air, activating his divine power. The cross grew in size and flew toward Taylor. Lee Shin thought this was the end of their fight.

In front of the ice wall, a black portal appeared and Lee Shin saw a black fog come out of it. Lee Shin was wrong. His eyebrows furrowed.

'I didn't expect him to be able to teleport through space.'

Realizing that he had let his guard down, Lee Shin immediately tried to hit Taylor with a strike of lightning.

Baaam—!

Taylor narrowly escaped the Sacred Cross, but was hit by the lightning bolt. The fog scattered and slowed down a little, but Taylor still made it safely into the Demon Realm.

Lee Shin could have followed Taylor into the Demon Realm to catch him there, but Lee Shin chose not to do that because he would be leaving others behind.

Besides, even if Lee Shin had left his subordinates behind and went into the Demon Realm, their mana connections would be cut off, so there was nothing Lee Shin could do about Taylor at this point.

'Tsk.?'

Lee Shin clicked his tongue and thought that he could catch him later on. Lee Shin sighed and looked at the people who had collapsed in exhaustion. He felt both sorry and grateful for them.

Then, Lee Shin slowly walked over to the two cold bodies and put his hand on the shoulder of Shin Ha-Neul, who was sobbing and holding onto them.

"Ma... Master..." Shin Ha-Neul sobbed.

Shin Ha-Neul, his eyes red with tears, backed away when he saw Lee Shin's gaze. Those who had been subdued by Lee Shin just stood there, gasping for air, showing no more will to fight. Baek Hyun-Ah and Kang Ji-Hoon seemed exhausted as well.

Kanoko, Cohei, and Kogo, who had entered the valley late, saw Lee Shin's back as they pushed past the soldiers. They could see that Lee Shin was holding onto Martyr. The pure white sword was shining in the darkness.

Lee Shin stared blankly into the empty space and then sighed. Then, Lee Shin swung his sword, cutting through the air.

Woong—!

There was a sound of rushing wind and then a moment of stillness. Although it was just a swing of a sword in the air, everyone held their breath, waiting for what would happen next.

Rustle— Rustle—

People's gazes dropped to the ground. Kim Kang-Chun's body, stained with blood and pierced at the heart and throat, began to twitch. The golden light of divine power from Martyr flowed out and seeped into Kim Kang-Chun, healing the wounds that had caused his death.

"Ugh..." A weak groan came out from Kim Kang-Chun's mouth.

Many people let out sighs of amazement upon hearing Kim Kang-Chun's voice. Everyone witnessed the power of Martyr. What was impossible had been made possible in front of many people.

Kim Kang-Chun woke up from what seemed to be a short but deep sleep, and his gaze turned to Lee Shin.

"Ma.. Master...?" Kim Kang-Chun looked surprised. His head was throbbing. With furrowed eyebrows, Kim Kang-Chun looked up at Martyr, which Lee Shin was holding onto, and then his body.

"Ah..." Kim Kang-Chun finally realized that he had been brought back to life with the help of Lee Shin who was standing beside him.

"Thank y—" Kim Kang-Chun's words of gratitude were cut short, because Lee Shin had put Martyr back into its sheath as if he had finished his task.

Swoosh—

When others saw that, they looked at Lee Shin with confusion.

"Master?"

"It's not over yet, is it?"

Upon hearing their words, Lee Shin looked uneasy and looked up at the air. He knew that Ji Eun-Ju was dead as well. Besides, Lee Shin did not plan on seeing into how she had died.

Of course, Lee Shin had thought of bringing her back to life, because he knew why she had died. However, Ji Eun-Ju refused to be brought back to life, and Lee Shin had no choice but to use the power of He Who Knows Death.

The past events that had caused Ji Eun-Ju's death as she climbed the tower passed in front of Lee Shin's eyes. Seeing those events, Lee Shin began to understand her feelings. From the beginning, Ji Eun-Ju was not a person with a tough mind or a tough heart.

Ji Eun-Ju did not fit in In the cruel world of the Tower. She blamed herself for being a burden to her colleagues and did not want to come back to life, not after what had happened to Kim Kang-Chun. She believed it was all her fault. Now she just wanted to watch over them from afar and did not hold any grudges against how life had treated her.

'Okay, now live your life after death in peace.'

Seeing her wandering as a soul, Lee Shin thought she seemed even more peaceful now.

"Ji Eun-Ju can't come back to life," Lee Shin said.

"What...?"

"Eun-Ju doesn't fit with the Tower. It's time to let her go," Lee Shin replied.

"But still..."

"She's asking us to let her go," Lee Shin said.

"...Sorry?"

"She asked me not to save her and let her go," Lee Shin explained once again.

With the firmness in Lee Shin's voice and the subtle bitterness it contained, other challengers could not say anything else about Ji Eun-Ju. Baek Hyun-Ah sobbed and closed her eyes tightly, while Kang Ji-Hoon and Shin Ha-Neul tried to hold back their tears.

"E-Eun-Ju..." Kim Kang-Chun, who had narrowly escaped death, cried out as he looked at Ji Eun-Ju, who was still spread across his knees with her eyes closed.

"I'm sorry... that I was too weak... Sob..." Kim Kang-Chun cried.

Although there were other precious people to him, Eun-Ju was the person Kim Kang-Chun had been with for the longest time and the one who he thought of the most. Knowing that Ji Eun-Ju would blame herself when things went awry, feeling apologetic toward her colleagues—because she did not fit in with this cruel world—had always hurt his heart.

Even though Kim Kang-Chun knew this well, he tried to ignore this fact and tried to help her adapt to this world, without realizing that she was already dying inside.

"I'm sorry... Ugh... I'm so sorry..." Kim Kang-Chun could not stop his tears, feeling that everything was his fault.

He wanted to ask Lee Shin to save Eun-Ju even now, but he could not bring himself to do it, thinking that it might only make things worse for her, as if he did not spare a thought for her feelings.

"Bro..." Eventually, Kang Ji-Hoon could not hold back his tears any longer and wept.

Seeing Kim Kang-Chun sobbing, Kang Ji-Hoon could not bear it any longer.

"Sob, why are you crying? Stop crying..." Baek Hyun-Ah and Shin Ha-Neul also started to cry.

The battlefield quickly became filled with tears as all the Korean challengers started crying. Watching this, some of Tetir and Aman's people also started to tear up.

"Ha..." Sighing deeply, Lee Shin closed his eyes and looked up.

Even in this situation, his heart was not beating fast. It just felt like he was being forced to feel the pain of losing a colleague in his head.

'It feels like I'm just becoming a broken robot.'

Closing his eyes, Lee Shin saw the past flash before him in the darkness. The death of a colleague who was like family was something that never got easier no matter how many times Lee Shin experienced it. Lee Shin has climbed the tower again, swearing never to go through such an experience again.

Besides, one of the reasons why he trained the challengers on the first floor so hard was so that they would not die.

'Even if I have a Martyr now, nothing has changed.'

Perhaps the reason why Ji Eun-Ju had endured until now was due to her efforts. It was not uncommon for those who could not adapt to the tower to die. Lee Shin was aware that pouring too much emotion into the issue of life and death was ultimately foolish.

"Death is inevitable," Lilian said, trying to comfort Lee Shin.

"Yes, you're right," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin gave her a bitter smile when Lilian tried to comfort him.

'Perhaps it was because memories remain.'

Although Lee Shin's heart did not race, he felt a certain sadness. Lee Shin thought it was fortunate he could feel this way, as he had been becoming increasingly desensitized to death while climbing the tower. However, Lee Shin was not quite like that anymore.

"Cormir... who was that guy? Was his power... a demon power or something?" At the sound of Shin Ha-Neul's tearful voice, Lee Shin nodded.

"Does that mean Cormir had joined forces with the demons?"

"Those damned bastards! We have to go after Cormir now!"

"No, we can't be sure that Cormir is the only one responsible," Lee Shin said.

At Lee Shin's words, they all glared at the Qualified individual from Cormir angrily.

"What are we supposed to do then? If we don't take revenge on Cormir, I cannot control my anger!"

"I'm not saying that we shouldn't. I'm just saying that Cormir may not be fully aware of what's going on. And he's not the only one responsible, is he?" Lee Shin replied.

As Lee Shin spoke, Lee Shin looked at the people of Tetir and Aman, who had now become captives after having thrown their weapons away.

Crunch—

The sound of Lee Shin gritting his teeth echoed eerily. The faces of the individuals who had been captured went pale.

"First, we are going to beat the hell out of Tetir and Aman. Then we restore Aderta and save Windsor first. We don't want to lose any more comrades, do we?" Lee Shin said, looking at the Korean challengers.

At Lee Shin's words, they all came to their senses and nodded.

"Stabilizing Merteng is our top priority. Revenge comes next." Lee Shin smirked.