

The Tower 114

Chapter 114

Lee Shin arrived at the sniping point of Park Joo-Hyuk's team and opened the Shadow Space to summon his subordinates.

"Speak up if you think you're good at tracking," said Lee Shin, looking at his subordinates.

"I'm not an expert, but I've quite a bit of experience tracking," Decan said, raising his hand.

"Okay..." Lee Shin nodded slightly at Decan.

Decan owned the Fighting Dog, an underworld ruler on the 17th floor who used to live in the same world as Alice. Lee Shin had assumed that since Decan came from such a place, he would have a lot of tracking experience.

"What about the rest of you?" Lee Shin asked, looking at his remaining subordinates.

The others did not seem to have much ability in that field. Therefore, Lee Shin put everyone else back into the Shadow Space, leaving only Decan out.

"The soil is scattered at regular intervals." Decan pointed at two spots to show the difference in the soil setups.

"If you look closely, the bark on this tree is slightly peeled. Do you see it?" Decan asked Lee Shin.

"I see it," Lee Shin replied.

"Someone must have stepped on it and climbed onto the tree," said Decan.

Lee Shin followed Decan up the tree. It was the tallest tree, and once they climbed up, they could clearly see the surrounding area.

"Did they climb up to check out the barrier?" Lee Shin muttered.

"That's what it looks like. Because of the trees, they probably found it hard to see from the ground."

After getting down, Decan continued to search for tracks. He then pointed to a spot, indicating the route he believed the group must have used.

"If you look here, you can see that the stride widens. This means that they started to run. Something will come out if we go this way," said Decan.

"Let's go," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin and Decan used the same route and arrived at where the power source used to be. Decan pointed at some compressed and sunken soil and told Lee Shin that the power source for the barrier used to be there.

"The tracks stop here. It looks like someone intentionally erased them," Decan said to Lee Shin.

"Thanks for your hard work," Lee Shin said.

After putting Decan back into the Shadow Space, Lee Shin looked up at the sky. While others couldn't see it, he could see the ghost circling the area.

[Necromancy]

Be careful. Necromancy can corrupt a sorcerer's mind!

Depending on your understanding of the demon souls, you can handle them more easily.

You can communicate with demon souls.

You can absorb demon souls.

You can summon the absorbed demon souls.

Lee Shin immediately used necromancy to summon the demon soul. The demon soul was caught off guard, so it flinched and then directed its anger toward Lee Shin.

"Do you want to die?" Lee Shin said to the demon soul.

Lee Shin put his hand on Martyr, making the soul flinch again.

- How dare you scowl at my master!

Martyr shouted, but the demon soul could not hear Martyr. Lee Shin grabbed the trembling demon soul.

"Where are Park Joo-Hyuk, Baek Hyun, and Park Hye-Won?" Lee Shin asked with a cold voice.

The demon soul turned around and started to guide Lee Shin. He followed the demon soul with Martyr in hand. Soon, a mountain ridge appeared, and they could see the remnants of a battle there.

The scene was chaotic, with the ground marked by thunderbolt magic and ice magic. The grass seemed burned, and scorch marks were in all directions.

Lee Shin deduced that the battle had occurred here, and the enemy had captured the three after. He felt that he had investigated the scene thoroughly and decided it was time to head to Serpell as the wizard had instructed.

Dozens of Skeleton Crows emerged from Lee Shin's Shadow Space. He had acquired them after killing crow-like demonic beasts. Whipping their flimsy bone wings, the crows scattered in all directions.

"Tell me if you spot any humans." Lee Shin said to his Skeleton Crows.

Lee Shin got on the largest Skeleton Crow and headed toward Serpell. Even after reaching the Blue Zone, he found no traces of people. Even his subordinates could not find any. Lee Shin landed on the ground after arriving at the "Bridge of Death."

Since numerous people had died here, death energy was thick here. Lee Shin noticed that the Bridge of Death seemed damaged, like an explosion had occurred here.

Upon approaching and examining it, it appeared as though it hadn't been broken for very long.

"A-a-a-are y-y-you Lee Shin...?"

Someone called out to Lee Shin in a trembling voice as Lee Shin examined the broken Bridge of Death. When Lee Shin looked up, he could see a soldier wearing Bilone's armor. The soldier's eyes and body started to shake like an aspen leaf.

"W-w-w-we have your c-c-c-comrades captive!" The soldier stumbled over his words in fear.

Lee Shin glared at him with a frown.

"What?" Lee Shin asked.

"Urk!" The startled soldier gasped nervously and looked around before continuing.

"If you don't want your comrades to die, the— kek."

The soldier couldn't continue, as Lee Shin had used Psychokinesis to grab his neck and pull him closer.

Crack—!

The soldier's face turned pale as the armor around his neck crumpled.

"What did you say?" Lee Shin asked again.

"P-p-p-please forgive... me! I was just doing as I was told—" said the soldier.

"Where are they? Take me there," Lee Shin said.

"I-I'll guide you!" the soldier replied.

Lee Shin ripped off the damaged armor around the soldier's neck and hurled it into the Demon Realm. The soldier watched in astonishment as his armor plummeted into the abyss, marveling at Lee Shin's incredible strength despite being a wizard.

"Eek!" The soldier gasped.

Lee Shin threw the soldier to the other side of the broken bridge and followed him over. The soldier hastily got up and began to guide Lee Shin with nervousness.

"We're here..." said the soldier, looking at Lee Shin.

The soldier had brought Lee Shin into the Demon Realm.

"If you're lying to me, be prepared to die," Lee Shin warned the soldier.

"I-I'm not lying!" the soldier replied.

Lee Shin looked inside the Demon Realm and could clearly see several humans waiting for him. He left the soldier behind and walked inside the Demon Realm.

As Lee Shin ventured deeper, a pack of demonic beasts charged toward him, but he effortlessly dealt with them. He then released his mana to examine his enemies. He detected several distinct types of mana, all huddled together.

‘Hmm...’

Lee Shin glanced around. Some individuals hid and observed Lee Shin as if also unaffected by the Demon Realm’s fog that hindered sight. He continued walking without paying any attention to them.

Judging from the level of the demonic beasts, Lee Shin could tell that this place was not an Origin Demon Realm but a False Demon Realm. So, the Nucleus of the Demon Realm had to be somewhere nearby.

Therefore, Lee Shin used his mana waves to locate the Nucleus and moved toward it. Soon, he saw the Nucleus of the Demon Realm and found that there weren’t that many demonic beasts around it.

Lee Shin wondered why the enemies had called him into a False Demon Realm if they were not planning on tiring him by making him fight numerous demons.

"Welcome, Mr. Lee Shin."

A man Lee Shin had never seen before appeared in front of the Nucleus. The person wore an old-fashioned outfit, and a fan covered half his face.

‘That must be Zhuge Yun.’

Since Lee Shin had already heard about him, he immediately recognized the newcomer.

"Are we here to exchange pleasantries?" Lee Shin replied.

"Hahaha, I've been looking forward to meeting you, Mr. Lee Shin," Zhuge Yun said.

"Is that so? Ever thought about the outcome of encountering me? You sure have some foolish notions," Lee Shin said, quickly releasing his mana toward Zhuge Yun.

An ice spear materialized and charged toward Zhuge Yun's heart with pinpoint accuracy.

Crack—!

Zhuge Yun frantically swung his fan and shattered the ice spear easily. A faint smile tugged at the corners of Lee Shin's mouth, but Zhuge Yun's eyebrows furrowed in frustration.

"You're too impatient," said Zhuge Yun.

"Do you really think I am impatient?" Lee Shin replied with a slight smile.

Lee Shin smiled because he had deduced the true nature of Zhuge Yun's fan with just one move. Zhuge Yun's jaw started to swell, so he quickly unfolded the fan and covered his face with it.

"You'll regret this," said Zhuge Yun.

Zhuge Yun turned around and ran away, disappearing into the darkness. Lee Shin did not chase after him because he knew he couldn't catch Zhuge Yun even if he used his magic. Besides, there were things that Lee Shin had to take care of first.

Several challengers approached Lee Shin, and their mana had a hint of dark red demonic energy, creating a potent and ominous aura.

"Is Bilone openly admitting that they're dirty players?" Lee Shin muttered.

Lee Shin muttered quite loudly, as he knew that they were listening in on this.

"Die!" A challenger with pitch-black eyes charged at Lee Shin, swinging their long fingernails in a vicious attack.

[Air Bomb]

The air in front of the demonized human's faces rippled. It then exploded, creating shockwaves that hit them.

"Kaaaah!"

"Kuah!"

The Air Bomb was not a powerful spell, but it was enough to interfere with their attacks. Lee Shin dispersed his preheated mana into his surroundings, causing it to scatter and spread across the ground. The mana rapidly crystallized into ice.

Sharp ice spikes arose and skewered the other demonized humans around. Despite seeing their fellow people dying, the demonized humans continued to charge like enraged bulls. The greed in their eyes still glimmered brightly.

'Tsk.'

As demonic power devoured the mana in this space, it let out a fierce roar. The sight of the demonized humans fighting to eat Lee Shin's mana was similar to hyenas fighting for a carcass.

Under demonic power's influence, the challengers charged toward Lee Shin, murmuring incomprehensible words.

"Disgusting bastards," Lee Shin muttered.

While demonized humans were strong outside, they were a force to be reckoned with inside the Demon Realm. However, a demonized human had to spend their entire life as a demon.

They were fools who had made foolish choices under the influence of a tempting power, unaware of what the outcome would be. Lee Shin wanted to end them but decided to show mercy to his fellow humans and toss them to his subordinates.

"Kill them all," said Lee Shin to his subordinates.

Lee Shin's subordinates emerged from the Shadow Space. They were undead beings, emitting an even darker black mana than the demonized humans' demon power. Death by black mana was the best way for them to meet their end.

"Be grateful, you idiots," Warrie said, thrusting his sword into the neck of a demonized human.

"Pitiful bastards," May murmured, looking down at the frozen demonized humans under his feet with a contemptuous gaze.

Lee Shin looked at the Nucleus of the Demon Realm. After comprehending the composition of its mana, he chuckled.

Lee Shin realized that whoever broke the Nucleus of the Demon Realm would inherit the curse associated with it. He couldn't fathom why anyone would even consider breaking it in the first place, given the grave consequences.

If Lee Shin hadn't figured out the true nature of Zhuge Yun's fan, even he would have hesitated to do this.

"Decan, destroy it." Lee Shin ordered.

"Yes, Sir," Decan replied.

Decan extended his thorns and destroyed the Nucleus. And like that, Lee Shin destroyed the Nucleus without touching it.

Crack!

[The Nucleus of the Demon Realm has been broken.][Your merit points are being calculated.]

[The top two challengers will obtain the 『Navy Pattern』.]

First. Mao Rang - 54,210 points.

Second. Yaweeh Chun - 43,760 points.

After the Nucleus' destruction, the reward for clearing the False Demon Realm appeared. Zhuge Yun had cleared the False Demon Realm so that Lee Shin wouldn't get any new Pattern.

The next moment, demon power began to take hold of Decan, making him struggle to move.

"My body... is stiffening," Decan said.

‘Is it the curse of petrification?’

Before Lee Shin could even analyze the curse, an unknown force suddenly began to trap the mana within the False Demon Realm. The once active and lively particles of mana quickly froze and became stagnant as the realm dissolved and faded away.

‘Was this the combat formation that sealed mana control?’

Lee Shin realized that this was why he had been called to the False Demon Realm. The demonized humans were mere decoys to lead him into the real trap.

Although this skill seemed to have a similar effect to the Anti-Mana Bomb, the principle was completely different because combat formation and hextech were entirely different fields.

If mana used to move like an airplane before, it was now walking, not even running. At this level, even using the most basic magic was impossible.

‘The only fortunate thing is that mana is still moving slightly...’

Lee Shin saw the approaching enemies after the False Demon Realm had disappeared. Zhuge Yun, who had tried hiding his appearance, approached him. The enemy smiled as if they had won when they saw Lee Shin’s stiff face.

"You don't look too good," said Zhuge Yun.

"How can I? A wizard who can no longer use magic?" Lee Shin replied.

Zhuge Yun held up his fan, swaying it gently back and forth. He then looked into Lee Shin’s eyes. They looked at each other like telepaths trying to unravel each other's intentions, waging a war of deception.

Zhuge Yun inwardly clicked his tongue for failing to discern Lee Shin's intentions. It was said that a person's true nature was reflected in their gaze, and Zhuge Yun had never failed to accurately read his opponents' intentions before.

However, Lee Shin's eyes were completely unreadable. His eyes were bright, yet his pupils contained unfathomable darkness. Zhuge Yun had seen this kind of gaze in people on the verge of death, but it was different from them. Their eyes lacked vitality, but Lee Shin's eyes were brimming with it.

"No matter who you are, it will be difficult to escape this situation unless you can use mana," Zhuge Yun warned Lee Shin.

"But aren't we both in the same situation?" Lee Shin asked.

"Do you really think so?" Zhuge Yun smirked, and he flicked his fan lightly.

Woong—

The wind created by his fan swept through the area, scratching the ground. The wind had mowed the grass in the area, leaving leaves with perfectly cut straight lines behind. Zhuge Yun looked at Lee Shin again, but his calm pupils showed no sign of wavering.

‘Is he just pretending to be fine, or does he have something hidden from me?’?thought Zhuge Yun.

Lee Shin slowly opened his mouth.

"Where are all the challengers you've captured?" Lee Shin asked.

Zhuge Yun narrowed his eyebrows. He could not believe that Lee Shin focused on the other challengers rather than his safety.