

The Tower 119

Chapter 119: The Counterattack

One could see a base in this desert-like wasteland, which was where the Korean challengers had gathered.

"How long do we have to stay here?" one of the Korean challengers asked.

"That jerk! We wouldn't be here if it weren't for Dier!" another replied angrily.

"Ugh, here they go again," someone muttered.

With nothing interesting to do or see, they ended up saying and doing the same stuff every day. They had been hiding their identities for a while now, so even they had realized that acting like a broken record was part of their routine.

"Hey, did you guys all hear the news?!" shouted a man who had come running into the base.

"What news?" the challengers asked.

"The news about Lee Shin! He has arrived here!" the man exclaimed.

Most people in the base looked at the man with skeptical expressions.

"That's old news. We heard that last time," said a challenger.

"Ugh, that guy's so slow again," said another challenger.

"Huh...? You guys already knew about it?" the man asked.

The man was momentarily taken aback by their reaction and scratched his head, but then another man burst in and shouted something similar.

"Breaking news! Have you guys heard that Lee Shin destroyed Tetir's Delbet alone?" said the newest newcomer.

"Ah, we know! We know that already!" the challengers replied with annoyance.

"Ugh, too many people here are so slow with the news," said another challenger.

"Huh? I've never heard of it," replied another person.

"Me neither. Lee Shin destroyed Delbet alone?" another one asked.

Unlike before, half of the people there seemed unaware of the second news. Their reaction made the newest newcomer continue with pride.

"That's not all! Merteng has also taken back all the land up to Windsor," said the newest newcomer.

"Really? All the way to Windsor?"

"Wow... he's really amazing. There wouldn't have been much support, though."

"What's the point? It will be pushed back again."

"Shouldn't we go help him?"

"Don't you know that we shouldn't step forward unless it's the right time?"

"Isn't it the right time?"

"That's up to the commander's decision."

And just like that, they began debating among themselves with zeal. After all, fighting over a little gossip was the entertainment they had missed. Without it, they might have died of boredom.

"That's not the end! Wildes and Lantan have allied with Merteng!"

"Are you sure? Wildes and Lantan really did that?"

"Uh... no way."

"The same guys who tried their hardest to destroy Merteng just a while ago?"

"Wait, then maybe we can keep Windsor safe?"

"How can you still believe rumors? Why would they abandon WOFP and ally with Merteng?"

"Well yeah, that's a good point."

The Korean challengers couldn't accept the news, thinking this couldn't happen without a solid reason.

"Hey! I heard this news from a really reliable source this time! I'm not lying!" said the newest newcomer.

"But you say that every time! So I don't trust you anymore."

"I think it's real this time, though! His eyes are saying that he is telling the truth."

"And what are you, an expert in him? Don't you remember the last time? You said you guaranteed it was real and got stabbed in the back! So just chill."

"What did you just say?"

"Hey, hey, why don't we bet on it? How about we decide who goes to Dier next time?"

"Oh, that's a good idea. Then I'll bet on the alliance with Wildes only."

"Same. I agree with you."

"Here's my vote."

"No, this time, that son of a bitch's expression was genuine. I'll go with both Wildes and Lantan."

"Yeah, that's right!"

"Stop all that, and come in, everyone!" When the debate had suddenly become a heated bet, a guy who had maintained a firm expression throughout interjected.

"How come everyone is so excited to talk about that? Is that the right reaction to have?" said the person angrily.

When others heard his trembling voice, they all turned to look at him.

"Those bastards betrayed Merteng just to catch one guy named Lee Shin. So why the hell would it matter whether they allied with Merteng?"

The atmosphere among the challengers quickly turned sour. The heated atmosphere cooled down like it had been doused with cold water.

"You're overreacting. We're just confirming if it's true or not."

"Ha! Am I the one overreacting? Don't the names of those countries make your teeth chatter?" said the guy, glaring at the person who had commented.

"Maybe they don't bother you, but they bother me so much! Just hearing those guys' names makes me angry!" said the colleague.

"I guess that's true. We've been hiding here for too long. We're so nonchalantly betting on those guys."

"Well... you have a point. Even if Meldeuren and Bilone led the way, the fact is that Wildes and Lantan were also involved."

The reminder helped the Korean challengers remember the anger of that forgotten day.

"Thinking about it again, I am opposed to allying with those guys," said one of them.

"Yeah, no way! Never!" another agreed.

"Who the hell do those guys think they are to shove their heads up to us?"

As the Korean challengers began to pour out their anger, their leader entered the room.

"Commander!" they called out.

"Is the news that Sang-Gu mentioned true?" One of them asked the commander if the second news was true.

The man leading them, Han Sang-Hyun, looked at the people and nodded. Hakan, who had entered with Han Sang-Hyun, shook his head.

"Wow! So it was true? But commander, we didn't say what Sang-Gu told us... So, why did you say he was telling the truth?"

"Oh yeah, how did you know? Wait, Sang-Gu! Did you hear that from the commander? And that was why you could report it so confidently."

"That's enough," Sang-Hyun interrupted.

Han Sang-Hyun thought that he had to change the minds of the Korean challengers because they could not just continue to be hostile to other countries purely because of past grievances.

"Merteng has allied with Wildes, Lantan, and Tetir."

"Wow!" exclaimed the Korean challengers, regardless of their anger.

"And the leader of that alliance is Merteng. It was mentioned that Mr. Lee Shin had achieved all these wins," Han Sang-Hyun explained.

"Oh really? That guy alone?"

"Wow... He's quite impressive."

"Well, all these things happened to Merteng just because of Lee Shin. So, yes, he is impressive."

"Merteng has been revitalized. Lee Shin had pushed Bilone, Cormir, Aman, and Stan out. Now is the time," said Han Sang-Hyun with a determined look.

At Han Sang-Hyun's words, the lively atmosphere suddenly fell silent. The phrase 'now is the time' had hit them hard.

"So, are we going to make a move now?"

"Yes," replied Han Sang-Hyun.

"Then what about our relations with other countries? What about what happened to us before?"

"They've decided to provide adequate compensation. And I will add one other thing. I told them not to fuss about it even if you guys punch them."

At Han Sang-Hyun's words, the group members swung their fists in the air and cheered.

"So feel free to vent your anger until you're satisfied! But if you end up getting beaten up by them, be prepared to get beaten up by me as well," said Han Sang-Hyun with a smile.

"Of course, Commander!"

"We won't lose against those bastards! One-on-one, we will trounce them!"

"I'm already looking forward to it."

"I didn't forget their faces for a single day."

Hakan, who had been quietly watching beside Han Sang-Hyun, exchanged a glance with Han Sang-Hyun and stepped forward.

"We Dier will request an alliance with Merteng as well. And probably Tashara will join us too. So let's work hard together from now on," Hakan said.

Whooooa!

The screams and excited cheers of the Korean challengers followed Hakan's declaration.

"For now, let's wait. I'll contact Merteng soon," said Han Sang-Hyun.

A month had passed since the end of the Windsor Siege. The situation in the continent of Isocia had rapidly changed during that short time. The movement of the once-silent demons became more intense, and WOFP, which had been pressuring Merteng, proposed a ceasefire.

At first, Merteng tried to refuse the proposal but accepted it when Lee Shin shared his opinion with them. Merteng also soon realized that accepting the offer was a really wise choice.

"What the hell is going on because of those stupid bastards?" Looking out at the plain beyond the castle wall from the top of Windsor Tower, Juan Byron said in an annoyed voice.

"This is becoming really serious." Standing next to Juan, the Minister of Mana nodded as if he agreed with Juan.

When people had first started to climb the tower, it was difficult to defeat the Demon King of Isocia. However, as time passed, countries became stronger, and challengers learned how to attack demons, making it easier and easier to defeat the Demon King.

As a result, the cycle of the Demon King resetting naturally became shorter, and the demon army's power decreased significantly as they had less time to accumulate their strength. And consequently, challengers forgot the past demon armies' infamy.

"The past is bound to be forgotten, but still..." Juan muttered.

After Meldeuren made a contract with the demon, changes occurred in this world as it began to settle without self-purification. The demons' power increased significantly, as did the number of name-class demonic beasts.

Even single-digit demonic beasts—beasts that only existed in history—appeared one after another. The demon army previously couldn't even leave the White Zone, the Demon King's castle location, but now they had invaded the Black and Purple Zones, all in just one month.

"I'm afraid that they will push us out of here..." said the Minister of Mana.

"Don't say that. I don't want to see those annoying bastards," Juan replied, thinking about the demons.

However, Juan Byron believed the demon army was already invading the plains.

Bilone and Meldeuren were fighting against the demon forces to collect all the merit points of the Black Zone. This ensured that other countries could not achieve the same growth as them and had difficulty stopping the demons.

Moreover, this created weak spots in the front lines, making the people on the front lines retreat even faster. The demon forces used this fact to capture many of the bases of the small countries in the Purple Zone.

Among the alliance of Merteng and the country with a base in the Purple Zone, only Tetir remained. Natasha Polly and her Task Force members went to Tetir's Purple Zone base to provide support.

"Those Tetir guys are lucky. They joined the alliance at the right time so that they don't have to lose their base in the Purple Zone," complained a Task Force member.

Due to being the first to ally with Merteng, Wildes had been marked a traitor and lost its base in the Purple Zone. Tetir, on the other hand, still had a base in the Purple Zone because they had joined late.

The member who had complained a second ago was annoyed that his country had suffered losses by joining early and now had to help Tetir, who had joined late.

"Stop that. We will get a base in the Purple Zone when the time comes," said Natasha Polly.

"Isn't it actually better that we don't have one now?"

"Yeah, that's right. The bases located in the Purple Zone are starting to fall apart one by one now."

"Don't worry about other places. We only need to worry about our alliance," said Natasha Polly.

After saying that, Natasha saw the darkness beyond the Tetir's base. It wasn't pitch black like inside a Demon Realm, but she couldn't see everything clearly. If a demon was hiding out there, they could catch her off guard.

Natasha Polly knew that the demon forces could move to the Navy Zone if this place was breached. And since Wildes' and Tetir's bases were in the Navy Zone, the best thing for the two countries was to combine their forces to stop the demon forces here.

"Do you think we can stop them?" a member of the Task Force asked Natasha.

Natasha found it hard to answer the member. She knew that the vast space would soon be filled with demons, to the point where seeing them all at a glance would be impossible. The base could deal with regular demons, but she doubted they would win against name-class demons.

'I have to defeat at least one on my own.'

Natasha wasn't sure she could defeat a Solo Digit, but she was confident she could defeat a double-digit demon.

"Don't worry. Merteng said they're coming to help," Natasha Polly replied.

"Will Mr. Lee Shin come?" a Task Force member asked Natasha.

When that name came up, hope lit up their faces.

"That person isn't coming," said Natasha Polly firmly.

"Oh, that's too bad. I was terrified when he was an enemy, but now that I think of him as an ally, there's no reliable comrade like him."

"How can you say that in front of the leader?"

"Oh, hahaha..."

Natasha did not care for those words. Her heart beat faster, and her sensitive senses warned her of danger.

'What if he was here with us...'

As Natasha thought about Lee Shin, she shook her head and erased that thought. She knew that she should not be relying on anyone else. If she could not do it herself, nothing would change.

"Mr. Lee Shin has not contacted us after he went to Dier. I think he will contact us soon, but even if he does, he won't be coming here," said Natasha Polly.

"Why not? Isn't this the place that is in most danger among our allied countries?"

"Yeah, right. Shouldn't our best make a move on the front line?"

Natasha shook her head, hearing the members' complaints.

"No, we've detected movement of the third demon forces in the Navy Zone, where Merteng and Lantan's bases are," Natasha explained.

"Sorry? The third demon forces?"

"Have those guys already advanced to the Navy Zone?" asked the startled team members.

"Yeah, and Mr. Lee Shin will probably go there too," said Natasha Polly.

The third demon force had many name-class demonic beasts, including at least two Solo Digits. No matter how powerful Lee Shin was, it would be difficult for him to face more than two solo-digit demonic beasts.

'Please don't die.'

Natasha Polly wanted to show Lee Shin how much she had improved.