

## **The Tower 122**

### Chapter 122

Baek Hyun was on the floor, gasping for breath, and the shadow of death loomed over him ominously. If he did not receive treatment soon, he could really die.

"You arrogant bastard!" Belzark shouted at Lee Shin.

Belzark's anger-filled shout echoed on the battlefield, but Lee Shin didn't have time to waste on him.

[Shadow Space]

May, Warrie, Lakers, Ahn Jin, and Decan appeared from Lee Shin's Shadow Space.

"Block him," Lee Shin ordered.

Lee Shin's subordinates charged toward Belzark.

"Get out of my way, you insignificant pests!" Belzark shouted as he swung his sword at Warrie.

Warrie glared at Belzark with his red eyes as he tried to block Belzark's attack with his sword. However, Belzark pushed him back as there was a great difference between their strengths. Lakers and Ahn Jin had to rush in to stop Belzark's follow-up attacks.

Clang! Clang! Clang! Clang!

The clash between demonic power and mana created shockwaves that engulfed the Korean challengers.

"..." The dusty winds from the shockwaves made Lee Shin squint his eyes.

It was a brief fight, but it became apparent that even the five of them together couldn't quickly subdue the demon. Honestly, Belzark had pushed back Lee Shin's subordinates a bit too easily.

'His demonic power is abnormal.'

Warrie and May were managing fine, but Belzark had quickly recognized that Lakers, Ahn Jin, and Decan were the weak links and thus focused on them.

"Master..."

Lee Shin noticed that more demons were approaching him, so he called out even more undead.

Dozens of undead rose from the ground and surrounded the challengers, pushing back the attacking demons.

"Tsk. He looks terrible." Lee Shin clicked his tongue, looking at the unconscious Baek Hyun.

His abdomen had been punctured, and the mana in his body was flowing unstably. Baek Hyun had an exceptional physique, but he could have put his life in danger if he had continued to fight.

"Martyr." Lee Shin called out, pulling Martyr from his waist belt.

- Yes, master

"Can you heal him?" Lee Shin asked.

- It may take some time, but I can do it.

"For now, just keep him from dying," said Lee Shin.

- Okay, understood.

Lee Shin pointed Martyr at Baek Hyun and then stabbed him with it.

"Umm... M-m-master?" Lee Shin's action baffled Park Hye-Won.

Park Hye-Won was surprised because it was her first time seeing Martyr in action. Kanoko, however, simply grabbed Park Hye-Won's arm and reassured her. Martyr could not cut anything alive. Although Martyr had pierced Baek Hyun's abdomen, there was no sound of flesh tearing.

- Please give me some divine power.

"Okay," Lee Shin replied to Martyr.

Golden divine power left Lee Shin's hand and seeped into Martyr. It wasn't a substantial amount, but it was sufficient. Martyr's origin was Saintess Belle, so this much divine power was enough to partially replicate her abilities and heal such a level of injury.

"Kek, keugh!"

Baek Hyun, whose breathing had been shallow, spat out blood and moved for the first time in a while. Blood was finally flowing properly in his body.

"Oppa!"

"Mr. Baek Hyun!"

"Are you okay?"

With Martyr's divine power, new flesh grew to mend the hole in Baek Hyun's abdomen.

"How is it?" Lee Shin asked Martyr.

- I just prevented his condition from worsening, but he needs to recuperate in a safe location to recover fully.

"Thank you," Lee Shin replied to Martyr.

Lee Shin removed Martyr from Baek Hyun's stomach and called for his subordinates, who were pushing back the demons.

"You guys need to go back to the base," said Lee Shin, looking at the challengers.

"Yes, Sir."

"But there are too many demons here, Mr. Lee Shin," Kanoko said as she looked at the battlefield saturated with demons, her hands trembling a bit.

"Don't worry. Help is coming," Lee Shin said.

"Help?" Kanoko asked.

She looked around but only saw demons. She wondered where the help would come from. Suddenly, Shin Ha-Neul looked up at the sky and saw a murder of Skeleton Crows flying toward them from far away.

"Look over there!" Shin Ha-Neul pointed to the sky and shouted.

Ahaaa—

Stop! Stop it—!

A piercing scream echoed through the air, catching the attention of the challengers, who looked skyward, curious about its source. As the Skeleton Crows drew closer, the challengers could finally see the people riding them.

The Skeleton Crows landed on the ground, trampling the surrounding demons. And then dozens of Korean challengers dismounted from them.

"Who are you guys?"

"Ha... um, nice to meet you. I'm Han Sang-Hyun," Han Sang-Hyun, the leader of the group, introduced himself.

The faces of those who had come down from the Skeleton Crows were pale.

"Are you okay?"

"Haha... I'm fine."

"No, I'm okay—"

Barf!

Barf!

"Hey, hey! Are you okay?"

Han Sang-Hyun was relatively okay, but some others vomited on the ground and complained of pain.

"Get up, you bastards!" Han Sang-Hyun lifted those who had collapsed.

"Take these guys to the base," Lee Shin said.

At Lee Shin's words, Han Sang-Hyun looked around and nodded.

"Come with us to the base."

"Are you sure... you're okay?" Shin Ha-Neul looked at the group.

"Yeah, we're fine." Han Sang-Hyun looked at Shin Ha-Neul and raised his sword.

As the challengers gradually left the scene, Lee Shin called his subordinates that were fighting Belzark. The condition of those subordinates seemed terrible.

May was relatively fine, but Decan's body was about to fall apart, and Lakers and Ahn Jin had already lost one arm each. Also, Warrie's bones seemed to be fractured in several places.

"Master..." Decan's eyes gradually dimmed before he collapsed.

[Decan has returned to rest.]

The system message confirmed his death. Although his memories with Decan were not particularly pleasing, Lee Shin did not feel good about Decan's death.

"Go back, all of you," said Lee Shin, looking at his subordinates.

The remaining four went into the Shadow Space. Belzark glared at Lee Shin, his black blood dripping. Belzark pulled out a thorn stuck in his body and threw it to the ground.

"Now you have no one to protect you," said Belzark angrily.

Lee Shin stared at Belzark—a name-class Solo Digit. In his past life, Lee Shin had never even seen a double-digit demon, let alone a Solo Digit. He only knew about them because of the information that had been passed down.

‘Is this the power of a single-digit demon?’

As the power of the Demon King increased, even stronger demons emerged. Belzark, a swordmaster, was number nine. Lee Shin's subordinates, as well as Baek Hyun and his team, had been unable to withstand his power.

‘Well... was my suspicion correct?’

Evidently, that woman, the Great Devil, was responsible for this situation. She was hiding in the Tower and attacking challengers on the twenty-first to the twenty-ninth floors.

‘Wait, no. She is not a Great Devil anymore.’

She was just a devil who had fallen from the 72 Thrones—a seat reserved for the Great Devils. After seeing Belzark, Lee Shin's suspicions became stronger.

"Die!" With a shout, Belzark charged toward Lee Shin.

Clang—!

A mana shield, which was just an accumulation of multiple shield layers, blocked Belzark's sword and dispersed the impact. However, the enemy's demonic power pierced through the shield.

A smile appeared on the demon's face. Was this a smile of satisfaction because he had taken revenge for being blocked by the shield earlier?

“Keugh...!” Lee Shin gasped.

[You have suffered 2040 points of damage.]

The demonic power leaked in as the shield exploded. Therefore, Lee Shin had to step back. He wondered if this was the power of a Solo Digit. He felt his body heat up after a long time, with the appearance of a strong opponent.

Lee Shin quickly scanned the area. The field was slick with the blood of demons, and their corpses were everywhere. He spread mana over them.

[Deep Flare]

Black flames shot up from under Belzark’s feet. Belzark, whose sight was obscured by the flames, rushed toward Lee Shin, engulfed in flames.

[Steel Plate Shield]

A shield of steel appeared in the air.

Bang!

Unlike the shield before, Belzark’s sword could not penetrate the steel shield. However, the shield contorted with each sword strike.

Creak—!

Ultimately, the steel shield broke and disappeared, but the demonic power-filled sword only struck the ground.

Kwaaaah!



The demon power rushed toward Lee Shin from the ground as if trying to tear him apart. Lee Shin concentrated his mana and threw it toward the incoming demonic power.

[Thunderbolt Explosion]

The thunderbolt, which he had molded into a sphere, collided with the demonic power and exploded. The demonic power and lightning energy simultaneously split into several branches and flew in all directions.

[Lightning Rod]

Lee Shin aimed his mana at Belzark's wound and struck it with the lightning rod. However, Belzark seemed unaffected by the pain, as he simply flinched a bit and then launched his sword. Lee Shin avoided the sword and smiled faintly.

The enemy was strong, and his attacks were swift and bold. Among the enemies Lee Shin had encountered since climbing up to the 21st floor, Belzark could be considered the strongest. However, that was all.

Lee Shin released the mana screaming to get out of his body. And his black mana began to absorb the death energy emanating from the dead bodies.

The transcendental class enhanced his vision, expanding his field of vision, and accelerated his thought process. He could clearly see Belzark's movements, and they gradually slowed down for him.

Lee Shin's black mana soared into the sky. The death energy flowing endlessly around him began to stimulate his emotions. The death energy was seemingly whispering to Lee Shin to kill all of them and bring death to the living because all of it would bring him power.

He could vividly feel the thunderbolts spread out in all directions as they were synced with his mana. Death energy seeped into the golden thunderbolts. The thunderbolts turned black as the thirst for death corrupted them.

[Punishment]

Baaam—!

A huge black spear fell from the sky. And lightning bolts of death poured from all directions. The resultant thunder was loud enough to tear eardrums apart, and a light so bright that it threatened to blind everyone dominated the space. The demons started to melt away, and hundreds of demonic beasts on the battlefield lost their lives at once.

"Damn..." Han Sang-Hyun, darting through the demons, cursed out loud at the sight.

The Korean challengers who followed Lee Shin froze in place and could not move. They feared that if they moved in the wrong direction, they would get hit by the black thunderbolt and die immediately.

Baaam—!

The thunderous noise rang out once again. Fighting at the base, Kim Kang-Chun furrowed his brows at the noise that made his ears stuffy. Venomenon, standing next to him, watched the scene with wide eyes.

"What... what's happening right now?" Venomenon asked.

"You can't understand it with common sense, so just accept it," Kim Kang-Chun replied.

Venomenon, the commander of Lantan, watched with his mouth agape the black thunderbolts falling from the sky. Sonoda Hazuki, Lantan's strategist, was also inside the base and couldn't move from his spot. They couldn't see the target of the black spear, but it was obvious.

Could a Solo Digit survive getting hit by this spear? Sonoda Hazuki could not imagine the demonic beasts surviving that hit. The black thunderbolts were evaporating the demonic beasts in real time. All of her strategies and everything she had planned seemed inconsequential now.

'If only we had Lee Shin...'

Gulp—

Sonoda Hazuki gulped as she got lost in her thoughts about someone, something she did not normally do. The battle should soon come to a close.

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"Cough!" Belzark coughed.

Belzark knelt heavily, putting his sword on the ground, and coughed up black blood.

Since the lightning attack had paralyzed him, he could not move his hands or feet. The lightning rod had precisely struck the area exposed by his broken armor.

The spear of death felt like a punishment from the God of Death. He felt a volley of strange emotions after getting struck by the black spear. Defeat, despair, frustration, and other negative feelings overwhelmed him, drowning him.

'If not for the Demon King's power, I would have died on the spot.'?

Belzark coughed up more blood, wondering if it was the shock that had actually paralyzed him. After all, he had tasted defeat for the first time, and it was vile. After realizing that there was a significant power gap between him and Lee Shin, he no longer had the will to survive. He did not even think about resisting.

Belzark would have taken his own life right there if not for the Demon King's will. After all, his life belonged to the Demon King. He locked eyes with Lee Shin—a monstrous being with incomprehensible power.

"What are you...?" Belzark asked Lee Shin.

Lee Shin laughed at the question.

"Human. One of those beings you so despise," Lee Shin replied.

"A human..." Belzark muttered.

Belzark trembled and slowly got up, trying to fight again. Lee Shin clicked his tongue at the sight. However, he suddenly sensed a mana wave and turned around in alarm.

A spine-chilling scream echoed and reverberated through the air. And simultaneously, the fleeing Korean challengers began to collapse one by one. Lee Shin gritted his teeth and extended his mana.

Bang—!

Belzark used this opportunity to run in the opposite direction. And the demonic beasts that had survived Lee Shin's attack encircled Belzark, seemingly trying to protect him.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue.

Did the demonic beasts think Belzark could escape if they held the humans hostage? Lee Shin spread his mana in both directions, which swept the ground.

[Reverse Thunder]

A thick thunderbolt line crawled along the ground like a snake and then shot up from under Belzark.

Pizzz—

"Keaaughh!" Belzark screamed in pain.

The thick thunderbolt had struck Belzark's heart through the damaged area of his armor. Therefore, he shook and died immediately on the spot.

Lee Shin spread a mana barrier to protect the humans, and the demonic power filling the space disappeared soon after. Quickly tracking the traces, Lee Shin approached Belzark.

As his black mana flowed into Belzark, the armor on his body disappeared, and the white bones inside clattered as they rose. Being two or three times the size of Lee Shin, Belzark, covered in shimmering black mana, grabbed the sword stuck in the ground. Then, he lifted it with his left hand and plunged it back into the ground.

"I, Belzark, pledge allegiance to you," Belzark said to Lee Shin in a determined voice.

Lee Shin grasped the sword's hilt and shared his mana with Belzark. Then, suddenly, black armor appeared all over Belzark's body.

"Thank you, Master," Belzark replied.

Standing up, Belzark swung his sword in the air.

Bang—!

A violent shockwave erupted as if the air had exploded. Then, Belzark moved a little, seemingly testing his strength.

"Follow me," Lee Shin passed by Belzark and ordered.

Lee Shin was heading toward the dark forest. It was time to hunt down the bandits hiding in the dark forest.