The Tower 132

Chapter 132

Drip, drip, drip, drip.

Dark red water streamed down Misteltein's blade; soon, the radiance began oxidizing it.

Pizz— Pizz—

A pungent smell drifted through the air. Misteltein's radiance grew as if trying to swallow Belial, but Lee Shin could not ignore this unpleasant feeling. The message about stat extortion, which had previously appeared numerous times, was no longer visible.

'Hmm… Something's weird. It's too easy.'

Getting to this point had not been as easy as it sounded, but it was much easier than Lee Shin had expected. By now, her raging fury should have been visible to the naked eye, but she remained motionless, seemingly dead.

The calm supplemented his anxiety as the sound of the fire echoed throughout the area.

Clunk.

Suddenly, the intangible chains that bound her entire body started to move.

Clunk. Clack. Clunk. Snap—!

The chains began breaking in succession.

"I guess we aren't done yet," Lee Shin muttered.

Lee Shin clenched his teeth and immediately drew a mana circle. The complex formulas inscribed in the air and the mana particles intertwined. He wanted to kill Belial with this attack. Mana escaped from his fingertips and began rotating.

[Gaibolg's Spear]

The revolving steel spear could seemingly pierce anything; it split the wind and rushed toward Belial.

Swoosh—

Belial turned her head, and her eyes emitted a purple light, sending a spear-shaped object, similar to Lee Shin's spear, flying. The two spears collided with each other.

Baaang—!

With a loud bang, the two spears distorted and then disappeared.

'Shit!'

Due to the collision's aftermath, Lee Shin instinctively raised his arm to protect his eyes from the raging wind. The air became thick with dust, and the black fog thickened, obscuring his vision. The demonic energy now seemed denser; he now felt a growing sense of danger.

Clang—!

Misteltein fell to the ground, and Belial then stepped on it.

"Did you really think… you could kill me with such a toy...?" Her dry voice contained restrained anger.

The wounds on Belial left by Misteltein began to heal slowly. There was a hole in her neck with traces of radiance spreading around it. The blow would have been fatal if it had been someone else, but she moved nonchalantly.

"Death will not come easy to you, boy," Belial said, looking at Lee Shin.

Her voice was calm, but the simmering anger was fully evident in her gaze.

"We will see about that," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin responded to her with provocation. It further distorted her expression, and he started to release his mana.

'She makes illusions real.'

Lee Shin knew that avoiding illusions alone was not the answer. That meant Lee Shin had to cast spells at a speed that even she could not keep up with.

"Return," said Lee Shin looking at Lilian.

At Lee Shin's words, Lilian returned to the blood branch. Having her by his side would be helpful, but it would consume much mana. He wasn't sure he could capture her even if he depleted all his mana.

Therefore, Lee Shin needed to use his mana with maximum efficiency. He extended his mana toward the ground, moving it toward the Belial.

[Ice Edge]

The ground beneath her feet froze, and sharp icicles abruptly shot up.

"How cute," Belial muttered, looking at Lee Shin.

Then, with a scoff, she gathered mana and fired it. She had flicked her hand lightly as if brushing off dust from her hand, but that had obliterated dozens of ice spikes. Lee Shin seemed unaffected by that as he proceeded with determination, and his mana moved busily.

At that sight, Belial's expression stiffened, and she looked up. There, thunderbolts were lurking like bats, radiating dangerous electrical charges.

[Dark Thunder]

Rumble— Crack!?

Baaam—!

A loud noise reverberated through the hall as if an explosion had occurred. However, Belial, the epicenter, remained unscathed.

"This one is… quite impressive," said Belial, looking at Lee Shin.

The remnants of the thunderbolts were swept down by the black curtain that formed around her and dispersed in the ground and the air.

"Then let's give you one more hit," Lee Shin said.

His mana scattered again in all directions.

[Ice Fog]

The countless moisture particles in the air began to freeze, creating a dense white fog.

[Wind Rage]

A sudden gust of wind swept through the previously still and silent hall.

'It's been a while since Abaim Monstre.'

Lee Shin had never pushed his mana to its maximum after leveling up. He had surpassed the fifth order and was at a level where he could best even those of the sixth and even the seventh order.

Now was the time to push the limits. Qualification of an Adversary could help him take a step into transcendence, so he utilized it to raise his class. It helped Lee Shin's brain work quick as lightning.

The rapidly flowing mana slowed, and the turbulent currents became as calm as a gentle stream. He could feel the serene yet majestic flow and the profound power hidden within. Lee Shin grasped the mana and manipulated it. He gracefully moved his fingers, weaving the mana threads like he was controlling a marionette.

'If it's a showdown of mana control in extreme cases, I am confident.'

Following his will, the mana became engraved in the empty space around. Also, there were thunderbolts above the rough pulsing currents. The ice controlled the flow, and the wind accelerated them.

Swoosh— Swish—!

A violent storm engulfed the entire hall. It felt like an immensely powerful force that could bring about death to anyone caught in it.

[Lightning Vortex]

The storm of thunderbolts raged on, forming a massive whirlwind that spun fiercely. However, there was only one emotion on Belial's face: anger.

"This damn shit...!" Belial muttered.

Her demon power surged.

Pizz— Pizz—!

Belial ignored the fragments of thunderbolts that scattered in all directions as she manifested her power of a deity. Lee Shin observed the effect of the Lightning Vortex and hardened his expression. Although Belial's exact response was unclear to him due to the vortex, he could sense her intentions from the flow.

'Is she creating deception from this as well?'

Confirming that mana was decreasing rapidly, Lee Shin clenched his teeth and organized his thoughts. If she created an illusion similar to the Lightning Vortex here, the probability of him winning future battles would be even lower. Unfortunately, he didn't know a lot about Illusioncraft.

Lee Shin thought she couldn't unleash such abilities without any constraints, perhaps a possibility for the Belial in her prime, but definitely not for the current one.

'If so...'

Lee Shin raised his mana as he saw Belial's demon power intensifying. The false Lightning Vortex, gradually growing in size, caused thunderbolts to surge. Violent currents clashed and roiled as two massive forces collided with each other.

Woosh—! Baaam—!

Winds and thunderbolts scattered everywhere, upheaving the ground and destroying the walls.

"Keugh...!" Lee Shin groaned.

Lee Shin created a shield, blocking the fragments of the Lightning Vortex flying toward him, and furrowed his eyebrows. This could go on no longer because the mirage might become the truth otherwise. His dark mana pulsated, ready to burst out at any moment.

'Fall.'

[Summoning the World of Death]

The ability began pushing away this area saturated with demonic power, instead filling it with death aura. The dark hall suddenly gave birth to a dark red sky, and a grim and desolate ground revealed itself. The demonic energy-filled black fog dissipated, and only the chilling aura of death remained.

"What in the world is this...!" Belial was stunned.

Belial's scowl deepened in confusion as the demon power that had threatened to consume Lee Shin's Lightning Vortex rapidly diminished. She attempted to push in more demon power, but the false Lightning Vortex lacked momentum and remained suppressed.

"But… how can a mere human... do such a thing with the world of death…?" Belial looked confused.

"Try creating this with your illusion," said Lee Shin.

Lee Shin raised one corner of his mouth and let out a faint laugh.

"If you can't do it, just die," said Lee Shin, looking at Belial.

The Lightning Vortex, infused with mana, began to revolve fiercely. Despite the arrival of the World of Death, Lee Shin's black mana remained unaffected by the death aura.

Pizz— Pizz—!

The noise of clashing thunderbolts gradually subsided. The center of the vortex narrowed and consumed Belial, who had been sucked in.

"Keuaahhhh!"

Belial screamed in agony for the first time.

[You have taken away Belial's Dominance.]

[Your Dominance has increased by 1.]

[You have taken away Belial's Luck.]

[Your Luck has increased by 1.]

[You have taken away Belial's…]

[…]

The clash between the demon power and thunderbolts caused them to intertwine and flicker within the whirlwind. Though they may have appeared similar at a glance, the powers were evidently distinct.

Baaam—!

With an ear-piercing noise, the Lightning Vortex exploded; the resultant gale pushed Lee Shin back a few steps. He narrowed his eyes and furrowed his eyebrows, gazing ahead intently.

Lee Shin could see Belial's black silhouette, and it seemed she was trying to catch her breath. As the dust settled, her enraged gaze found Lee Shin.

'How is she so calm even after getting struck by that?'

Lee Shin had hoped that she would collapse from this attack. Summoning the World of Death could be considered his ultimate move, and he had delivered a critical blow to her at the perfect timing.

Belial was once one of the seventy-two thrones, so Lee Shin thinking he could bring her down with that one attack was him being too ambitious. He should be content that he could even deliver such a critical blow to her.

'Still, the tide has turned.'

He could tell that her condition was not as good as before, proved by the fact that she had failed to evade the attack with Illusioncraft.

'There must be limits to using that power.'

The tide of the battle had almost turned in Lee Shin's favor.

"You will be dead soon," Lee Shin said, looking at Belial.

In response to Lee Shin's sneer, Belial's demon power spread everywhere. Then, the demon power writhed and rose. One by one, her illusions materialized.

Then, a group of powerful demons emerged, each distinct in appearance and abilities. Among them were the three-headed demonic beast Kakus, Shadow Archer Shirek, the muscular figure Arbon with a deadly longsword, the knight Belzark clad in black armor, the tentacled cavalryman Nuit with a formidable spear, as well as Gurakan, Pestilence King, Anentis, and Montblanc. It was a reunion with every demon Lee Shin had previously encountered.

'She still has that much strength remaining?'

Each demonic beast possessed unbelievable power. Lee Shin could not believe that he had to face all of them at once in this state. He forcefully straightened the crease about to form on his forehead and stared her down as if this was nothing.

"I thought my strength and abilities had weakened due to my injuries, but… What on earth is this power? How can your power take away what is mine!" Belial's gaze showed a mix of astonishment and anger.

"If you win, I'll let you know," Lee Shin replied.

The question strengthened his conviction. He was sure that only a minority of the creatures inside the tower knew about his power called Chaos. Belial's expression became distorted even more upon hearing Lee Shin's words.

"Kill that human!" Belial ordered, looking at the demonic beasts.

"Have you forgotten that we're in the World of Death right now?" Lee Shin asked.

Lee Shin's shadow grew as he looked at his opponent with contempt. And from that shadow emerged dozens of undead.

"The World of Death doesn't just push away demonic power," said Lee Shin.

The dead lived inside the World of Death. The savage black glow in the eyes of the undead grew like flames. In front of the fake Belzark, Lee Shin summoned the Skeleton Belzark.

"Who… are you…? How do you wield the same sword as me?" The fake Belzark glared at the Belzark Lee Shin had summoned.

"Tsk… How dare an imposter pretend to be me. Even though my original body has disappeared, my soul hasn't," replied Belzark.

With that, Belzark infused his black sword with black mana.

"And now, I have gained even greater power," said Belzark.

"You are ridiculous. You're fake, not me!" shouted the fake Belzark.

The two black swords clashed with a thunderous sound.

Baaam—!

The clash between Anetis and the fake Anetis also created a shockwave. The same went for the other undead and the imposters. They faced each other as enemies.

"My children are both fake and real at the same time. Can mere undead like them surpass the real ones?" Belial said.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue, scoffing at her words.

"Do you really think so?" As Lee Shin uttered those words, he turned toward her.

Belial could not answer immediately.

'That's right.'

As the Great Devil who had reached the seventy-two thrones, she could not possibly be unaware of the World of Death. Even if she had not been there before, it would not make sense for her to be ignorant of the power of the World of Death.

The World of Death was a realm inhabited by the deceased, where they drew strength from the death aura permeating the environment. It served as their source of power, fueling their abilities and

existence. Simultaneously, the death aura had the effect of suppressing the living beings within it. Belial would have clearly felt her power waning in the face of the death aura's influence.

'It doesn't make sense that she could not tell.'

Belial, the master of deception, may have presented a facade of confidence, but her outward demeanor did not fool Lee Shin. Lee Shin looked at her and laughed mockingly, dispersing black mana in all directions.

"Devour everything," Lee Shin ordered, looking at his Skeletons.

Uuuurrrrr—

Grrrr—

Amidst the screams of the dead, the sound of clashing bones resonated in all directions.