

## **The Tower 137**

### **Chapter 137**

The air in the ordinary-looking field became hot very quickly. Vuela, whose body started to heat up with the warm environment, swung his sword horizontally. With the sound of the wind, Vuela's sword cut through the Red Flame of Cigarate.

"Keuk!" Vuela was startled.

Although Vuela successfully executed the strike, he was taken aback to see the Red Flame divide into two upon his slash, surging up the hilt of his sword and wrapping around his wrist.

It was a form of magic that Vuela had never seen before. Enduring the pain that made his hand tremble, he willed himself not to groan. If it were anyone else, they would have dropped the sword without hesitation. However, Vuela tightened his grip on the handle even stronger.

"Your endurance is quite impressive," Cigarate said to Vuela in a mocking tone.

"If this is all you've got, it's quite disappointing," said Vuela to Cigarate as if the attack was nothing.

Vuela's eyes lit up with eagerness to fight. He kicked the ground and charged at Cigarate.

'Man... he got faster.'

Cigarate hurriedly infused mana in front of him. Red spheres appeared here and there in the path where Vuela was taking.

'Just a quick look tells me these spheres are dangerous.'

Vuela, who had been charging straight ahead, kicked the ground and made a sharp turn. However, as if they had anticipated Vuela's movement, the spheres were always one step ahead, blocking his path.

‘Oh, man.’

No matter where he moved, it was the same. If he forcibly shoved his way through, he might end up getting trapped by those spheres, which could further disrupt his movements. The veins at Vuela’s temples bulged out.

Rather than being on the receiving end of attacks, unable to get close, Vuela thought it would be better to engage in a head-on clash. Vuela, who had only been trying to avoid the spheres, glared straight at Cigarate. Sensing something wrong, Cigarate’s eyebrows furrowed.

‘What is he trying to do...?’

The next moment, Vuela ran straight toward the spheres. As the spheres collided with him, they unleashed the Red Flame contained within.

‘Oh shit!’

With each of the spheres bursting, flames surged and engulfed Vuela. Nevertheless, Vuela, seemingly unperturbed, charged at Cigarate at an even greater speed.

"Just die!" Vuela shouted at Cigarate.

Fierce mana surged as Vuela’s sword pointed at Cigarate. At the same time, the Red Flame that had been clinging onto Vuela’s body writhed, as if it intended to swallow his opponent whole.

“...”

“...”

Suddenly, their eagerness to kill each other died down in an instant. To an observer, the situation would seem perplexing; but in that brief moment, they had understood each other, as if they had read each other's minds.

It took 0.3 seconds for them to glance at each other, another 0.3 seconds to exchange their thoughts and 0.4 seconds to take action—a grand total of one second was all they needed.

Baaam—!

All of a sudden, the stones on the floor cracked and flames surged. The ash-gray smoke and flame that could burn flesh filled the entire field.

"Cough... Cough!" Ash got into Cigarate's throat.

Then, he escaped from the field.

"Ugh... Who the hell is...!" Vuela muttered.

A little later, Vuela also escaped from the flames, cursing. If they had been a little slower to escape, they could have been dealt a fatal hit from the explosion. This was clearly a trap designed to kill them.

"It's not over yet!" Cigarate shouted in order to warn Vuela.

Hearing Cigarate's urgent cry, Vuela swung his sword and deflected an incoming bullet. However, that was not the end of the attack. Numerous bullets and cannonballs continued to rain down through the spreading smoke.

Both of them grimaced and nodded at each other, which meant 'Let's deal with the enemies closer to us, and come back.' It felt like they could read each other's minds better.

Just as they were about to move to eliminate the enemies, a faint scream reached them through the smoke. The gunfire from the enemy suddenly ceased, and both of them turned their heads to see what was going on all of a sudden.

"What the hell is going on...?"

After a moment of silence, Vuela and Cigarate could hear footsteps. A tall man appeared out of the ash-gray smoke, leading a line of humans bound by a rope.

"Jack?" Vuela exclaimed, his face filled with surprise.

His slightly disheveled clothes and hair indicated that there had been a battle. There were blood stains on his sword, and those who were led by him had swollen faces, as if they had been beaten.

"These are the ones who attacked you just now," said Jack.

Just how strong he became was apparent as he effortlessly pulled the rope that bound nearly ten people with one hand and thrust them forward.

"Why are you helping us?" Cigarate asked.

"I was enjoying your fight, and they were bothering me, so I just captured them," Jack replied.

"So you were watching us fight?" Cigarate asked.

"Did you come all the way here to just watch us fight?" Vuela could not believe him.

"Yeah, because it looked fun," Jack replied.

Vuela and Cigarate looked at him, bewildered. However, they could not say anything to him because Jack had helped them.

"What about the pub?" Vuela asked.

"There are many others besides me to take care of the place," Jack replied.

"What if there were troublemakers?" Vuela asked again.

"If guys like that come, they'll contact me. Well, there probably aren't many of those anyways," Jack replied.

"Yeah right," Vuela replied.

Vuela grabbed a man by his head of yellow hair and lifted him up. The man looked at Vuela with a bruised face. Now that Vuela was looking at them from up close, he thought they looked familiar.

"Earthlings?" Vuela asked Jack.

At first, humans from any dimension looked similar. However, now he could tell that they had quite different features depending on which dimension they came from, and that was especially the case for the Earthlings.

"Why are you targeting us?" Vuela asked them.

He could not understand their motivations because he thought there was no reason for Earthlings to target him. Besides, he was expecting them to treat him more nicely because he was Lee Shin's comrade.

"...We are not Earthlings," replied the man, trying to make up an excuse.

However, Vuela was even more certain of his deduction that they were Earthlings based on the man's reaction.

"Is it because of Lee Shin?" Cigarate, who had been quietly watching, asked.

The man seemed to flinch slightly at that question.

"I think I guessed right," Cigarate muttered.

"You really did this to us because of Lee Shin? Do you have a grudge against Lee Shin?" Vuela asked.

"..." The man did not respond.

"You don't have anything to say, huh?" Cigarate said.

"Then I'll have to make you speak," said Vuela.

Vuela pulled out a small dagger. Then, in a swift motion, the sharp blade came close to the man's eye. Just as the man's face turned pale in that instant, a bright light flashed from the city in the distance.

"Did more challengers arrive?" Jack muttered as he looked toward the light.

Whenever new challengers arrived, his responsibilities increased, so he had to be mindful of that.

"I think quite a few guys have arrived this time. What's with the light...?" Jack muttered, looking at the number of lights that flashed from far ahead.

"There are so many of them this time?"

Vuela and Cigarate's expressions stiffened for a moment. Vuela stood up, letting go of the man's hair and looked toward the city. Then he checked his messages.

# Lee Shin - Where are you?

Vuela's eyes flew wide open and he checked the message he received over and over again before sending a reply. Seeing Vuela's reaction, Cigarate knew his guess was correct.

"Will you be going to the city?" Jack asked Vuela.

"Yeah, the guy I've been waiting for is here now," Vuela replied.

"What do you want to do with these guys?" Jack asked Vuela.

"Oh right... Do you mind coming with us but bringing these guys along?" Vuela asked Jack.

"Then, what about compensation?" Jack asked Vuela.

"I'll take care of that. How much do you need?" Cigarate asked Jack.

"10,000 points," Jack replied.

Without hesitation, Cigarate handed over the points.

"You're quite generous, aren't you?" said Jack.

"Aren't these guys somewhat related to Lee Shin? Since I also played a part in resolving this, I'll have a reason to meet Lee Shin," said Cigarate.

Cigarate needed to find a reason to meet Lee Shin; and since Jack was well aware of the situation, he had demanded a much higher price than usual. It was a win-win situation. Vuela had nothing to lose, so it did not matter to him.

"He's a businessman through and through, unlike how he looks," Vuela muttered.

"He's just clever," said Cigarate.

Vuela and Cigarate entrusted the Earthlings to Jack and rushed to the city. The Central Square of Redcon was crowded with people. It was very noisy. There was a large influx of Earthlings, the first time in a while.

With hundreds of humans climbing up at once, it was no surprise for chaos to ensue, so those who had arrived there earlier had to be mindful of that.

"Wow... is this the 30th floor?"

"It feels like an entertainment district of a city."

The newly arrived challengers were busy looking around the city just like tourists. Humans were the minority; there were a lot more different species from various dimensions.

"What will you do now, master?" Park Hye-Won asked Lee Shin.

The surrounding challengers turned toward Lee Shin at her question.

"First, I'll have to meet the administrator," Lee Shin replied.

The next moment, Park Hye-Won opened the community and checked the time remaining to the start of the stage. There were about two days left. They did not have to rush, but they also did not have much time to spare.

"Should we go with you?" Park Hye-Won asked Lee Shin.

"No, you guys should prepare for the next stage during that time," Lee Shin replied, looking at the other challengers.

When they climbed to the 30th floor, the community was reactivated. Everyone seemed to be frustrated, having been unable to access the community while in Isocia. Now that they had regained access, they were all checking the community.



Lee Shin also turned on the community and checked the messages that had been accumulated.

‘Oh, I guess he’s still on the 30th floor.’

After reading the messages sent by Vuela, Lee Shin replied. Not long after, he received Vuela’s reply.

# Vuela - Stay there, I'm coming.

That one-liner somehow brought joy to Lee Shin. He smirked and moved to a quiet place because he had not properly checked the rewards for clearing the previous floor yet.

Lee Shin knew the layout of the 30th floor very well, because he had stayed here for almost a month in his previous life. A while later, he headed toward the residential zone on the outskirts of the city.

This area was known as the Harlem district to the challengers. During the day, there were quite a few residents out and about in that part of the city, but it became very quiet at night.

‘This spot should be good enough.’

Even if someone happened to pass by this spot of the residential zone, he would be barely noticeable. Lee Shin then reactivated his message window to check the notifications again.

[You have cleared the world that connects from the 21st to the 29th floor.]

[Your achievements will be recorded.]

[You made a legendary achievement! Many gods are paying attention to you!]

[You have achieved 3,535,890 points.]

[You have received 3,535,890 points.]

[The Power of the Pattern is bestowed upon you, the challenger.]

[Your Health Point has increased by 54,779.]

[Your Mana Power has increased by 244,724.]

[Your Strength has increased by 252.]

[Your Agility has increased by 259.]

[Your Intelligence has increased by 436.]

[Your Dominance has increased by 359.]

[Your Divinity has increased by 8.]

[Your Luck has increased by 3.]

[You have acquired the 『Skill - Zombification』 .]

‘Zombification?’

[Zombification]

Neither bones nor flesh can be sacrificed. Zombies are dead but they can exert more power than when they were alive.

# Turn corpses into Zombies.

# The corpses that turned into Zombies decay faster.

# The speed of decay depends on Dominance and the soul.

# The longer the corpse has been dead, the shorter the duration.

‘Is this an enhanced version of Skeleton...?’

As long as the bones aren't damaged, Skeletons could continue to engage in combat. On the other hand, Zombies' ability to be in active combat was limited to a set duration of time, but they became more powerful compared to when they were alive. Lee Shin thought that Zombification would be a useful skill if used appropriately.

‘Hmm... I want to test how great this skill is...’

At that moment, Lee Shin sensed a change in his surroundings and slowly turned his head. Suddenly, numerous challengers had gathered around Lee Shin.

"Hey, newbie! Are you out of your mind, wandering around carelessly like this?" A challenger resembling a wolf with fur all over his body approached Lee Shin, grumbling.

Not only him, but various other species came around, with eyes filled with the desire to attack.

"Tsk, where are you from?" a woman asked Lee Shin.

She was a middle-aged human with red hair. She crossed her arms.

"Let me guess, you're not from Elfern, right? Well, there weren't any good-looking guys like you there. Hehe... Do you want to have some fun with me?" asked the woman, leering at Lee Shin.

"There she goes again. Many challengers had come up this time, so his companions might be around. Behave yourself," the wolf-like challenger said.

"You mind your own business! I can handle my own affairs," said the woman.

"We could get into trouble because of you! Don't you know that in this world, if you don't know how to act appropriately, you'll disappear in an instant?" said the wolf-like challenger.

"They are just trying to scare cowardly people like you. Look at me, I'm perfectly fine!" the woman shouted.

It seemed like situations like this had happened more than once. Although the wolf-like challenger was picking a fight, he did not look nervous. Amidst the bickering between the red-haired woman and the wolf-like challenger, a man pushed them aside and adjusted his round glasses as he looked at Lee Shin.

"Where are you from? There are rules even in this neighborhood. If you compensate us appropriately, we can send you away peacefully," said the man who stepped forward.

Although he seemed ordinary at first glance, when he spoke, the others around him went utterly silent.

‘He’s not an Earthling... Could he be a human from another dimension?’

He seemed fairly strong for a human. At best, he would be on par with the backstreet thugs. However, this place was not just any backstreet on Earth, but it was the backstreets of Redcon. These were individuals who took pride in their own abilities.

Nevertheless, considering that challengers who made it to the 30th floor were likely of a certain caliber, there must be more than meets the eye if they could threaten a challenger just because he had set foot there.

‘If they don't have confidence in their abilities, there must be someone watching their backs.’

They could have underestimated their opponent seeing Lee Shin, who was just a human. After clicking his tongue, Lee Shin scanned the thugs.

"Well, this is fortunate," Lee Shin muttered.

Greed suddenly appeared in his calm eyes. At that sight, the man with glasses narrowed his eyes as he looked at Lee Shin.

‘What's going on?’

He thought it was strange how Lee Shin could still look calm and indifferent. Despite the multiple threats right in front of him, Lee Shin did not seem to feel a hint of danger.

‘In a situation like this, there are only two possibilities.’

It's either Lee Shin believed he could defeat all of them in a fight or...

‘Or there is someone watching his back as well...’

The man thought that the possibility of Lee Shin bluffing was low because the man trusted his own judgment.

‘Well, who cares.’

The man had confidence in his own abilities as well as the others who were watching his back. Besides, he had encountered countless challengers who were as arrogant as this guy. He thought his time was no different.

‘If I cannot defeat him with my own abilities, I can just call him.’

The man thought this way, because he believed that there were no one who was stronger than him on the 30th floor.

"Well, if you're confident in your abilities, bring it on," said the man with glasses.

At the man's provocation, Lee Shin smirked.

"Sure, I think it's time to test out my new skill."