

The Tower 139

Chapter 139

As he headed toward the residential district, Jack realized that the person waiting for him there was Lee Shin.

'Tsk.'

He had heard that the challenger he was about to meet was someone who had recently arrived, a wizard who used Thunderbolt and turned the dead into Zombies. He had purple hair, spoke calmly, and carried a sword at his waist. Based on the information he had gathered, the challenger was definitely Lee Shin.

'I didn't want to meet like this.'

Jack was quite wary of Lee Shin, because he had heard all sorts of stories about Lee Shin at the Tune of the Drunkard. Redcon alone had a population of over a hundred thousand. Jack knew the Earthlings who were active here well, and so from them, he often heard rumors about other Earthlings as well.

Recently, he had been hearing the name 'Lee Shin' quite often. He seemed to be a remarkably skilled individual, whose abilities surpassed the powerful Earthlings Jack knew. As a result, this wizard named Lee Shin had attracted a considerable amount of hostility.

The two individuals whom Jack recently encountered, Vuela and Cigarate, were familiar with Lee Shin. They were both highly skilled individuals who ranked at the top here. Yet, there were rumors that even those guys could not defeat Lee Shin.

Jack wondered how strong Lee Shin would be. Jack's mind was in turmoil because he was not sure if he could defeat Lee Shin. But that internal monologue did not last long, because without realizing it, he arrived at the residential district, and Lee Shin could be seen from afar.

Lee Shin's sharp eyes were directed straight at Jack. It was as if he had already sensed Jack's presence even before he had turned the corner of the building. Jack could tell that this fight would be a dangerous one.

He was certain that this person Lee Shin was more dangerous than anyone he had encountered so far. Jack, with a stern expression, stood in front of Lee Shin. Even though he had concealed his appearance, Lee Shin's gaze never left him for a moment.

"You're finally here," Lee Shin muttered, fixing his gaze on Jack.

However, on the outside, nothing had appeared. Behind Lee Shin, the gangsters in the back alley were all lying on the ground, completely beaten and battered as if they had engaged in a fierce fight.

"Are you Lee Shin?" Jack asked.

"Yeah that's right," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin's eyes scanned Jack. It almost felt like Lee Shin's sharp eyes were digging into his soul. Although he felt uncomfortable under his gaze, Jack did not avoid it.

"You're quite impressive," said Lee Shin.

"What do you mean I'm quite impressive?" Jack asked.

"Oh, nothing... So you're here for revenge against these guys, right?" Lee Shin asked.

Jack pondered. He contemplated whether it was better to fight Lee Shin or avoid it. If he fought, he could not guarantee victory—no, he would not be able to win.

However, if he were to avoid the fight, his hard-earned reputation would be tarnished in an instant. Honestly, Jack did not care much about his personal reputation, but he thought that he represented the Tune of the Drunkard.

'If I fall down, the Tune of the Drunkard will also be in danger.'

Crack—

Jack clenched his teeth.

There was no other choice for him from the beginning. He could not avoid the fight, but that did not mean he could afford to lose the fight. He had to somehow overpower his opponent and win.

"Well, if you apologize right now, I'll let it slide," said Jack.

"Hmm..." Lee Shin did not reply right away, dragging his words.

Jack wondered what would come out of Lee Shin's mouth. He wanted to know what Lee Shin was thinking. Jack started to panic.

"You guys picked a fight first, so why should I apologize?" Lee Shin said to Jack.

"We started it?" Jack replied.

"Yeah, they came to me out of the blue and asked about me and demanded what I had," said Lee Shin.

"That's an implicit rule in this place. If you comply with the demands the first time, they tend not to bother you again," Jack explained.

"Not for good, but they just 'tend to'? Who made such an absurd rule?" Lee Shin asked.

"...In this world, there are laws," said Jack.

"Well, I have no reason to follow those laws," Lee Shin replied.

"You're mistaken. Rules exist for a reason—" Jack said.

"You talk too much." Interrupting Jack's words, Lee Shin chuckled and spoke.

Jack's eyebrows twitched as Lee Shin cut him off.

"Was this guy always so talkative?" Lee Shin muttered to himself, looking at Jack.

At Lee Shin's words, Jack's expression was distorted. The expressions of those around him subtly changed as well.

'Tsk, I was hoping those guys would come at least.'

Since Vuela and Cigarate knew that he had left for the residential district, Jack hoped they would come here and resolve the situation for him.

'I guess I have no other choice but to fight...'

Baaang—!

At that moment, a loud noise resonated from not too far away. When Jack amplified his senses, he could feel a familiar mana emanating from that place. His crumpled expression was slightly relaxed.

From a distance, a couple of familiar-looking individuals were coming toward them.

"What's happening?" Jack turned around, looking serious.

"Lee Shin!"

It was Vuela and Cigarate.

"That guy always causes trouble," Lee Shin muttered, shaking his head.

It was obvious that Vuela had clashed with the other gangsters in the nearby alleys, creating a disturbance.

"What on earth is happening?" Vuela asked, as he suddenly appeared beside Lee Shin and Jack.

"Finally, we meet again, Lee Shin," said Cigarate, looking at Lee Shin.

"Cigarate? Why are you here?" Lee Shin asked.

"I've been dying to reunite with you after our encounter on the 15th floor. Things are different now, so let's fight again," Cigarate said.

His keen eyes were fixed on Lee Shin. Lee Shin's head started to throb at the thought of this annoying guy.

"Hey, didn't I tell you to beat me first before challenging Lee Shin?" Vuela said to Cigarate.

"But you—" Cigarate tried to explain, but he was cut off.

"That's enough. My business with Lee Shin is more urgent than anything else. So, you two need to back off," said Jack.

Jack's words made the two of them turn their heads around, and they furrowed their eyebrows.

"Jack, if you think I'll let it slide just because you showed some kindness earlier, you're mistaken," said Cigarate.

"Hey, I'm first to talk to Lee Shin, Jack," said Vuela.

"Tsk, do you think you two can stop me?" Jack provoked the two with his aggressive words.

"Ugh, that bastard," Vuela muttered.

"Before facing Lee Shin, I think I should deal with you and warm up a bit," said Cigarate.

The atmosphere was tense. It felt like a fight would break out if anyone made a move, but no one dared to act carelessly because they were all mindful of Lee Shin.

"Why don't we all gather and settle things," Lee Shin suggested.

After hearing his words, the rest of them looked at Lee Shin with puzzled expressions because they could not understand what he meant. Then, Lee Shin turned back toward Jack.

"Your Master is on his way here right now," Lee Shin said.

"...What?" Jack was startled.

Jack amplified his senses, but he could not detect anything. However, soon enough, he could feel several people approaching this place. They were indeed the people from the Tune of the Drunkard.

'So Penser is...'

Penser, the owner of the Tune of the Drunkard, was closely connected to Jack. If his safety was at risk, Jack had no choice but to intervene, even if it meant risking his life.

"Hey Lee Shin, I'll forgive you this one time because of my relationship with Vuela and Cigarate," said Jack.

"What did you say, Mr. Jack?"

"Why are you saying that all of the sudden...?"

The group, who had hoped that Jack would deal with these arrogant guys, were taken aback by his sudden change in attitude.

"Tsk, Jack. It looks like you don't have much confidence in yourself." Vuela laughed provocatively, but Jack remained calm.

"I won't fall for meaningless provocation. The reason why I'm stopping right now is because I acknowledge your abilities. There's no need for us to fight because of these guys," said Jack.

When Jack openly acknowledged their abilities, Vuela and Cigarate calmed down a bit. The fact that Jack had avoided the fight despite having been hailed as the strongest on the 30th floor was a humble move to show his affirmation that they were stronger.

Even though it would be a blow to his reputation, Jack still decided to put an end to their fight. Therefore, it was better for both of them to take a step back too, at this point. That way, their relationship with Jack would not suffer.

"Ahem! Then I'll assume that we will stop here—" Jack tried to declare.

"No, I've never said I'll stop, Jack," Lee Shin said.

Hearing Lee Shin's voice, mixed with laughter, Jack's expression stiffened abruptly.

"Are you really eager to shed blood?" Jack asked Lee Shin.

"Well, I think that's what your Master wants to do. So, I have no choice," Lee Shin replied.

Jack gritted his teeth. Knowing who Penser was, Jack knew that a fight was inevitable.

"Well, if you say that, then there's no other choice for me," said Jack.

Jack swiftly drew out two swords that were on his back.

"That bastard!" Vuela shouted.

"I'll take care of him," said Cigarate.

Lee Shin pushed them aside.

"Step back. He's not yours to fight," said Lee Shin.

Right after drawing his swords, Jack disappeared. He smoothly escaped out of the mana that Lee Shin had secretly set up. Then, Jack hid his own appearance. It was an astonishing display of precise mana control and sharp senses.

"So I guess when people said that you are the strongest one on the 30th floor, it was not just a rumor," Lee Shin said.

As Lee Shin smirked, a sword suddenly appeared behind him and swung down.

Clang—!

With a loud noise, Jack's sword bounced off the shield that Lee Shin had created. And then the sword swung again, this time toward Lee Shin's side.

Clang—!

However, it bounced off once again.

Clang—! Clang—! Clang—!

The sword strikes were so fast that it was hard for Lee Shin to follow with his eyes. He remained composed in his stance, but it was certain that everyone around him, except for Vuela and Cigarate, would have been hit by the sword strikes already. In fact, even Vuela and Cigarate momentarily entertained the thought that they themselves would have been hurt, showing how powerful Jack was becoming.

And then eventually, Lee Shin's shield finally shattered.

Crack—! Baam—!

It was the first time that Lee Shin's shield had been broken just by the sword, without any impressive technique.

'Jack's abilities are well beyond my expectations.'

Lee Shin thought this way, because Lee Shin noticed that with each sword strike that Jack made, he was breaking through Lee Shin's shield structure little by little.

'But there are things that natural talent alone can't handle.'

Lee Shin had been waiting for the precise moment when Jack broke through the shield to launch his secret trap. He thought that Jack would not have anticipated it at all, because what he was trying to do now was completely outside of common sense.

Jack's sword, which had pierced the shield, charged forward. Lee Shin's gaze momentarily dropped. In an instant, a powerful force emerged and tugged at the sword. Due to the unexpected pull, the trajectory of the sword shifted slightly.

'Damn it!'

As Jack's sword grazed Lee Shin's neck, a mana circle flashed at the same time and a whirlwind of ice engulfed Jack.

Crack—!

The temperature dropped rapidly and ice fragments formed on his body. Jack desperately tried to activate his mana to shake off the ice, but he could not help the brief pauses in his defensive spells during the process.

[Thunderbolt]

Baaam—!

A golden thunderbolt struck precisely above his head. The power of the thunderbolt was amplified twice as much as usual due to the frost that covered his body.

"Kraaah!" Jack groaned in pain and he started to tremble.

The thunderbolt tore through the tough scales that covered his entire body and burned his tender flesh.

Sizzle—

Smoke emerged from Jack's body as he gasped. At that sight, Lee Shin looked at Jack as if things were turning out pretty interestingly.

'Did he just react to that?'

In the spot where the golden flash had disappeared, Jack stood with his long tail firmly embedded into the ground. At that sight, Lee Shin silently revised his evaluation on Jack once again. The moment his

body froze, he gave up on escaping entirely and just broke the ice near his tail and lifted it up to protect his head from the thunderbolt attack.

Then, the next moment, enduring the pain, he embedded his tail into the ground to redirect the current. It seemed like Jack had great judgment and mana control that allowed him to temporarily avoid Lee Shin's mana. If either of these two aspects were lacking, Jack would not have been able to react in that way.

Pizz— Pizz—

Lee Shin's gaze shifted to the ground. The electricity was flowing strongly above the ground. Lee Shin, Vuela, and Cigarate were fine, but the other challengers who were standing there dumbfounded were writhing in pain, electrocuted by Lee Shin's thunderbolt.

While Lee Shin's gaze briefly lingered on the others, Jack concealed himself once again.

'Is he finally unleashing his best?'

Lee Shin extended his mana into his surroundings and his expression hardened when he could not sense Jack's presence. Although he had heard a lot about Jack in the past, he still lacked information as he had never personally encountered Jack.

.

'I heard that he specialized in the assassination field.'

Jack's ability had never been properly revealed at the 30th floor. However, now that he faced Jack, Lee Shin could tell that it was not that he did not reveal it; it simply had not been necessary. With Jack's level of skill, it made sense.

'Where are you?'

Lee Shin's senses sharpened to the maximum. When it comes to the wizard's natural enemy, most people would think of an assassin, because assassins could find a momentary gap in the wizard's skill and instantly kill their enemies.

That was why the battle between wizards and assassins often depended on whether the wizard could detect the assassin's presence or not. However, within Lee Shin's sensory range, there was no trace of Jack's presence. If Lee Shin could not even detect it, then it was certain that Jack was using his unique ability.

'Have there always been this many individuals with unique abilities?'

Even in his past life, Lee Shin had not encountered many individuals with unique abilities. However, he had encountered quite a few of them recently. Lee Shin could not tell exactly what Jack's unique ability was, but he could at least tell that it made detecting his presence impossible.

However, just because it was a unique ability did not mean it was foolproof. Lee Shin was certain that there would be a moment when his presence would be revealed.

Woong—

Lee Shin was right, because it actually happened. He soon felt a silent yet sharp sense of mana close to his neck. It was a dangerous strike that sent shivers down his spine.

'Think of him as a bad guy.'

Jack's blade did not reach Lee Shin.

[Qualification of an Adversary]

No matter how great Jack's potential was, it was all meaningless. Although he might eventually reach the transcendental class, it did not matter. The difference between Jack and someone who had already reached the transcendental class was clearly different.

Woong—!

Lee Shin's thought process accelerated exponentially. In his mind's eye, one second of time was broken down into frames. In the background, a sharp sword was ready to kill its prey. The sound of the blade slicing through the air could be heard. The next moment, as Lee Shin tilted his head slightly, Jack's blade passed through empty space.

'But how...?'

Jack could not understand this situation. No matter how much he instinctively wanted to avoid a fight with Lee Shin, he believed that if they were to end up fighting, he would be the winner of the fight. He had confidence in his unique ability, and throughout his life, there was no one who could avoid this strike. That was why he was certain. However, despite being a wizard, Lee Shin was able to react to his attack.

Baaam—!

Lee Shin, who avoided the strike, slammed Jack's head into the ground.

"Kek...!" Jack groaned.

It was a forceful smash that would make anyone think Lee Shin was a warrior rather than a wizard. Even with pure stats alone, Lee Shin's strength surpassed that of most individuals, but he used the principles of psychokinesis to strike him even harder.

The next moment, with a cracking sound, his nasal bone broke, and a few scales covering his body were destroyed, fell to the ground and bounced away.

"What just happened?"

"Did Jack... lose?"

The challengers could not believe what they were seeing right in front of their eyes. They could not believe that Jack had lost, and that Lee Shin had shown such unbelievable magic. They could not figure out why Jack had lost. It was all beyond their understanding.

At that moment, the sound of wheels rolling could be heard, and Penser revealed himself.