

## **The Tower 147**

### Chapter 147

[You have killed Cobratila.]

[Your Health Points have increased by 800.]

[Your Mana Points have increased by 1,400.]

[Your Strength has increased by 3.]

[Your Agility has increased by 6.]

[Your Intelligence has increased by 7.]

[You are the first one to kill Cobratila.]

[You have obtained a Unique Box.]

"Ha..." Lee Shin sighed.

The surroundings had turned into a mess. Lee Shin approached the stone slate and placed the bead in the stone slate.

Woong—

The slate glowed with a red light that extended up to the sky.

[You have opened the Unique Box.]

[You have obtained the Draconia Leather All-Purpose Suit.]

[Draconia All-Purpose Leather Suit]

# Excellent flexibility.

# Comfortable to wear.

# Strong durability.

# 10% damage reduction.

# Reflects damage to the opponent at a very low probability.

Lee Shin wore the red-and-white suit. The suit hugged his body tightly, so it did not feel like he was wearing clothes at all.

"Mr. Lee Shin!" He heard Shannon's voice from a distance.

When Lee Shin turned around, he witnessed a strange sight.

"Why are you two together?" Lee Shin asked because Tashi, the Cyclops, and Ethan stood strangely close. And more strange was the atmosphere between the two.

"Well... that's..." With an embarrassed face, Shannon let her voice trail off. So, Ethan stepped forward to explain the situation.

After hearing it, Lee Shin looked at Ethan and Tashi incredulously before shaking his head.

"So, you won't attack me anymore?" Lee Shin asked Tashi.

Tashi just pursed her lips and glared at him.

"If it weren't for Ethan, I wouldn't have forgiven you," said Tashi.

"You have such a kind heart, Tashi," Ethan said.

Lee Shin could not understand how things had turned out like this.

"I apologize for what I said earlier. I didn't mean it." Lee Shin apologized.

Since Ethan and Tashi were now together, Lee Shin thought fostering a negative relationship with her was unnecessary.

"I made you angry in that situation to get an opening. That's all," Lee Shin said.

"How did you know that saying that would make me angry?" Tashi asked.

"Someone told me that," Lee Shin muttered.

"Who was it—" Tashi asked, but she got cut off.

"Well, well! Let's stop discussing the past and focus on what we should do now." Ethan's casual tone lightened the atmosphere.

"You guys should walk around the outside and focus on your growth as much as possible. I have something to take care of," Lee Shin said.

"Understood!"

"If you need us, please feel free to let us know."

"Well, when all five pillars on the island are established, come to the island's center," Lee Shin said.

Shannon's mouth dropped upon hearing Lee Shin's words.

"So, you're trying to awaken the monster on this island," Shannon muttered.

"Yes, that's right. I might need your help later on, so grow your stats as much as possible," Lee Shin replied.

"For sure! You can count on us!" Ethan replied with determination.

Ethan, Shannon, and the other five challengers accompanying them were Earthlings. Lee Shin's request was one they couldn't refuse.

"Will you help us too, Tashi?" Ethan asked.

She nodded subtly.

"But are you two dating or something?" Lee Shin asked.

Ethan nodded proudly.

"Of course! Isn't it fascinating that no one has taken such a beauty with them?" Ethan commented.

"Ethan, don't say stuff like that!" Tashi started blushing.

The shy expression on her face was a complete contrast to her earlier angry appearance. Lee Shin wondered if this woman was the same Cyclops from earlier.

"But Cyclopes don't go out with anyone weaker than them... So, how could this be possible?" Lee Shin asked.

However, he quickly averted his gaze in response to Tashi's intense stare. Her eyes wide open, she silently warned Lee Shin, urging him to remain quiet.

"Of course, I am stronger, aren't I? In Meldeuren, there were only a few who could defeat me. Hahaha!" Seeing Ethan boast about his power, Lee Shin clicked his tongue.

To assume that he was stronger than the female Cyclops simply because few challengers in Meldeuren could defeat him was absurd. Even if he was one of the strongest in Isocia, he shouldn't confidently claim to be stronger than her.

He would surely feel ashamed later on after learning the truth. However, Lee Shin thought that was a problem for the future Ethan.

"Well... Whatever. We'll see how things turn out later," Lee Shin muttered.

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The scattered individuals gathered when Lee Shin stepped out of the Loricula Forest.

"Mr. Lee Shin, this woman is..." Park Joo-Hyuk looked at Aphzal Tashi with a puzzled expression.

"Well, it just turned out that way," Lee Shin muttered.

"Just so you know, she is my lover," Ethan replied.

"Your lover?" Park Joo-Hyuk could not believe that.

"Sorry? Did you just say, lover?"

"Damn! Has this old bear man gone mad? What's so good about this woman—" Shin Ha-Neul started to grumble.

Tashi responded to his words by grabbing his head and lifting him.

"What. Did. You just say?" Tashi glared at Shin Ha-Neul.

"Uh... um... Ah, no, I mean..." Shin Ha-Neul started to panic.

"Honey! Stop it. He's just joking around; don't listen to him, my lovely dear." Ethan tried to calm her down.

As Ethan hurriedly tried to calm her down, she tossed Shin Ha-Neul aside as if throwing a sack of potatoes and smiled brightly.

"I understand, honey," Tashi replied.

'When did they start changing endearments?'

A frown unwittingly appeared on Lee Shin's face, so he quickly turned away from them.

[Hunger will strike.]

[Satiety level is at 100%.]

[Satiety level decreases by 13% every 30 minutes.]

[Hunger disappears once the satiety level reaches 100%.]

The messages appeared simultaneously before everyone, so everyone stared at the empty space before them for a while.

"Hunger hasn't accumulated for anyone, right?" Lee Shin asked, looking at the challengers.

Most people nodded in response, but only Shin Ha-Neul looked nervous. He then rubbed his stomach.

"My hunger got stacked twice," Shin Ha-Neul replied.

Lee Shin and the others looked at Shin Ha-Neul with surprised faces.

"What have you been doing without filling your satiety until now?" Lee Shin shouted at Shin Ha-Neul.

"Well... I went looking for more useful items first, so I was late..." Shin Ha-Neul muttered.

Before entering this stage, Lee Shin had constantly warned the challengers that they should not let their hunger stack. The more their hunger accumulated, the faster their satiety level diminished, and their hunger cycle accelerated with each passing day, making it even harder to endure.

"Three consecutive stacks are still manageable, but beyond that, it'll be hard to maintain sanity," Lee Shin said.

"I feel like I'm already going crazy because of hunger. But having grown accustomed to starvation since childhood, I believe I am faring better than others," Shin Ha-Neul replied.

"I mean, are you really that foolish? What kind of idiot would accumulate hunger after all the many warnings we guys got?" Ethan made fun of Shin Ha-Neul.

When Ethan teased Shin Ha-Neul, seemingly unable to comprehend his actions, Shannon cast an incredulous gaze at him.

"Ugh, did you already forget who stopped you from accumulating hunger? If not for me, you would've been in a similar situation," Shannon said, looking at Ethan.

"Well, that's..." Ethan tried to give an excuse.

"But aren't there others like me?" Shin Ha-Neul said.

"Who?" Baek Hyun-Ah asked.

"Well... You know, those challengers like Hyun or Vuela," Shin Ha-Neul replied.

"No matter how foolish they are, would they have really done that?" Baek Hyun-Ah said and shook her head.

"Then are you saying I'm a bigger fool than them?" Shin Ha-Neul asked again.

"You are indeed an idiot," said Park Joo-Hyuk firmly.

Shin Ha-Neul now looked depressed.

'I feel like Baek Hyun and Vuela are in the same situation...?'

"Anyway, I think it would be better to split up now. Moving as a group seems quite inefficient," Natasha suggested.

Everyone agreed with Natasha, as moving together would only disrupt their growth. It was better to divide into smaller groups and explore the entire island.

"Mr. Lee Shin, I think it would be better for us to divide the territory among ourselves," said Natasha.



Lee Shin scanned the map, keeping the remaining time in mind.

"I think that's a good idea," Lee Shin replied.

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Woong—

An orange light column soared into the sky. After breaking the last slate, Lee Shin looked at the sky. Growth Island now had five columns of light.

‘Now it begins.’

It was already the tenth day for Lee Shin. Although there were still four days remaining, this stage would end today.

"Mr. Lee Shin, look over there," said Natasha, pointing toward the trees behind the hill.

Four challengers were there, their eyes filled with madness, ready to kill each other to satisfy their hunger.

"They must not have filled their satiety level," Park Joo-Hyuk solemnly looked at them.

One man severed his opponent's arm and began to chew on it.

"Eww!" Shannon covered her mouth, gagging at the disgusting sight.

"I'm so scared, honey," Tashi said with a scared voice.

"Don't worry, honey. You will never become like that." Ethan reassured her.

"I feel so reassured because of you, honey," said Tashi.

When Tashi buried her face in Ethan's chest and leaned against him, Baek Hyun and Shannon's expressions stiffened, and they looked away, disgusted.

"Wait here, everyone," Lee Shin said.

Leaving them behind, he left for the island's center, where a massive abyss existed. Now that all the slates had been activated, the true owner of this island would reveal themselves.

Kugugugugugugu—

Vibrations that shook the entire island came from the abyss.

Crack—! Thump—! Baaaam—!

The violent tremors that shook the ground and the sound of walls crashing kept Lee Shin on high alert.

Kiiiiek—!

A plant let out a chilling scream, strange because plants usually lacked vocal organs. The roots of this plant extended for hundreds of meters, displaying their immense strength and resilience. Alongside them were formidable traps, seemingly inescapable once entrapped, and sharp thorns embedded within.

Thud! Thud!

The mere sight of the plant was enough to make one tremble. The plant—the legendary Mandragora—revealed itself in the abyss.

'This is Mandragora...!'

Lee Shin looked at his surroundings upon facing Mandragora. No one had made their presence known yet, but if they did, it was certain that they would become Mandragora's prey. Therefore, Lee Shin had to diminish Mandragora's power as much as possible before any such encounter occurred.

The branches of Mandragora surveyed the forest before abruptly attacking Lee Shin. Despite its enormous size, it possessed remarkable speed and agility. The might of its attack could be felt even without suffering a direct hit. Lee Shin could only dodge in the face of such an attack. He hadn't used the fourteen days to grow, so he had to fight as efficiently as possible.

'It would be foolish to face the attack head-on.'

[Shield]

His mana gathered and interweaved tightly to form a small shield. The minimal surface area ensured that it had maximum defensive power. It also decreased the total frictional force to prevent the full impact from penetrating and twisting the branch's trajectory.

Baaam—! Grggrgrgrg!

As the branch scraped the ground and flew forward, Lee Shin could not do anything but click his tongue.

'Tsk, even though I've raised my stats so much, this is still insufficient.'

Even though the branch had only grazed the shield, it had gotten grated. If the shield had absorbed the attack head-on, the branch would have pierced through, causing severe harm to him. Seeing the branch swing again, Lee Shin used his magic first.

[Stone Hammer]

A stone hammer broke out from the ground and struck the tip of the branch.

[Flare Burn]

A burst of flames followed the hammer. The hammer had peeled a bit of the branch's skin, and the fire used that as an opening to flay the entire bark off. The branch, writhing in pain, struck the ground around it.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud!

That broke the ground, creating rock pieces of all sizes. Lee Shin wanted to take advantage of this great opportunity. He gathered the debris and swung again.

[Stone Dagger]

The rock pieces floated in the air before turning into sharp blades and flew toward Mandragora. Although the fragments could not penetrate its tough skin, it did not matter. It was enough to nick its bark. Lee Shin became more ambitious and used his mana to deliver consecutive strikes. Just then, Mandragora's branch swept the ground as it headed toward Lee Shin.

Swoosh—!

[Raise Ground]

Lee Shin urgently kicked the ground to avoid the attack, but it seemed like the creature had anticipated it, as another branch was already rushing fiercely along the trajectory.

'Oh no...!'

Lee Shin tried to create a shield in the air to diminish the impact, but complete defense was impossible.

Baaam—!

Thud!

"Keugh...!" Lee Shin gasped.

[You have been damaged by 8,800.]

The blow would have been detrimental if Lee Shin had not spent ten days relentlessly killing plants and increasing his Health Points. As proof of the power, the thick branch that had collided with Lee Shin shook and snapped.

Fortunately, Lee Shin was wearing the suit that reduced damage. Otherwise, he would've been injured even more severely. After wiping the blood dripping from his lips, he turned to face the creature again.

'I pushed myself too far.'

A sense of arrogance had crept in after Lee Shin had reached transcendence class. He had used too much mana for a simple spiral attack and consequently fallen victim to an absurd attack.

'Well.'

Lee Shin decided to look at the bright side; it served as a good reminder to always stay alert. Mandragora was still swinging its branches as if it could not calm down.

Landing an attack did not seem to satisfy Mandragora. Therefore, Mandragora's attack started once again. A gust of wind brushed against Lee Shin's skin. The branches thrashed the ground erratically, tearing up the earth and hurling wood chunks.

It launched a barrage of attacks. Had Mandragora been weak, it would not have mattered much, but each attack was so powerful that a single head-on collision was powerful enough to break through Lee Shin's shield.

Baaam—!

Once again, the branch hit the side of the shield and slammed into the ground. Without his exceptional physical abilities and mana control that almost seemed acrobatic, it would not have been possible for Lee Shin to endure until now.

"Kraaack!"

The sudden scream drew his attention, so he looked in that direction with furrowed brows. A branch had skewered a challenger, their corpse dangling like a rope now. This meant that the challengers were beginning to arrive here.

‘Tsk, even if the achievement is tempting, they are going too far...’

Greed was one of the seven sins, but shouldn't one consider whether risking their life for it was worth it? Fortunately, the challengers' arrival took Mandragora's attention off him, giving him more room for defense. To not waste their sacrifices, he decided to use all the mana he had accumulated so far.

[Ice Bound]

Lee Shin collected the moisture in the air, rapidly cooled it down, and detonated it in front of Mandragora.

Babababam—!

The deadly, mana-infused ice shards flew toward Mandragora.

Babababam—!

Crack—! Craaack—!

The ice shards precisely targeted the spots where two or more branches met. Mandragora twitched in the face of the attack, and Lee Shin's mana surged again.

[Thunderbolt]

Lightning and thunder struck down the monstrous plant. Dark clouds covered the sky, obscuring the sun and casting a dark shadow over the island. Only the lightning flashes illuminated Mandragora, turning it into the tragic protagonist on the stage.

Rumble— Rumble—! Crack!

The thunderbolt struck its target precisely, stealing from the wildly thrashing branches their lives. The branches fell one after another. Only then did Mandragora seem to feel a sense of urgency. The tips of its branches began to rotate in a spiral, intercepting the thunderbolt.

Pizz—!

The electrical currents from the lightning spread through the dozens of entangled branches, but Mandragora spread the branches, buried them in the ground, and neutralized the electricity.

'Is it an instinctive movement?'

Mandragora knew how to counter the thunderbolt magic. However, considering Mandragora's intelligence, instinct likely triggered its defensive mechanism rather than rational behavior.

After silently observing Mandragora's movements, he turned to look at the other side. A massive, bright-red fireball came through the lightning bolts and struck Mandragora, creating an enormous heatwave.

Swoosh—!

The flame spread instantly along the branches. However, Mandragora's bark oozed moisture to stop the fire from prospering.

"Huh..." Cigarate, responsible for the fireball, could not take his gaze away from Mandragora, even as he dodged the remnants of the lightning attacks.

The ground around Mandragora cracked, as Mandragora was rapidly draining the moisture underneath. Lee Shin frowned and immediately moved from the abyss's edge toward the inside of the forest.

Baaam—!

As Mandragora slammed the ground in pain, the completely dried-up soil split apart like crumbling cement. The entrance to the abyss, where Mandragora was, collapsed, revealing its roots a bit.

Lee Shin's last attack seemed effective because two-thirds of Mandragora's branches had lost strength and sagged. Just when it seemed like the monster was weakening, buds began to bloom from the tips of its branches.

As the buds opened up, challengers emerged from within. Lee Shin's expression hardened, and he used Psychokinesis to grab and blow up the blooming buds, but it was already too late.

Dozens of challengers with green skin, born from the numerous buds, appeared on the ground with thin branches attached to their bodies

"Matador..." Lee Shin muttered.

The old Hunchback stood before Lee Shin with a sly smile.