

I BECAME THE 1ST FLOOR BOSS OF THE TOWER

Chapter 15: A Clue

Ughhh—

Keughhh—

The ghosts wandering in the air continued to get on Lee Shin's nerves. It would have been fine if they had only moved, but they screamed too. Those intrusive screams broke his concentration.

Although it had been a long time since Lee Shin had gained the title of He Who Knows Death, Lee Shin still could not easily get used to the sound, especially when he was focused on his research.

"Hey, you old man!" Stop fooling around!" Lee Shin shouted, because that ghost was especially on his nerves today.

However, Lee Shin knew that those souls would not care.

There were not many souls here, but still, it was quite enough. And most souls floated in the air with such cries. Not only were they unable to hear Lee Shin, but they also seemed to be unaware of Lee Shin's existence. They seemed to have a split mind, just like Gene Ebrium.

There were a small few of them who were in a better condition—Warrie and May. Since they did not go to a state of schizophrenia, they were given a chance to become Lee Shin's subordinates.

Lee Shin had asked May and Warrie, but neither knew why the souls were behaving in this way. They could not remember their past, nor how they ended up in this place.

If this was a place to trap those who were defeated by God, May and Warrie would have been fine because their classes were low.

According to May and Warrie, they had no memory of the gods, but they instinctively felt revulsion towards them.

Lee Shin could not be certain yet. However, if his assumptions were true, he thought he would be able to make strong allies out of them, by restoring their broken souls.

The next question was, how could he possibly restore them? Something had just come to his mind, but Lee Shin decided to study about that a little more.

'Huh?' When Lee Shin looked up after a moment of thought, there was the soul of an old man staring at him.

It was the same soul that was floating in the air a few seconds ago. When Lee Shin's eyes widened in surprise, the old man's facial expression changed bizarrely.

- Can... you... see me...?

The old man's speech was very slow. It almost seemed like he had forgotten how to speak, because it had been so long since he had talked. It seemed like he was trying to remember how he had spoken in the old days.

"I can see ghosts," Lee Shin tried to hide his surprise and replied calmly.

- Oh... I see...

The old man was nonchalant, unlike Warrie and May.

- A lot of... people... can see... ghosts...

"Oh really? Is there a lot?" Lee Shin asked.

- Yeah, there were... a lot... I just... cannot... remember... so well.

"What happened to you?" Lee Shin asked again.

- I... can't...remember...

Lee Shin frowned at the old man's words. His ability, He Who Knows Death, did not work. Lee Shin had originally thought that this skill would work on anyone who could communicate with him. However, that was not the case.

'Hmm... What's the difference?' Lee Shin could not figure out what conditions had to be met.

At least, he could tell that this old man was a completely different soul compared to Warrie and May. Sometimes, this old ghost seemed like he was from a high class, but other times he seemed insignificant.

"Do you know anything about this place?" Lee Shin asked.

- This place... This place is...

Ahhh—

Suddenly, the old man stopped talking and groaned in pain. He grabbed his head. He seemed to know something about this place, but he just could not say it.

"That's all right! You don't have to say it!" Lee Shin calmed him down and the old man's groan gradually faded.

- ... There is... a guide... in this... place...

"There's a guide here?" Lee Shin asked.

It was a sudden remark. The old man struggled to continue his words.

- ...To... get... to... the... next... ah...

He frowned in pain. It seemed like the old man was holding in his pain somehow to spit out words.

"You can stop now," said Lee Shin.

The old man did not care what Lee Shin said. The old man's eyes looked different for a moment. There was anger, loss, and determination. Besides, numerous emotions seemed to be intertwined intricately.

- A... place... where... the mana... gets... dissipated....

Ahhh—

The old man uttering the last word, disappeared through the floor with a distorted face before Lee Shin could do anything about it.

Lee Shin wondered, perhaps there was a limit to how much information the old man could reveal.

Lee Shin had similar experiences several times in his previous life, so he could somewhat predict why the old man's soul became like that. Now, the question was why the old man had that look on his face.

Lee Shin could not stop thinking about the look he saw on the old man's face. It seemed like he was outraged by something. It could potentially be rage toward the gods.

Lee Shin thought about the words the old man had mentioned. He wondered what the old man wanted to say about the guide, about moving on, and about the place where mana got dissipated. Was the old man suggesting a way up to the next floor? Or, was he trying to tell Lee Shin about something else? Lee Shin was curious about whether the old man knew something about him. It seemed like the old man wanted to give Lee Shin some useful information.

When talking to the challengers from the Undermost, Lee Shin made it sound like he knew the way to proceed to the next floor. However, he did not know anything. It was just his way of motivating them to get strong and collect points from them in return.

'The place where mana dissipates...'? Lee Shin had not found such a place on the first floor yet.

In fact, there was no way for him to go beyond the cliff in the first place.

* * *

Time flew by, and the first floor and the people at the Undermost were having peaceful days.

"I know! So you're saying that you got defeated by Kim Kang-Chun. Did I hear this right?" Lee Shin rebuked Warrie.

"It wasn't... I didn't really lose..." Warrie rubbed his head continuously as if he was perspiring, albeit from a skull with no sweat glands.

Warrie was desperately making excuses to Lee Shin.

"I mean... I changed my bones to the lowest... I mean... there was a request from the Undermost... Kim Kang-Chun knew about that, so he used a trick on..." Warrie explained.

"...And so you lost in the end?" Lee Shin scolded him.

"... Yes." Warrie lowered his head and his thick bones trembled.

"Tsk. I can't believe you got defeated by those kids. This is embarrassing," Lee Shin continued.

"You're pathetic! How can you call yourself master's subordinate?" Lillian climbed above Warrie's head from Lee Shin's shoulder and hit Warrie's skull with his foot.

"I'm sorry, I'm still not good enough..." Warrie replied in a quiet voice.

"No, it's my problem. I was too complacent. I thought you wouldn't be beaten anywhere. But I guess that was not the case. I was stupid."

Puck! Puck! Puck! Puck!

Suddenly, Lee Shin reproached himself and started to hit himself on the head. And when Warrie saw that, his eyes twitched as if he had encountered a typhoon. Warrie's teeth chattered as he did not know what he had to do. He was engulfed in deep fear.

His master was hurting himself before his eyes. Warrie wondered if Lee Shin was hitting himself because he really thought that this was his fault.

No matter how insensitive Warrie was, he could understand what Lee Shin tried to communicate through his actions. Warrie's body trembled like an aspen tree and he put his head down as if it was going to dig into the ground.

"S-s-s-sorry master! It's all my fault! So please...!" Warrie stuttered in fear.

"No, this is not your fault. It's because I'm stupid. What a fool!" Lee Shin continued hitting himself.

Puck!

"How can you call yourself a Great Mage?" Lee Shin was getting angry at himself.

Puck!

"Is your head just a decoration or what?" Lee Shin shouted in an angry voice.

Puck!

"Master, p-p-please stop..." Warrie trembled in fear.

"How weak did you make Warrie that he got defeated by the newbies who didn't even make it to the first floor?" Lee Shin hit himself again.

Puck! Puck! Puck!

"Please..." Warrie was almost crying.

Creak—

"Master, here are the documents that you..." When May opened the door with the documents that Lee Shin had asked for, he could not believe what he was seeing.

Whoosh—

May's hands lost strength, and he unwittingly dropped all the documents on the ground. He was so shocked that he did not even realize he had dropped them.

May, with his intelligence, tried to understand what was going on. The next moment, he noticed Warrie bowing down as if he was about to dig into the floor.

'Ugh, that crazy guy... What the hell did he do?' May noticed Warrie had done something wrong.

Meanwhile, Lee Shin was blaming himself by hitting his head.

"What a fool!" Lee Shin hit himself.

Puck! Puck! Puck!

"M-m-master!" May called Lee Shin hurriedly, and only then, Lee Shin stopped hurting himself and looked at May.

"The d-d-d-documents are..." Lee Shin stuttered.

May had called Lee Shin hoping to make things better, but after realizing that the papers were all over the floor, May felt a sharp pain in his skull.

"Uh...Uh... I mean..." May knew something was wrong.

"Oh, I see... Since you brought the documents, you want me to pick them up myself and read them? Well, is that so?" Lee Shin asked in an annoyed voice.

"No, that's not it..." May replied.

"Okay well, how can a master who can't even educate their subordinate properly argue about that? I'll just pick them myself if you say so. I'm sorry that you have a master like me." Lee Shin's voice was calm and relaxed.

Despite Lee Shin's calmness, the Skeletons could infer from his words that he was being cold, even colder than the icy breath of the Ice Bird. May's body was frozen and Warrie's body stiffened as he lifted up his head and saw how bad things were becoming.

Warrie's mouth opened slightly in shock. Warrie looked as the documents were picked up. He turned to look at May and it felt like lasers would come out of Warrie's eyes. May finally felt Warrie's gaze and stared back at him.

'You dumbass! Why would you make things even worse?' said Warrie.

'You started it, you idiot,' replied May.

'Oh yeah? You want to go for a round? The only thing you can do is to swing your wand from behind,' Warrie asked.

'You're so ignorant. You have big muscles, but a small brain!' May continued.

'And you're so weak that you can't even lift a piece of paper properly. Look what you've done,' said Warrie.

"Ha! How dumb is your head that you put the lowest-rank skeleton bones in your body and get defeated by those Undermost kids?" replied May.

'What did you say?' Warrie asked.

The two were not talking to each other, only conversing with their eyes.

"Just go to hell, both of you!" The sudden sound of Lee Shin's angry voice made the two of them jump.

"Squeek!"

"Keugh!"

"What are you two doing?" Lee Shin asked.

"N-n-n-nothing!"

"Nothing!"

"What do you mean 'nothing'? I can clearly see the two of you talking behind your master's back just using your eyes." Lillian suddenly returned to her true self and laughed in her chair as if this situation was entertaining for her.

"W-w-what are you talking about? There's no way!"

"No, it's just that this guy—"

"Okay, I guess I was not paying much attention to you guys lately. I'll change your mind so that you don't get beaten up or spill papers somewhere," said Lee Shin.

Wary and May glared at each other, recalling the nightmares of their recent past. And they lowered their heads at Lee Shin's words.

"Okay."

"I'll do my best."

Just like that, the gate to hell opened for May and Warrie.

* * *

Ever since the Dimension Gate had opened, the tower's community had been more active than ever. The challengers who went out of the tower heard news from the Earth and delivered them to the challengers inside the tower when they came back.

└ Was it true that the challengers on the first floor were blocked by the boss?

└ Wait, how did that weakling get so strong all of a sudden?

└ How do you expect those kids who recently came up to the first floor to win if even Cha Yu-min got defeated?

└ Cha Yu-min must have been penalized. Do you really think that they would let the 80th-floor challenger use his full power on the first floor?

└ That's true, too. By the way, will the first floor really break in a year?

└ If Cha Yu-min said so, I think he's right. It's Cha Yu-min.

└ That's fine, but does that mean we won't be getting any new recruits for a while? Ha... I think I'll just focus on training this year.

└ But I also heard Cha Yu-min say that Korea will become the top rank soon. Is this for real?

└ Why did he say that? What's the reason? He usually doesn't say anything like that. He doesn't have that kind of personality.

↳ Who knows? He didn't tell anyone the reason. The academia claimed that it is probably related to the first floor.

↳ Who cares about the academia! We know the tower better. How would they know anything by studying on Earth?

↳ I don't need them all! Someone please do something about the national game! Korea is ruined!

↳ Damn, the Japanese keep picking a fight because they think this is the best time. They're going crazy! Those guys were below us until last year!

↳ Cha Yu-Min! Are you here? Please come out and say something!

↳ Cha Yu-Min is known for not being active in the community. If you have time, just climb the tower.

The challengers on each floor threw out their own ideas about the first floor and made all sorts of speculations. And it took them months to confirm these.

* * *

Lee Shin stayed in his laboratory for nearly a month. Only necessities were delivered through May, and everyone else was prohibited from entering.

"Is master okay?" Warrie asked.

"If I were you, I would worry about myself before I worry about the master. If you don't have a clear achievement before he comes out, you will have to continue the hellish training again." May explained.

"Don't say that ever again! I don't want to live through the pain of being on the master's operating tab—" Warrie was interrupted.

Thud!

At that moment, Lee Shin's laboratory door opened as if it exploded, and Lee Shin, looking like a mess, popped out.

"I found it! I found it!" Lee Shin cried out.

Surprised at the scene, May and Warrie asked him.

"What do you mean?"

"No way..."

"Yes, I found it. I found a way to escape from the first floor." Lee Shin looked at the two, smiling triumphantly.

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