

The Tower 156

Chapter 156

Lee Shin finally arrived at the fourth realm of the 49th floor. He reached the end goal he had been longing for throughout his time on the lower floors. Even before climbing up to the second floor, Lee Shin had set his eyes on the fourth realm and beyond.

‘This is a big gamble.’

Unlike those before, the 49th floor was a stage set in the Demon Realm itself. Inside the first to the third realm, challengers received protection from the Tower. However, from the fourth realm onward, things were different.

‘Although it becomes much easier for the gods to intervene...’

The fourth realm was a world set outside the stage. Even if the gods' gaze could not reach him, they could still intervene if they desired. However, it was also the realm of the Great Devil and the world of the Demon God. That would serve somewhat as protection for Lee Shin.

‘...surely they will send their apostles or subordinates to spy on me.’

Lee Shin was now standing on the land of the Great Devil. That meant that the gods would need to send apostles who were capable enough to survive this place at the very least. Apostles like these were busy individuals, so the gods might not even consider sending their apostles and subordinates here at all.

"Hmm..." Lee Shin looked at the large mansion in the distance.

It seemed like his portal had opened in a considerably distant place from the mansion.

‘Confronting them head-on would not be the best option though...’

Lee Shin's goal was not to fight Sayr. It was to rescue the Sage whom Sayr had captured.

'If I truly have returned to the past, the Sage should still be with Sayr.'

Sayr, also known as the Nobleman of Origins, valued material riches. Possessing all the treasures from all dimensions was his heart's desire. He wanted his subordinates to traverse dimensions and bring him different treasures; he even kidnapped an Elf and took him to his territory.

The Elf's name was Sevrino, and he was also known as the Sage who Traverses Dimensions. He was a High Elf who possessed exceptional knowledge, unmatched by any other when it came to dealing with dimensions. Sayr had kidnapped Sevrino and forced him to conduct research to enable him to freely cross dimensions.

'But, Sevrino was a frail one.'

Lee Shin was aware that, despite being a High Elf, Sevrino had a weak constitution as he spent most of his time locked in a room, conducting research. Eventually, although Sevrino succeeded in connecting and traversing most dimensions at Sayr's whims, Sevrino would die due to the torture he had gone through.

'I must rescue Sevrino at all costs.'

Only then could Lee Shin stop the gods' misdeeds.

"Krrr..."

Lee Shin, who had been lost in thought, suddenly noticed that he was surrounded by demonic beasts. He looked around.

Crack— Baam!

He saw a massive tree that seemed to be over 10 meters tall collapse, causing a thunderous boom. There was a giant demonic beast, so huge that he could not see its face until he looked up and stared for a while. Its belly protruded, and although its limbs were not particularly long, they were thick.

Its skin resembled rough bark. In its right hand was a large club, with scraps of flesh stuck here and there, an indication of the number of creatures it had crushed with the club.

‘It seems to have lost its focus in its eyes.’

Lee Shin could instantly tell that the Tree Giant was not in its right mind.

Wooong— Baaang!

The Tree Giant swung its club toward Lee Shin, but it only slammed the ground with a loud crash, missing Lee Shin. Having dodged the attack, Lee Shin immediately released his mana to the ground.

[Stone Hammer]

A stone hammer that emerged from the ground, struck the Tree Giant’s ankle and caused it to fall.

"Keugh..." the Tree Giant groaned.

Baaam—!

Due to its weight, the ground shook upon impact, as if it was an earthquake. Then, from behind, a loud sound of sonic waves came, trees snapped and a club flew in the air.

Whoosh! Baaam!

[Upper Ground]

Lee Shin, who had soared into the air in order to avoid the Tree Giant’s attack, furrowed his eyebrows.

‘Did someone intentionally send the Tree Giants?’

The condition of the Tree Giants was unusual. They seemed possessed, not focusing on defense but solely on swinging their clubs.

‘They are greeting me quite aggressively.’

There were four Tree Giants surrounding Lee Shin. Two of them stood in front of him, while the other two hid among the trees, waiting for an opportunity.

‘Do they think I won’t be able to notice their presence?’

If that was the case, they could not be the lackeys of the gods who came to get him.

‘Otherwise, they must be pretending not to know anything, which is quite an impressive show of acting skills.’

[Psychokinesis]

Lee Shin, who had a faint smile on his face, gathered the Tree Giants hidden in the forest in one place.

"Kheuergh

...!" Due to the sudden force, the Tree Giants knocked into one another and were startled.

[Flame Fall]

A massive fireball that formed in the air fell toward the Tree Giants who had gathered.

Bababam—!

With a tremendously loud sound of explosion, the temperature of the surroundings surged, and the Tree Giants were engulfed in flames in an instant. The next moment, Lee Shin could feel the heat too.

[Ground Wall]

At the same time, the ground surged upward, creating an enclosure to prevent the fire from spreading further. The Tree Giants were weak against fire; therefore, these Tree Giants turned into ashes and disappeared.

Clap Clap Clap Clap.

At the sudden clapping sounds, Lee Shin turned his head toward the source of the sound. When he turned, he noticed a man smirking in the darkness.

"Just as I expected, such an attack wasn't enough to threaten you," the man muttered in the darkness.

He had snake-like eyes and green hair and emanated an extraordinary aura.

"Was that you just now?" Lee Shin asked the man.

"Yes. Well, you could say it was my greeting," the man replied.

As he spoke, the man continued to chuckle.

"What's so funny?" Lee Shin asked.

"Oh, because it's entertaining," replied the man.

After saying that, the man looked up into the sky and glanced at various spots, smirking.

"It's funny how all the gods have turned their attention here because of a mere human challenger," said the man.

"Do you think the gods would be able to see this place from where they are?" Lee Shin asked.

"Well, isn't that why they have sent their eyes to this place?" the man replied.

He was talking about the eyes of the gods, meaning the apostles.

"You're nothing more than an eye sent by the gods," Lee Shin muttered.

"That's right. The gods just want to amuse themselves. I'm similarly amused myself," the man replied.

Lee Shin and the man locked eyes.

"So you're saying that you're also an apostle," Lee Shin said.

Behind those snake-like eyes, Lee Shin could see the man's intention; his hunger, like a snake waiting for the right opportunity to nab its prey. Just looking at the man's eyes made Lee Shin feel like he was going to be sucked into his gaze.

"He's messing with me," Lee Shin muttered.

"Kek. Hahahaha!" The apostle started laughing, holding his stomach.

The man seemed out of his mind, but Lee Shin remained calm. Once the individuals reached a certain level, all of them were somewhat insane. Among them, the apostles were the most deranged.

"That was impressive. As expected, your mental defense is excellent. I already knew about it because I've heard it from the gods, but it's still pretty amazing to witness it in person," said the apostle.

"But I don't find any of these exciting," Lee Shin muttered.

As he spoke, Lee Shin activated his mana.

"I don't like things that are boring. If we continue to be boring people like this, I'll have to amuse myself," said Lee Shin.

"Hahaha! You're funny. But let's postpone what's even funnier to a bit later," said the man.

After saying that, the apostle lifted up his hand, and small birds flew in from all directions and settled on his arm.

"As I said earlier, there are many gods targeting you. Will they let this opportunity slip by? The apostles are searching for you in the land of Sayr right now," said the apostle.

"If I was scared of the apostles, I wouldn't have come here in the first place," Lee Shin replied.

"That's true, but even if you're strong, it will be difficult for you to face multiple apostles alone, don't you think?" the apostle asked Lee Shin.

One of the birds perched on the man's hand flew slowly toward Lee Shin.

"Don't worry, it won't do any harm," said the apostle as the bird landed on Lee Shin.

Lee Shin let the bird approach, because he knew he could handle whatever the man was up to. As the eyes of Lee Shin and the bird met, Lee Shin could see an image of someone walking on a desolate land.

"This bird is Yubaba Homestin, but you can just call it Yuba. Anyway, Yuba has the ability to share what it sees with others," the apostle explained to Lee Shin.

"Why are you showing me this?" Lee Shin asked.

"I don't want you to get beaten up by other apostles and die, or be handed over to another god so easily. Because it wouldn't be so fun, would it?" said the apostle.

His raised eyebrows and the creases in the corners of his eyes made his smile even more disgusting.

"Let's form an alliance. I'll help you," the apostle suggested to Lee Shin.

"Heh, I haven't heard anything more interesting than what you just said in a while. Aren't the apostles supposed to be afraid of the Demon God? Do you think those insignificant gods can come here without being noticed by the Demon God?" Lee Shin asked.

"You're right. But the Demon God has no time to care about what's happening here," said the apostle.

"...What did you just say?" Lee Shin seemed confused.

It seemed like the apostle knew something that Lee Shin did not. The fact that something happened to the Demon God during this time was something Lee Shin had never heard of, even in his previous life.

"You could probably tell after seeing Yuba's ability just now, but I have found four apostles so far. If we come together, there will be five of us. Besides, Sayr is also after you. So, do you think you will be able to withstand that combined force?" The apostle started to laugh.

"...Then at least reveal the name of the god you serve," Lee Shin said.

"Fine. My name is Buren, the apostle of the God of Deception," said the apostle, introducing himself.

"Hmmm... the God of Deception...? Buren... Buren..." Lee Shin muttered to himself, rubbing his chin.

Soon, Lee Shin smirked.

"What's the matter?" The apostle asked Lee Shin.

"Nothing, let's form a temporary alliance," Lee Shin said.

When Lee Shin agreed, Buren approached him with a smile and extended his hand for a handshake.

"Don't die so easily, Lee Shin," said the apostle.

"Well, same to you," Lee Shin replied.

As Lee Shin and Buren extended their hands for a handshake, their eyes met. Lee Shin could notice a strange power in the apostle Buren's sharp eyes. As their hands drew closer, the ominous feeling intensified.

'Just as I expected.'

'Did he notice it?'

The power of the two who had read each other's minds clashed in the air with an explosion.

[Dark Blitz Gun]

The black lightning energy that quickly gathered at the tip of Lee Shin's fingers was shot toward Buren.

Kwaaah!

The surrounding air heated up enough to melt everything that was around. The power was beyond Buren's expectation, as he thought it was impossible to shoot such a powerful blast instantly. Buren, who furrowed his eyebrows at the inexplicable power, quickly waved his hand.

A ginormous eel appeared in the space and opened its mouth wide and swallowed Lee Shin's black lightning energy.

Kugugugu—!

Its mouth was filled with Lee Shin's black lightning energy, and its stomach bulged and burst.

"No...! My Habame...!" Buren cried out.

Another lightning bolt struck Buren, who opened his eyes wide in shock, but this time, a turtle with a shell resembling a jewel appeared and deflected the lightning bolt.

"Since you've destroyed my toys, I'll make sure to turn you into my toy," said Buren, gritting his teeth.

"Well, your deception doesn't affect me," said Lee Shin.

The God of Deception and his apostle Buren were individuals whom Lee Shin had already known in the past. They were wicked beings who would relentlessly seek anything useful and unique and turn them into their toys.

What they had done to their followers in the name of the apostle was so terrible that it could not be spoken of. Although Lee Shin had not seen them in person, their infamous reputation was well-known.

"I didn't expect to meet you on just the 49th floor," Lee Shin muttered.

"...So, you already knew about me," said Buren.

Dozens of voids opened up near Buren, and several beasts with long snouts emerged from them, spewing venom.

[Thunderbolt]

Rumble— Crack!

Dozens of lightning bolts were precisely aimed at the beasts. Lee Shin demonstrated a level of mana control that was unbelievably skillful for a lower-floor challenger.

Crunch—

After seeing that, Buren realized that Lee Shin's skills far exceeded his expectations and gritted his teeth.

'I heard that it hasn't been long since he became a challenger... but how is this possible?'

Buren did not think that Lee Shin's skill would not be that astonishing just from looking at his appearance, but now, his opinion of Lee Shin changed.

'He's constantly manipulating mana, to read its flow, and predict the changes...!'

Lee Shin was able to accurately read the point where the beasts would appear and dealt with them skillfully. At first, Lee Shin's response might have been somewhat clumsy due to his lack of knowledge about the beasts' characteristics. However, as time passed, his countermeasures became flawless.

'He remembers the beasts' subtle movements, habits, and characteristics, and responds accordingly. How is it possible to remember everything in that short amount of time?'

Buren originally thought that Lee Shin was an exceptional wizard, a necromancer with excellent judgment. However, that was not all. He possessed unbelievable, hidden abilities.

'There was a reason why he had become so strong in such a short period.'

Soon after, Buren realized that he would never be able to win against Lee Shin. That was his conclusion.

"Seik!" Buren called out.

A huge mana circle emerged from the sky, and a giant shark appeared within it, opening its mouth wide and soaring upward. Lee Shin, who was preparing for the attack, felt something strange and furrowed his eyebrows due to the extraordinary power wave.

‘No way...!’

Another portal appeared in front of the shark that was flying toward Lee Shin. Yet another portal appeared above Buren. Lee Shin, who sensed that his opponent was trying to escape, hastily gathered transcendental class energy and fired a spell, but it was futile.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue.

Buren, who had entered the shark's mouth, disappeared into that spot. Buren still seemed to have plenty of energy left, but he escaped so quickly. Buren's reaction was completely different from what Lee Shin had anticipated.

‘But now I have a good sense of his combat force.’

Lee Shin had taken this time to adapt to his opponent; he was confident that he would not miss Buren the next time they met.

‘Besides, there are others still lurking around.’

As Lee Shin raised his transcendental-class energy, he began to sense the presence of another individual hiding.

‘I won't let this one slip out.’

[Qualification of an Adversary]

Black mana lingered over Lee Shin's violet eyes which were shining like jewels. He activated his transcendental-class energy and dispersed his mana in all directions.

Rumble—?

The weather changed instantly.

[Divine Realm Breaking Force]

The pressure in the space and the transcendental class energy emanating from Lee Shin was overlaid with Lee Shin's black mana and pressing out in all directions.

"Wait!" At the same time, someone revealed themselves from the darkness.

Seeing that figure, Lee Shin withdrew his energy, putting a stop to the Divine Realm Breaking Force.

"Wait... You are...?" Lee Shin muttered.

It had been such a long time since Lee Shin last saw that guy. He never expected to have a reunion like this.

"Grukka! It's good to see you, Lee Shin," said Shakhan, who suddenly appeared in front of him.

Shakhan was the Great Warrior of the Dark Frost Troll tribe as well as an apostle of the God of Death. He grinned, revealing his large fangs.