

## **The Tower 164**

### Chapter 164: The Platinum Group

The Defense Force, a group of White Elves, appeared to be a single unit on the surface, but in reality, they were divided into two factions. There was the Versia faction which was responsible for Islands 1 to 10, and the Genia faction, which was responsible for Islands 11 to 30.

The Versia faction consisted of only the high-ranking White Elves. Therefore, although their numbers were smaller than the Genia faction, each individual was quite strong. On the other hand, the Genia faction had fewer high-ranking White Elves, but a larger number of White Elves.

The reason for this division was simply due to differences in values and ideology. Versia believed that guarding a few islands perfectly would be sufficient, while Genia believed that more islands needed to be defended. Both factions had their strengths and weaknesses, and it was difficult to say that one was definitely better than the other. As a result, the gulf of differences split the White Elf community.

Lee Shin planned to cooperate with the Genia faction rather than Versia, with Island 43 chosen as the base for their cooperation. It was once a place filled with criminals but now it was to serve as a residence for humans.

"Long time no see," said Lee Shin as he walked in.

Lee Shin was now on Island 5 of the Lardel Archipelago. Whenever people recommended the best and largest accommodation in Lardel Archipelago, they would all talk about this place named Feix.

It felt nostalgic for Lee Shin to relive the memories of staying comfortably here in the past. As he opened the door and entered the place, a large lobby and numerous people came into his view. When he looked closely, there was a line that extended all the way behind the counter. It seemed like everyone was waiting to make a reservation.

'Is it the reservation period?'

The Feix had a system that opened up for reservations for a week once every two months. That was because if they accepted reservations at any time of the year, it would quickly become fully booked for the next one or two years.

Lee Shin looked at the clock. It was 9:52 a.m. According to what he remembered, reservations started at 10 a.m. As the time was approaching, the line became extremely long. Lee Shin knew that if he had to wait for his turn, he would have to spend the whole day here.

'I don't have any choice, do I?'

Lee Shin slowly walked toward the line. After leaving Island 1, he had changed his clothes and concealed his face in order to disguise himself. Therefore, no one has recognized him so far.

"Hey! What are you doing!"

"Hey, get in line properly!"

"What are the guards doing? He's trying to cut the line!"

As Lee Shin walked past the challengers and residents who were in the line, disgruntled voices could be heard. That was because in Feix, even low-rankers were treated the same as ordinary people—the low-rankers also had to line up and make reservations just like everyone else.

On the other hand, the rankers were given a two-day period called the "Priority Reservation Period" outside of the regular reservation time. This allowed the rankers to reserve one room per person. However, even the rankers received the same treatment as others during this week-long reservation period.

That was why the others were complaining when they saw Lee Shin cut in line. It was an old rule and tradition of Feix. Being a place supported by the Defense Force, breaking the rules was as good as defying the Defense Force.

"Stop right there," a guard said, looking at Lee Shin.

The guard blocked Lee Shin's path. He was muscular and resembled a gorilla.

"If you want to make a reservation, please go to the back of the line," said the guard with a cold voice.

There were still 8 minutes left until 10 a.m. The guests, who thought they had found a small amusement to pass the boring 8 minutes, turned their eyes toward Lee Shin.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue.

"Tsk?" the guard repeated.

When the guard heard the sound of Lee Shin clicking his tongue, the expression on the guard's face got distorted abruptly, and at the same time, Lee Shin pulled back his robe that had been covering his face.

"Step aside," said Lee Shin to the guard, revealing his face.

Lee Shin did not want to start a fight at this point, so he wanted to quickly reveal his face, finish making the reservation and enter a room. There was one exception to the rules in Feix, which applied to the top rankers.

The top rankers were treated as exceptions in both the Defense Force and at Feix. Therefore, the top rankers could make reservations at any time. Besides, the place always had some rooms set aside for them to immediately check-in.

Since Lee Shin had not known that it was the reservation period right now, he initially planned to quietly inform the staff and enter his room. However, it became troublesome because it coincided with the reservation period.

"..." The guard did not say anything.

Even in the face of Lee Shin's words to step aside, the guard remained silent. Lee Shin stared back at him. He stood still, rolling his eyes at Lee Shin. It seemed like the guard did not recognize Lee Shin.

It was understandable since Lee Shin had just climbed to the 50th floor and became a top ranker in a short amount of time—perhaps the guard had not received the news yet. Lee Shin did not plan on getting mad at him, because the guard could have sensed something already.

At that moment, the murmuring sound around them grew louder. It could be because of the guard's attitude or the insolent demeanor of the human in front of them. However, the noisy murmurs quickly subsided.

"Step aside, everyone," said an Elf.

The Elf had white silky hair and a small face adorned with distinct features, but rather than appearing soft, she had a strong aura. The beautiful White Elf approached Lee Shin, drawing the attention of everyone around. Lee Shin also looked at her with surprise in his eyes, because he had not expected to encounter her so soon.

"Nice to meet you. My name is Genia. You're Mr. Lee Shin, right?" Genia, the Head of the Defense Force in charge of Islands 11 to 30, opened the door and approached Lee Shin.

"Yes, that's correct," Lee Shin replied.

The commotion that arose with Genia's sudden appearance doubled as Lee Shin's identity was revealed. In fact, for them, this figure named Lee Shin was even more astonishing than Genia.

It was an uncanny feat that Lee Shin could cause a stir across the entire Lardel Archipelago, being a challenger who had only just climbed to the 50th floor—thanks to the extraordinarily huge bounty of two million over his head. Besides, as soon as he had reached the 50th floor, Lee Shin became the top ranker. In fact, he was the first one to become a top ranker at the 50th floor.

In terms of achievements, Genia was no match for Lee Shin. Furthermore, across the entire Tower, there had never been a case where a challenger who had just reached the 50th floor became a top ranker.

Therefore, those who got mad at Lee Shin a while ago hid among the crowd, trembling, while observing the situation.

"What's your name?" Genia asked the gorilla-like guard.

"M-m-my name is B-Besung!" the guard replied with his name.

"Hmmm... Besung... And who's your superior officer?" Genia asked again.

"Re—" Besung did not get a chance to respond fully before he was interrupted by Genia.

"Rejigal?"

"Yes, that's right mam!"

"Alright, I see. You may get going," Genia said.

After hearing Genia's cold voice, the panicking Besung quickly walked away.

"Do you plan to stay here, Mr. Lee Shin?" Genia asked.

"Well, I plan to stay for a few days," Lee Shin replied.

"Alright then. I'll take care of everything for you, so rest easy," said Genia.

Lee Shin thanked Genia. "Thank you."

"Not a problem."

After saying that, Genia bowed her head and walked out of the building while making a call. No one who witnessed this exchange could divert their gaze from Lee Shin due to Genia's courteous behavior.

Among the bystanders, those who were proud of their somewhat great reputation wanted to approach Lee Shin. They excitedly entertained the thought of talking with Lee Shin, but they quickly gave it up. It was because a ranker stepped forward first.

"Hahaha, it's such a stroke of luck to come back like this after missing the reservation period by accident. Hey man, I'm a ranker in the 4,311th position. I'm Sisian. Nice to meet you," a ranker introduced himself to Lee Shin.

As Sisian boasted of his high ranking, he approached Lee Shin and reached out his hand for a handshake, but Lee Shin had no intention of greeting such a guy who was full of himself.

When Lee Shin ignored him, Sisian was slightly irritated. He extended his hand to grab Lee Shin's shoulder.

However, suddenly, five White Elves surrounded Sisian and forcibly escorted him out of the Feix. The situation was resolved just like that, and no one dared to approach Lee Shin after witnessing the ranker, who was the first one to approach Lee Shin, being driven away without any explanation.

"Hello, Mr. Lee Shin, your mana has been set."

After finishing the mana settings, Lee Shin got into the elevator for the top-floor guests. Once the mana was injected, the elevator recognized him and started operating automatically. Then, Lee Shin entered the room and sat down on a chair, lost in thought.

Although Feix was undoubtedly the best choice of accommodation in terms of convenience and safety, the reason why Lee Shin chose to stay here was primarily because he wanted to meet Genia. Since this place received support from the Defense Force, he believed that the news of his presence here would reach Genia's ears.

Lee Shin had planned to secretly arrange to meet her once she had reached out. However, their encounter took place under the gaze of too many people; he thought Genia might have been near where he was. It was not necessarily a bad situation, but Lee Shin thought that it might cause Versia to have his guard up a little higher.

"Well, it'll be fine," Lee Shin muttered.

Lying back in his chair, Lee Shin heard the incoming notifications. He took out a tablet that was powered by mana to read the messages.

"The rumors spread quite fast," Lee Shin muttered again.

The second reason why Lee Shin decided to stay here was that it would be easier to interact with influential individuals who stayed on the top floor of the Feix. The messages that Lee Shin just received were of that kind. The individuals staying on the top floor heard about Lee Shin and contacted him through the Feix.

After checking all the messages from those individuals, Lee Shin logged into the community. There were numerous messages waiting for him.

There were messages from many people, including Park Joo-Hyuk, Baek Hyun, Park Hye-Won, and Kim Kang-Chun. However, the most important ones for Lee Shin at the moment were from Vuela and Alice. Lee Shin needed to know how they were doing.

# Alice - Hey Lee Shin! I found out who the real owner of Island 43 is. He is controlled by a group called the Platinum Group. So, watch out for this group.

The name "Platinum Group" was mentioned by several others aside from Alice.

"Hmm..." Lee Shin was lost in thought.

The leader of the Platinum Group had sent Lee Shin a message through the Feix, expressing his desire to meet. Most of the messages Lee Shin received a few minutes ago were probably to scout him or build rapport, but the intentions of the Platinum Group still seemed unclear at the moment.

# Park Joo-hyuk - Hello Master, I heard you've arrived. While tracking down the individuals who put a bounty on you, I found some information that seems to be related to the Platinum Group...

Platinum Group was mentioned here and there. Initially, when Lee Shin heard of the name from various other people, he thought that the Platinum Group was simply after a bounty of 2 million. However, now it seemed to him there were several things that were strange.

Lee Shin was certain that the leader was currently on the 50th floor. He was sure because the leader contacted Lee Shin a few minutes ago through the Feix message that he wanted to meet. If that was the case, why hadn't that leader guy captured Vuela and Alice?

Originally, Lee Shin had thought that guy was trying to conquer the Tower from the upper floors, but he soon realized that was not the case.

'I should really meet him to see what's going on.'

Ignoring all other messages, Lee Shin replied only to the leader of the Platinum Group.

- 10 PM tonight, Special Room on the 31st floor.

\*\*\*

The 31st floor of the Feix was a collection of several high-end restaurants and a few private rooms. Lee Shin had rented one of the special private rooms and was seated there.

Currently, no one else was using the room except for Lee Shin. A while later, a man entered the room guided by a staff member. He was covered from head to toe, including his hands and feet. He was wearing gloves and shoes, concealing all his bare skin from sight. He wore a mask on his face and firmly pressed a hat on his head.

"Is it you? The one who wanted to meet me?" Lee Shin asked as soon as he saw him.

The man stared at Lee Shin with a vigilant look and then sat across from him.

"Yes, that's right," replied the man.



The man was Cain, the leader of the Platinum Group. Lee Shin had looked up some information about him before this meeting, but there was not much available, except that Cain would do anything for points.

"So, what's the reason you wanted to meet me?" Lee Shin asked Cain.

His sharp gaze scrutinized Lee Shin, so instead of avoiding his gaze, Lee Shin met his eyes as if also trying to assess him.

"Join the Platinum Group," said Cain.

Tsk.

"...Is that why you called me?" Lee Shin was disappointed. He clicked his tongue and hardened his expression. Lee Shin did not set up a meeting just to hear what everyone else was also saying.

"...Are you refusing to accept my offer?" Cain asked.

"Yes," Lee Shin replied.

Cain's voice carried a hint of disappointment.

"There's a bounty on your head," said Cain.

"There are rumors that you're aiming for that bounty," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin taunted him with his words, trying to provoke a reaction. Cain glared at Lee Shin. In the tense atmosphere that made it feel as if an eruption of mana could happen any moment, the man named Cain broke the silence.

"I know the one who put the bounty on your head," said Cain.

It was an unexpected statement. Whether Cain knew the truth or not, there was no reason for him to say that to Lee Shin.

"Why are you telling me that?" Lee Shin asked with a puzzled look.

"We actually had our eyes on you. But now we're giving up," Cain replied.

Cain seemed nervous. His tension was palpable.

"Get to the point," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin carried himself in a calm and composed manner throughout the whole conversation. Just from his appearance, it was hard to believe that Lee Shin had only just arrived at the 50th floor. Cain looked at Lee Shin in the eyes.

"We will provide you with information. So don't interfere with us. That's all I want to ask you."