

## **The Tower 165**

### Chapter 165

Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.

Lee Shin tapped his index finger on the table, lost in thought. He wondered who could be targeting him and putting a bounty on his head.

Lee Shin, 2 million; Vuela, 1 million; Alice, 500 thousand.

It was not easy to find someone who could easily wager an enormous sum of 3.5 million points. Besides, since the bounty was issued under the protection of the Defense Force, no one could make a dummy bounty, thinking that no one would be able to catch them anyway.

The first to the 49th floors were often referred to as a kind of tutorial to reach the 50th floor. That was how significant the 50th floor became in the world of the Tower. From the 50th to the 100th floor, all the challengers could interact and meet with all sorts of individuals.

Lee Shin thought about the point in time when the bounties were placed. It was clear that it was issued after someone failed to find him in the fourth realm. In that case, he thought that it could be the subordinates of a god who had put the bounties on them. Perhaps even now the apostles could be looking for an opportunity nearby.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Tap.

The atmosphere grew heavier with each sound Lee Shin made in the silence. When Lee Shin lifted his head slightly to look, it seemed like Cain was also lost in his thoughts. Cain was probably thinking about whether Lee Shin would accept the proposal not to interfere with them. However, Lee Shin did not plan to give in to his wishes that easily.

"Well, there's a condition," said Lee Shin.

For a brief moment, the look in Cain's eyes wavered.

"What is it?" Cain asked.

"Can you provide specific details about the person who placed the bounty? And also tell me everything about how you found out about it. Tell me about the setting and the exact situation as well," Lee Shin replied.

The atmosphere of the upper floors was completely different from the lower floors. One could not recklessly speak in the upper floors like they would in the lower floors. Every word had to be spoken with caution.

Although the world of the lower floors was centered around the individual, it was not the same for the upper floors. The higher the ranking, the stronger the power and influence one could exercise. However, it always came with responsibility.

"..." Cain remained speechless.

His demeanor changed. The weight of what he would say was apparent. It was easy for Cain to just say that he could provide all the information, but he soon realized that he could not actually tell Lee Shin all the details.

The reason why Cain simply said that was because he did not think Lee Shin was a tough opponent. Looking at his attitude, Lee Shin decided that if he could not answer these specific questions, Lee Shin would just destroy him right there and walk away.

"I'm sorry, but there are limits," Cain replied.

"Were you just playing with me?" Lee Shin said in a cold voice.

Lee Shin's Transcendence was sufficient. Besides, it seemed somewhat necessary to demonstrate his abilities at this point.

[Transcendence]

Each transcendence stat can extend 1 second of time into 10 seconds.

# Transcendence (30/30)

# Transcendence recovers once every hour.

Bam—!

As soon as Lee Shin slammed the table, the tea in the cup splashed into the air. Hundreds of water droplets began to fall in slow motion. In the midst of the slow flow of time, the tense gaze of the man was fixated on Lee Shin.

[Frostbite]

The next moment, Lee Shin turned the water droplets into sharp icicles and hurled them toward Cain.

Baaam—!

Simultaneously, Lee Shin pushed the table using his psychokinesis and pinned Cain's body down. The shards of ice were about to surge over him.

Bababam—!

However, the ice shards passed through Cain's body, which became ghost-like, and the table struck the wall.

[Thunderstrike]

Pizz—!

The sound of an explosion filled the room—lightning. The thunderbolt that started from the center spread in all directions, and eventually electrocuted Cain's body.

"Keaughhh—!" Cain shouted in pain.

He trembled in his place. Then, Lee Shin electrocuted him once again with the thunderstrike. After getting struck, Cain fell to his knees. To do all these, Lee Shin only consumed 1 Transcendence. Not even ten seconds had passed.

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Cain looked at Lee Shin with a dazed expression. Lee Shin, who was sitting still in a chair, looked back into Cain's vacant eyes. As Lee Shin remained motionless in the chair, Cain fell onto his knees before him.

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'Shit... He's so fast that I can't even counter his attack properly...'

Was this the difference between a ranker and a top ranker? Cain never thought he would be humiliated like this by a mere beginner who had just reached the 50th floor. Of course, the body confronting Lee Shin at the moment was Cain's clone. However, even this clone possessed 50% of Cain's strength.

Cain thought he would be able to escape at least, if he found an opportunity. However, he soon figured out that it was a ridiculous idea. Initially, he even thought about whether he should have actually come himself; though that thought did not last long. Besides, he had decided to send the clone in anticipation for a situation like this.

"I... I will tell you everything," said Cain.

"What are you talking about?" Lee Shin asked.

"I'll tell you everything I know," Cain replied.

"Then speak," said Lee Shin in a cold voice.

Cain spoke about everything within his knowledge. It was presumed that a bounty was placed by an apostle, but Cain did not know which God's apostle it was. Fortunately, Lee Shin had a way to figure out who that was, because Cain had a meeting arranged with the guy on Island 100. That was all that Cain could say.

"It's not particularly helpful," Lee Shin commented after hearing Cain's words.

"...But, if you let me go, I'll take you with me to Island 100," Cain replied.

"Why should I trust the guy who sent a clone because he was afraid of me?" Lee Shin scoffed at his words and glared at him.

When Lee Shin said that, Cain's eyelids twitched.

"I've heard that you guys are the real owners of the three major businesses on Island 43. Is that right?" Lee Shin asked, looking at Cain.

After hearing Lee Shin's question, Cain's face became expressionless. This time, Cain was truly taken aback, but he tried to maintain a poker face. Besides, Cain was curious as to how Lee Shin found out, because Lee Shin was someone who had only just reached the 50th floor.

Even if Lee Shin had asked Vuela and Alice to find out about it, it had only been a day or two since they had messed around on Island 43. It was impossible to know so much in such a short time. In that case, it was likely a bluff.

However, unlike what he expected, Lee Shin's calm gaze was filled with conviction. Seeing that, Cain could not easily brush his comment off.

"Hah... But how did you know that?" Cain asked Lee Shin.

"That's something you don't need to know. Give up your ownership of Island 43. If you can do that, I will spare your life," Lee Shin replied.

"What are you saying! That's too much to ask for..." Cain grumbled.

"Ha!? Don't you remember inciting bounty hunters and targeting the Earthlings to capture me?" Lee Shin laughed at Cain.

"Even if that's true, I can't do that for you," Cain replied.

Cain could not concede this. The scale of the points that he earned on Island 43 was quite impressive. Even if he had to give it up eventually, it would cause an uproar within the Platinum Group for him to do it so easily.

Moreover, those who followed the Platinum Group could rebel and leave if Cain decided to give away his ownership like this. Cain did not know how Lee Shin managed to find out about this, but he had to negotiate his way out.

"Then, I'll kill that clone and take over with my own power," Lee Shin said.

In response to Lee Shin's firm attitude, Cain was startled and instinctively gathered his mana.

"Wait, why do you want to take over Island 43? We need to know the reason behind your request in order to negotiate," Cain said.

"I have no reason to tell you, so make a decision. You will either have to give it up, or face me," Lee Shin said with a smirk.

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After finishing his conversation with Cain and returning to his room, Lee Shin checked all the messages he had ignored earlier. He responded to each of them. Originally, he had no intention of contacting anyone else, but his thoughts changed after the conversation with Cain.

"Hmm... It's finally here," Lee Shin muttered as he saw a message from Genia.

When Lee Shin came back after the meeting with Cain, he noticed that Genia had also contacted him. After sending her the time and place to meet, Lee Shin infused mana into the ring and necklace.

The next moment, the shimmering light inside them burst out, and soon the figures of a middle-aged Elf and a Goblin appeared.

"Hmm..." Sevrino admired the luxurious interior of the Feix with awe.

"Hieeek!" Sarzago, Sevrino's assistant, jumped in surprise and looked around.

"Where are we? This place looks so n—" All of a sudden, Sevrino stopped talking.

While Sevrino was speaking, he looked out the window and gulped. Seeing the whole of Island 5 in plain view from the high-rise, Sevrino could instantly figure out where they were.

"No way... Are we at the Feix right now?" Sevrino asked excitedly.

"Yes, we are at the top floor of the Feix," Lee Shin replied.

"Wow..." Sevrino seemed amazed.

Sevrino had only heard of the Feix but had never seen it with his own eyes before. That was because he had no reason to go up to the 50th floor in the first place. Seeing that Lee Shin had summoned him, it was certain that he was on the 50th floor, and if the accommodation was this good, it had to be the Feix.

"Wow... H-how many rooms are there?" Sarzago looked around with an amazed expression.

"Rest well today, because starting from tomorrow, we will set up a laboratory and start the actual work," Lee Shin said.

"Understood," Sevrino replied.

Sevrino lay on the bed, enjoying its comfort. The furniture in Sayr's castle was great as well, but he did not truly feel comfortable because his mind was never at ease. However, now, things were different. Sevrino felt like he could truly relax here.

Grrr—

Sevrino was startled by the abrupt sound of his own stomach growling and looked at Lee Shin.

"Mr. S-Sevrino, you must be really hungry. W-Well, I guess it's about time to get hungry. I'm actually hungry too," Sarzago said and laughed.

Lee Shin smiled at the two and gestured toward one side of the wall.

"If you press the button over there and say what you want, it will be brought to you," Lee Shin said.

"If I can say what I want... Does that mean I can ask for anything?" Sarzago looked surprised.

"Yes, you may ask for anything," Lee Shin replied.

"Well then, I want a jelly crab, fully cooked, with fully ripped Regna leaves from the Lizardmen's swamp..." Sarzago said.

Excitedly, Sarzago recited the instructions for the food he desired, and upon hearing the answer that they could get it served, Sevrino also began to blurt out all the food he wanted.



'Eat your fill.'

Lee Shin gave them time to enjoy themselves because he knew that this luxury would soon be gone. The Dimension Gate would open in two days, and it would bring a bigger storm than ever before. Besides, the two of them had to be the ones to create that storm.

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The White Elf officers who were gathered at the Defense Force headquarters were conducting a meeting. There was a serious atmosphere.

"The Dimension Gate will open in two days."

"Every year around this time, it gets chaotic, but this time it seems to be even more chaotic."

There were only two days left until the Dimension Gate opened, meaning the Defense Force had to restore order to Islands 1 to 10, which would become more tumultuous. It was their duty as well as their mission.

"There are unusually many challengers gathering this time."

"That's a common occurrence. There's nothing new about it."

"It's just a bunch of small fry. So, we don't need to worry about them." Versia, who was sitting in the highest seat, spoke in a low voice that resonated throughout the room.

His words drew the attention of everyone present.

"However, it is predicted that there are four top-ranker individuals in the Lardel Archipelago. No, there will be five actually, including the newcomer," said Versia.

Versia's voice was filled with annoyance and displeasure. Among the officers, those who sensed it were cautious in their responses. However, amid this tense atmosphere, one of the Elves stepped forward.

"We need to make sure that the top-ranker individuals remain as allies, not enemies," said the Elf.

The Elf who rebuked Versia's hostile attitude toward the top rankers was Genia. There was no other Elf who could speak to Versia in this manner.

"When did I ever say I would treat them as enemies?" Versia's voice remained calm, but Genia could sense the suppressed anger in his voice.

"I just mentioned it again, because we should not forget our duties because of our emotions," said Genia.

Crunch—

The sound of his teeth grinding echoed in the room.

"Hey Genia! Are you saying that Versia will forget his duties?"

"You are going too far. You shouldn't have said that to him."

"Are you showing arrogance just because you've gained some status? Mind your attitude."

Versia's closest aides lashed out on Genia. Compared to Genia, the high-ranking White Elves in Versia's faction were much older, making her seem like nothing more than a young novice.

"Well, it's not like Ms. Genia misspoke—" An Elf tried to defend Genia.

"Enough." Genia raised her hand to stop the Elf who tried to defend her.

"Did I say something wrong? Think about who the most crucial figure in the Lardel Archipelago is at this moment," Genia continued, trying to show that she was taking a logical approach to this problem.

Her fiery gaze swept across the officers, landing on Versia for a second.

"Isn't it Lee Shin? He was the first one ever to become a top ranker on the 50th floor. Besides, it's not just him. As I said earlier, it is estimated that there are four more top-rankers in the Lardel Archipelago other than Lee Shin. The likelihood of them approaching Mr. Lee Shin is quite high. So, we need to find out the whereabouts of the other top rankers using Lee Shin and prepare accordingly," Genia tried to explain her logic.

All of the Elves present already knew about the impact and power of the challenger named Lee Shin. However, Lee Shin was seen as a reckless person that even Versia could not do anything about. Besides, who could control this challenger, who was not only a top ranker but also one who might rise even higher in the future?

"It is easier said than done, Genia. If you are so confident, then why don't you show it to us? If you can negotiate with Lee Shin successfully, I'll grant you the authority to use the Seed of Ardelgia," Versia sneered at Genia as he made this proposition to her.

Ardelgia was the name of the giant tree that was located at the center of Island 1. Under the protection of Ardelgia, White Elves grew stronger. Therefore, gaining the authority to use the Seed would mean an opportunity to expand the reach of Ardelgia's protection.

"But, on the other hand, if you fail in negotiating with Lee Shin, I'll strip you of the authority over Islands 11 to 20," said Versia. Those islands were also known as the second district.

Versia was very assertive in his stance. In fact, he was very confident that she would not accept this proposal. Taking away the authority over the second district would be quite detrimental to her.

Even if she agreed to accept his offer, it did not matter to him, because he thought that Genia would not be able to win this bet anyway. Just like Versia expected, Genia could not respond immediately, as she was lost in deep contemplation.

"Why would you say something that you can't even handle easily—" Versia tried to mock Genia.

"I will do it," Genia replied.

Genia ended her deliberation and cut off Versia's words.

"What did you just say...?" Versia could not believe what he just heard.

"I said I'll do it. I'll accept your offer. If I fail, I'll relinquish all authority over the second district," Genia replied with confidence.

Versia's eyebrows furrowed as he listened to her bold acceptance, and a slight smile appeared on Genia's face.