

## The Tower 169

### Chapter 169

Lee Shin climbed onto Veck Jack and looked down at the ground. In the man's hand was a gun of uncertain size, resembling either a pistol or a rifle. His long hair was roughly tied back, and his unkempt beard added a rugged touch to his face. Suddenly, mana began to gather again in the gray barrel of the gun. Lee Shin's senses heightened, allowing him to perceive things he couldn't sense before.

‘Was he trying to diminish my cognitive ability?’

Whatever the man was doing, he failed to deceive Lee Shin for long. Something that had been concealing the man's mana waves seemed to have dissipated during their last exchange. Aware of the imminent danger, Lee Shin knew he had to block the man's attack. Suddenly, the slide on the gun moved back automatically, and a massive bullet flew out of the muzzle.

Baaang—!

The shooting was so loud that Lee Shin wondered if this was really a gunshot, as it sounded more like cannonball firing. He straight away activated his transcendental class to counter the attack. He released his mana and scattered it into the air. Time slowed down, and he could even see the wind moving.

Bang—!

Then, once again, another shot rang out. To consecutively fire bullets with such power within such a short time was insane. The concentrated wind that Lee Shin had created exploded beneath the spinning bullets.

Brrrrrrboom!

Lee Shin had used his mana to counter the bullets' rotational force, which required a high level of mana control. He used his mana to congregate and condense air before giving it spin in the opposite direction to render the first bullet powerless. However, the following bullet flying toward him gained momentum in mid-air.

‘Does this one have wind attributes?’

Lee Shin noticed a layer of condensed air around the bullet. The second bullet got very close to Lee Shin in no time, passing by the first bullet.

‘His aim wasn’t me? It’s Veck Jack.’

In that brief moment, the man had realized Veck Jack’s speed differed from Lee Shin’s. In this situation, Lee Shin could not avoid the attack and had to confront the man. He created a steel shield and cooled the space above it. He then pushed the bullet down using Psychokinesis.

Crack—!

The bullet tore the steel shield like paper, but it slowed down consequently. The bullet only managed to graze Veck Jack’s leg, which melted from the great force.

Clack!

The man swiftly tossed the gun into the air and skillfully added new parts, which seemed to move like sentient beings, transforming it into a deadly sniper rifle. The man did not even load the bullets, as bullets materialized in the air and autonomously loaded themselves into the rifle.

Lee Shin knew that he would be in an unfavorable position if the man got into a sniping position. The easiest way to defeat a sniper was to not even let them get into a sniping position. An enormous amount of lightning energy gathered in the air, and thunderbolts fell on the man.

The man responded to Lee Shin’s attack by setting up a layered iron barrier in the air, deflecting the lightning energy. Lee Shin created a massive steel spear and thrust it downward at the man.

Baaam—!

The entire island vibrated. The ground trembled, and a gigantic crater formed beneath the man's feet. A white beam flew out of the settling thick dust.

‘Is he using the light attribute this time?’

The man was now using the light attribute instead of the wind attribute, showcasing his versatility in using multiple attributes. The bullet he fired sliced through the air, leaving behind a scorching trail. However, there was more to it than the light attribute; another attribute lurked within the bullet. Undeterred, Lee Shin concentrated his mana and created a thick barrier in the air.

Pizz—

However, the barrier shattered easily, much to Lee Shin’s disappointment. The fragments of the shattered mana barrier scattered and disappeared. Furthermore, the bullet with the light attribute was still flying toward him, aiming to kill him.

‘It’s the demonbreaker’s bullet...!’

This hidden attribute was extremely destructive, capable of destroying even mana. A wizard with weak physical abilities would be helpless against this bullet and die. Even Lee Shin hadn’t expected to ever fight someone capable of using the demonbreaker attribute. It was the stuff of legends.

Crunch—

Lee Shin clenched his teeth and used his Transcendence to pour out as much mana as possible to cause an explosion in the air. He knew that the bullet was enveloped in a light attribute barrier, but he had no choice but to make a move, despite knowing it could be useless.

Lee Shin twisted his body desperately, narrowly evading the bullet. Luck played its part as the light attribute bullet's trajectory wavered, sparing his heart but hitting his left shoulder. Thankfully, the explosion had succeeded in altering the bullets' path slightly.

Lee Shin's Health Points plummeted from the injury, and his left shoulder became immobile. He promptly retaliated with a relentless barrage of lightning energy toward the sniper's location.

Baaaam—!

Thick black smoke billowed, engulfing the surroundings and obscuring the view. The ground became a haze of dust, and even the nearby grass caught fire, sending dark smoke spiraling upward. The opponent's counterattack came to a halt.

His mana waves still detected the opponent, so he knew the man was alive. Besides, Lee Shin knew that someone at that level would not die so easily. However, he thought the man's condition would be far from good. And because of the intense danger that Lee Shin felt, he decided to release his mana wholeheartedly.

'Shall I go down and take a look?'

In the blink of an eye, Lee Shin descended with Veck Jack, and the flapping of its enormous wings dispersed the smoke, revealing the man. The thick steel that surrounded him melted away under Lee Shin's mana. The man's leather clothes were charred, and he appeared tattered.

The man glared at Lee Shin, clearly aggrieved. Well, considering that the man had failed to capture a wizard despite having the demonbreaker and light attributes, it was understandable that he could be frustrated.

Encountering the demonbreaker attribute had left a lasting impact on Lee Shin. The power to disrupt mana was not to be taken lightly, and most challengers couldn't withstand it. Moreover, if the man wanted to, he could easily eliminate any challenger, regardless of whether they were a wizard or not. In fact, for the first time since encountering Geraldine, Lee Shin genuinely felt that this situation could have been dangerous.

Lee Shin's Transcendence, luck, physical abilities, mana control, judgment skills, and so on were required to prevent the bullet from piercing his heart. The opponent's bullet would have pierced his heart if he lacked any of them. It seemed like the man couldn't move due to the recoil from using the demonbreaker attribute.

The man hadn't set up a proper defense to counter Lee Shin's magic; therefore, the damage acquired exceeded the man's expectations. At the start, Lee Shin had no intention of killing him, intending to reveal his power and negotiate from an equal position.

However, the man unexpectedly had the demonbreaker attribute. The demonbreaker attribute was too dangerous for him to deal with because, with this attribute, it was impossible to remain unscathed.

Thud— Clank!

A harsh metallic sound came from behind him, somewhere far away. A thick steel cannon was firmly lodged into the ground, aimed toward Lee Shin. Behind the cannon, a muscular Dwarf with a beard was cursing and scowling at Lee Shin.

"You damn bastard! What the hell do you think you are doing, barging in out of nowhere!" shouted the Dwarf, glaring at Lee Shin.

Lee Shin smirked at the sight and approached the Dwarf. The gunner lying on the ground struggled to stand up upon seeing that.

"Don't... Don't mess with the elderly man..." said the man.

The man pointed his gun at Lee Shin, but he remained composed. Judging from the man's condition, he couldn't use the demonbreaker attribute right now. Therefore, the bullets he would fire in that state did not threaten Lee Shin much.

Somehow, it felt like Lee Shin had become the antagonist. The battle between top rankers had placed him on an equal footing with the man, but since Lee Shin was the intruder, he appeared as the villain. Although his shoulder was also messed up, he could not help feeling a little sorry.

"Hello, Sir, please calm down. I did not come here to fight..." Lee Shin said, looking at the elderly Dwarf.

Lee Shin spoke calmly, trying to create a peaceful atmosphere.

"Who the hell are you, barging in like this and causing a ruckus? And you're saying you didn't come here to fight after making all this mess?"

Lee Shin did not know how to handle this situation. He hadn't intended to make things difficult, yet the fight escalated beyond his expectations. By the looks of it, the gunner seemed to have a special relationship with the elderly man.

In this case, Lee Shin could not kill the gunner or force the gunner to come with him. Therefore, he just turned toward the gunner with a wry smile.

"Hahaha... Let's forget about what happened, considering we both got hurt," Lee Shin said.

The gunner's face distorted. Lee Shin, however, believed that it was all okay since they both had gotten hurt.

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After managing to persuade them with great difficulty, Lee Shin was able to go to the cabin where they lived. This cabin looked like an ordinary house from the outside. However, as someone who knew how incredible Vian Stiger was, he could not believe that Vian was living in such a house.

Lee Shin suspected that Vian's real residence was hidden, but he was just satisfied with being able to converse with Vian.

Ptui!

Laurent, the gunner, was ranked 912th among the top rankers; he was spitting blood. The one standing next to him was the elderly muscular Dwarf, Vian Stiger, the hextech mage Lee Shin had fervently sought.

Thud.

Vian placed a teacup on the wooden table with great force. Then, he stared at Lee Shin.

"Drink this," said Vian.

"Thank you," Lee Shin replied.

There was a leaf floating on the tea. As Lee Shin smelled the fragrance of the tea and took a sip, he felt his mind and body calming down.

"So, what brings you here?" Vian asked Lee Shin.

Lee Shin knew he had to tread carefully. Despite their rough first meeting, he had a plan to win Vian over. He understood the pain of Vian's past—deceived by gods, betrayed by comrades, living in isolation. Therefore, Lee Shin planned to touch upon those memories and connect with him.

"Well, well." Lee Shin cleared his throat lightly and recalled the past.

Lee Shin had a similar painful past—oppressed by the gods, unjustly imprisoned in the Tower, and losing his comrades. He had ascended the tower with mighty determination only to realize that at the top, he only had one choice: Either become the gods' lackey or die.

"I... I lost my comrades and family to the gods," said Lee Shin in a poignant and anguished voice.

The abrupt change in the atmosphere made Vian and Laurent's gaze sink.

"They oppressed and threatened my people. That's why I decided to climb the Tower," Lee Shin continued.

As Lee Shin recalled the past, he started to become emotional. This wasn't a show, so there was no need to make up stories or pretend to be emotional.

"One by one, they died... So I lived to my fullest, sacrificing myself to save those few people on the verge of death. But the words of the gods were nothing but empty lies," said Lee Shin.

Vian's cheeks trembled, and his face was filled with anger.

"I don't want to be fooled by the gods anymore. I'm going to kill them. So please help me," said Lee Shin desperately.

Lee Shin explained his situation, and his sincerity seemed to have reached them because Laurent's cold expression melted. Besides, Vian's eyes were filled with sympathy for Lee Shin.

"Hmm... you're telling the truth," said Vian.

The gem on Vian's necklace glowed blue and returned to its original state.

"The gods will close the Dimension Gate within five years," Lee Shin added.

"What did you say?" Vian was shocked to hear that.

Vian frowned at Lee Shin's words and fiddled with the necklace again. The gem in his necklace shone blue again before returning to its original state.

"Huh..." Vian wondered if his necklace was working okay.

"Is that true?" the man asked Vian.

Judging by their reactions, it seemed that the necklace could detect lies. Lee Shin wondered if such magical artifacts existed. However, he soon thought it could be possible because he did not know about all the equipment.

"And tomorrow, Versia will lead the Defense Force and attack this place," Lee Shin said, looking at the two.

"What!" Vian shouted in anger.

"What the hell are you talking about...!" the man also shouted in shock.

Both of them sprang to their feet, slamming the table in surprise. The necklace Vian wore glowed red this time. Lee Shin was testing if it truly detected lies, noting that blue signified truth and red indicated falsehood.

"I'm just kidding," Lee Shin quickly said.

The duo glared at him with a bewildered expression. Lee Shin hoped that he did not ruin their relationship by carrying out that experiment.

"Haha... The atmosphere felt too down, so I tried to lighten it up," Lee Shin said.

He came out with a hasty excuse, but they were still glaring with anger.

"You damn bastard," Vian muttered, looking at Lee Shin.

Vian, the hextech mage, swore and sat back down. Laurent also managed to calm himself down and sat down next.

'Hmm...'

However, Lee Shin's curiosity about the necklace kept growing, annoyingly enough. If it could detect lies, there must be a limit to the number of uses or the amount of energy consumed.

'Should I check it one more time...?'

Lee Shin glanced down and looked at Vian's necklace again. He felt a sharp gaze suddenly. Something told him that if he continued, he would be kicked out.

"Ahem... So what I'm trying to do is make their act of closing the Dimension meaningless," Lee Shin said.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Vian asked Lee Shin, looking confused.

"I am going to make semi-permanent activation equipment for the Dimension Gate," Lee Shin replied.

Vian's eyebrows arched, seemingly asking Lee Shin to explain this nonsense.

"You must be crazy," said Vian.

"If you help me, Sir, it will be possible," Lee Shin replied.

Vian's face turned serious, meaning he was actually considering it. Besides, Lee Shin thought there was no turning back if they had come this far in their conversation.

'Most of the preparations are almost complete.'

The remaining plan in Lee Shin's mind was the attack on the Defense Force using Laurent and securing the Seed of Ardelgia.