

## **The Tower 178**

### Chapter 178

"Run, everybody!" Kim Kang-Won shouted.

The Korean Task Force rushed to the large common area that they had discovered earlier. It was a vast space that could accommodate hundreds of people, featuring a stadium-like arena surrounded by spectator seats. Unlike other areas, the ceiling here was exceptionally high.

Baaam—!

After stepping inside, Kim Kang-Won slammed his palms to the ground. A massive ice staircase materialized from the floor, reaching the ceiling.

"Go up! Quickly!" Kim Kang-Won shouted.

Thud!?

Thud!

Thud!

They could feel the intense vibrations originating from the corridor. Cha Yu-Min had reached the 80th floor and used to be the strongest Earth top-ranker; however, the challengers here were sure he wasn't this strong before.

'It must be him...'

Kim Kang-Won thought about the man with the eagle mask who had kidnapped the challengers not long ago. He had created the black hole that had sucked Cha Yu-Min into it. However, the black hole in the Auction House had seemed much stronger than it, and even Yu-Min seemed stronger than before.

'The shadow is gradually overtaking him.'

Cha Yu-Min could never achieve this while he had been in his right mind. Kim Kang-Won had heard that the shadows could go rogue and out of control. This situation matched the description perfectly.

Clang!

Kim Kang-Won aimed his gun at the entrance of the large common area.

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump...

The sound of footsteps grew faster.

'He's coming.'

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

The bullets struck the shadow, but as if hitting air, they disappeared helplessly. Cha Yu-Min got close to Kang-Won and instantly struck him.

"Keugh...!" Kim Kang-Won groaned in pain.

[Ice Rage]

Shards of ice flew from all directions, attacking Cha Yu-Min.

Click—

Kim Kang-Won pulled a grenade from his pocket and threw it at Cha Yu-Min.

Boom!

The ice shards retreated to create a hole; the grenade went in through that. It exploded, and the flames enveloped the shadow.

"Kieeeeeek!" Cha Yu-Min groaned in pain.

It was not the voice of a human; it resembled a monster's agonized scream. Kim Kang-Won trembled at the eerie sight as a rope descended from above.

"Team Leader, grab on to it!"

Baaam—!

An explosion occurred on the ceiling, and debris fell as the heavy blizzard hit downward. Amidst the falling snow, a black shadow became clearly visible.

"Now, I can clearly see you, you bastard!" Kim Kang-Won shouted.

Kim Kang-Won climbed up, holding onto the rope. Cha Yu-Min jumped to follow him and attacked with his shadow sword.

[Ice Call]

The snowstorm falling from the sky turned into ice rain and attacked Cha Yu-Min. However, Cha Yu-Min managed to block them all. Afterward, passing by Kim Kang-Won, he stabbed the Task Force member holding the rope.

"Keuahh...!" the team member gasped.

Splash—!

The Task Force member's blood fell on the shadow, but Yu-Min just shook the blood off and charged toward another Task Force member.

'Damn it!'

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Cha Yu-Min had become nearly twice as powerful in every aspect, including speed, strength, and skill use. Therefore, the ordinary members of the Task Force were no match for him.

"Baek Kang-Woo!" Kim Kang-Won called out urgently as he saw Cha Yu-Min approach him.

Baek Kang-Woo had been dealing with the falling debris when he heard the shout, so he quickly blocked Yu-Min's attack.

"Hyung! Wake up! Look at me!" Baek Kang-Woo shouted, looking at Cha Yu-Min.

"Krrrr..." Cha Yu-Min, sadly, just growled.

Looking into Cha Yu-Min's darkened eyes, Baek Kang-Woo thought that his words could not reach Cha Yu-Min at all.

'Damn it. How did this even happen to him...'

"Everyone, climb up! We'll fight from within the blizzard! It will be a good place for us to hide!" Kim Kang-Won shouted.

Pizz—

- This is Saint. We've reached the target point.

- This is Charlie. I've checked that there was a ground explosion. I will snipe the target.

Kim Kang-Won and the team heard a transmission from a foreign Task Force. All of a sudden, Kim Kang-Won anxiously looked up. Baek Kang-Woo and Cha Yu-Min were engaged in a fierce fight there. They were fighting very close to each other; outside, someone had a gun aimed at them.

Clang!

There was a harsh metallic sound, followed by the flow of explosive mana energy through the barrel.

Bang—!

The distorted muzzle spat out a bullet, which almost instantaneously appeared in front of Cha Yu-Min's head.

"Kieeeeek!"

Baaam—!

The bullet hit Cha Yu-Min, and he fell to the ground.

"Step aside, and leave him to us. Now it's our turn to deal with him," said Natasha Polly, the German Task Force team leader.

She stood firm with a determined look.

"What do you mean you will 'deal with him?' He doesn't even seem bothered," said Baek Kang-Woo, looking at Cha Yu-Min.

Woong—

Cha Yu-Min, who had fallen to the ground, sprang up like a spring and started targeting Natasha this time.

"Move aside, you greenhorn," said a man, looking at Natasha Polly.

The man with spiky blue hair gave Cha Yu-Min a cold smile.

"Cha Yu-Min... I've always wanted to step on your face," said the man with a sly smile.

Jonathan, an American upper-floor challenger, looked at his rival with fiery eyes. As he clenched his fist in the air and pulled it closer to him, the stone and the rubble on the ground flew up and struck Cha Yu-Min.

"Kaaah!" Cha Yu-Min groaned in pain.

"You would've died if it weren't for me," said Jonathan as he pushed Natasha Polly aside arrogantly.

"Get lost. I wouldn't have died even without your help," said Natasha Polly, as if her pride had been hurt.

"Ha!?You have a huge ego," Jonathan muttered, looking at Natasha.

He had an arrogant face as if saying there was no need to fight a battle of pride with someone like Natasha Polly. Natasha, who did not like that look, activated her unique abilities. As the veins around her left eye popped out, Jonathan looked at her, intrigued.

As Cha Yu-Min tried to escape from the stones, the space around them began to crumple along with the stones. Surprised, Jonathan stared at Natasha Polly in amazement for the first time.

"Ha... Ha..." Cha Yu-Min seemed out of breath as he tried to escape their attacks.

Although his breathing sounded rough, Cha Yu-Min had already managed to shatter the stones and escape. However, the attack managed to create a tear in the shadow.

"Ha! See? You got nothing." Jonathan smirked and ridiculed her, but deep down, he had marked Natasha as someone to be wary of.

"Kiaahhh!" Cha Yu-Min landed on the ground and let out a fierce roar.

Amidst the raging snowstorm, black shadows emerged from all directions. The challengers from various countries surrounding Cha Yu-Min clenched their teeth in determination. Dozens of shadowy figures rose and attacked the challengers from all over the world.

'No way... He wasn't even fighting with all his strength until now? Unbelievable!'

Kim Kang-Won felt a surge of panic as he witnessed Jonathan, one of the world's best challengers, struggling to handle Cha Yu-Min. Despite his best efforts to restrain him, Jonathan could only hold him back for a few seconds.

Although Cha Yu-Min seemed hesitant and became slightly slower in countering them due to the attacks pouring from all directions, he soon began to target those who seemed relatively weak to break through.

"Keugh!"

"Kuk...!"

"Ron! Sienna!"

"Damn it! The weak ones need to step back right now!" Jonathan shouted in frustration.

"No! We should not be doing that! If people step back like that right now, our formations will be disrupted!" Kim Kang-Won shouted back.

"Just shut up! We will all end up dying while trying to protect the weak ones here! So stop talking nonsense and step back right now!" Jonathan shouted even louder this time.

Kim Kang-Won looked solemn. These individuals from different countries had never appropriately coordinated before, so the situation was chaotic. The lack of cooperation resulting from their unfamiliarity with working together created this situation. Additionally, each country's Task Force was only focused on its own gains, with no intention of coordinating.

Besides, they did not have much time left. The group that had pressured Cha Yu-Min earlier started to break apart, failing to maintain their cooperation. The arrival of support from other countries only worsened the situation, resulting in even more damage.

"Man... Why isn't he getting tired?"

"Hey! Don't expect things like that! Just fight as if you're going to kill him!"

"That is what I'm doing!"

At that moment, eight shadowy figures descended from the sky. As the white snow fog cleared up, they noticed that seven of the eight shadowy figures all had the same appearance.

'Huh...? That person is...'

The shadowy figures concealed their face and body, revealing only parts of their rough blue skin and snake-like pupils. Kim Kang-Won immediately had an assumption about their identity but couldn't be sure.



"Who are they? They look like humans, don't they?"

"Yeah, I think so too. But what's up with this guy? His power feels quite unusual..."

Cain looked around, noticing the dozens of humans. They all seemed to be on guard against him.

"Um... Well... Tsk,?I just realized that I can't communicate with them," Cain muttered, disappointed. Conversing outside the Tower was often quite challenging.

"What should we do? We need to ask where Lee Shin is..." Plea muttered with a worried look.

Stomp Stomp—!

As the two contemplated their next move, Cha Yu-Min attacked Cain. He instantly locked eyes with Cha Yu-Min. When his pupils dilated vertically, Cha Yu-Min flinched and froze momentarily. Using that opportunity, Cain punched him, sending Cha Yu-Min rolling into the underground base.

"What the hell? Did that challenger beat up Cha Yu-Min with a single punch?"

"Man... What's up with that guy?"

"Stay on guard, everyone. We can't tell if they're enemies or allies yet."

"Prepare to snipe!"

The others seemed intimidated by Cain and his power, but Kim Kang-Won stepped forward, stopping the others. Then, he put on the Translation Bracelet he had been carrying.

"Ahem... Ahem! Hi! Can you understand what I'm saying?" Kim Kang-Won said slowly, looking at Cain and Pleta.

Cain and Pleta looked at him with surprise, as they hadn't expected to encounter an Earthling who could talk with them.

"Do you know our language?" Cain asked Kim Kang-Won, puzzled.

"Oh, I actually have a translation device," said Kim Kang-Won.

Kim Kang-Won raised his arm to show the bracelet he was wearing.

"Phew... What a relief that I brought my translation device today. I almost forgot to bring it. It could have been a real disaster. You know... because we don't need translation devices in the Tower..." said Kim Kang-Won with a smile.

"That's right. I did not even consider bringing a translation device since I hardly ever leave the Tower."

"Are you Cain, the leader of the Platinum Group?" Kim Kang-Won asked Cain with a stern face.

"Yes, that's right," Cain replied.

"How did you guys end up coming here?" Kim Kang-Won asked again.

"Well... it's actually a long story. But to explain it briefly, we came here looking for Lee Shin," said Cain.

"Huh? You came to look for Mr. Lee Shin? Is Mr. Lee Shin on Earth right now?" Kim Kang-Won asked with a surprised look.

"Yeah, that's right," Cain replied.

The surrounding people who heard their conversation also could not hide their astonishment.

"What? Lee Shin came to Earth?"

"So, that guy is Cain, the leader of the Platinum Group?"

"Wait a second... But how did someone not even from Earth end up on Earth?"

Unable to understand what the others were saying, Cain gestured to Kim Kang-Won.

"Oh, it's nothing," Kim Kang-Won replied.

Thud. Thud.

Abruptly, loud noises resounded from behind. Cha Yu-Min, who had been hurled into the underground base, emerged before them once more.

"Man... I punched with all my strength, though. His resilience is quite impressive," Cain muttered, looking at Cha Yu-Min.

"Leader, we should deal with that guy before continuing our conversation. What do you think?" Plea asked Cain.

"Yeah, sounds like a plan," said Cain.

"Is that alright with you?" Plea asked, looking at Kim Kang-Won.

"Yes, you can do that. But please make sure not to kill him," said Kim Kang-Won.

"Ugh... You're asking for too much," Cain muttered.

Cain furrowed his eyebrows but did not refuse the request.

"I guess there are strong individuals other than Lee Shin on Earth," Cain said.

"This will be interesting."

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A gigantic Skeleton landed on top of a large Hindu temple in Barthala, India.

"Huh? W-what was that?"

"It's a monster! A monster has appeared!"

"We need to call Mr. Abitar!"

"Oh... Oh man... Dear Lord..."

Disregarding the turmoil, Lee Shin disembarked from the Skeleton and stepped into the Hindu temple. Indians attempted to obstruct his path, but their efforts proved futile. Employing his psychokinesis, Lee Shin effortlessly erected a barrier to deter them.

"Who are you?" An elderly man with a thick white beard approached Lee Shin and asked.

Lee Shin infused mana into the Translation Bracelet that he had received from Zhuge Yun.

"Where is your 'Deva?'" Lee Shin asked.

"..." The old man answered with silence.

The old man's expression had briefly hardened before returning to normal.

"He is our God. So it is not within my knowledge where he is," the old man replied.

Lee Shin chuckled at the old man's audacity and decided to activate his mana.

"Well, then, shall I go ahead and search for him?" Lee Shin threatened the old man and started using his mana.

Suddenly, the elephant statue placed beside him started floating.

"Hey! W-what are you doing!" shouted the old man in panic.

Then, steel appeared over the elephant statue and pushed it to the ground harshly.

Baaam—!

The pieces of the statue flew toward the old man, and the fall of the statue had created a hole in the ground, revealing what was beneath it.

"Go call Abitar right now! Hurry up!" The old man shouted.

"Yes, Sir!"

"Well, I guess there's nothing beneath us," said Lee Shin, looking at the hole.

"Aren't you afraid of the wrath of God?" The old man threatened Lee Shin, glaring at him.

"God? What has your so-called God done for you? Do you really think your God will save you?" Lee Shin laughed at the old man.

"We are but creations of God. We accumulate achievement as we go through reincarnation, hoping for a better life in the next round," the old man replied.

"Ha!?God cannot decide anything for us," Lee Shin replied.

"Don't insult God. It will only accumulate as bad karma," the old man replied.

Lee Shin gave up on conversing with the old man. The old man was not a suitable conversation partner in the first place.

"You will soon realize how vile and filthy the Gods you praise are," Lee Shin said with a smirk.

Lee Shin stated that because the Gate to Earth would soon open. He contemplated whether the old man could maintain such confidence when confronted with interdimensional monsters invading Earth.

[Drill]

The trunk from the broken elephant statue began spinning; its tip soon became sharp and pointy.

Zzzzz—

"Hey! Stop destroying the temple!" The old man shouted at Lee Shin when he saw Lee Shin destroying the floor again.

The complete destruction of the floor revealed another space. It had a completely different atmosphere from the upper floor.

"Did you hide them here? I'm talking about the challengers," Lee Shin glared at the old man as he asked.

Lee Shin could finally sense the barrier inside, which blocked mana. Indeed, this was the headquarters of Reverse.