

The Tower 179

Chapter 179

Even the barrier couldn't block the dark aura of the sinister people hiding inside.

'This is...'

Lee Shin was trying to analyze the familiar dark aura when he sensed the commotion above from those outside trying to catch him. Therefore, he quickly used magic to embed the elephant statue into the cracked ceiling and covered it with the surrounding soil.

'They should stop them for a while.'?Lee Shin thought it would work as long as challengers didn't get involved.

'They sure love cosplaying.'

Sparks appeared on various spots of the wall before him, brightening the area slightly. The wall was filled with images of Hindu Gods and inscriptions in an unknown script.

'Could this be... an ancient language?'

Lee Shin had attempted to decipher ancient languages during his time on the first floor. Yet, he soon abandoned the endeavor due to their sheer abundance.

'How can something look so familiar and strange at the same time?'

Interpreting the inscriptions seemed impossible. As Lee Shin ventured further, he came upon a massive altar with various antiques on it.

"Who are you?" asked a man, looking at Lee Shin.

The man had walked out from behind the altar. He was wearing the familiar eagle mask. He was the mastermind behind the challengers' kidnapping incident and the leader of the organization called "Reverse."

'Well, well. I didn't expect to meet you again like this.'

This man was a human who had given Lee Shin quite a hard time in the past.

"That's something you should find out for yourself," Lee Shin replied coldly.

"Are you Lee Shin?" asked the man.

The response made Lee Shin think the man was quite perceptive, as he hadn't expected his name to appear so soon.

"Why do you think so?" Lee Shin asked back.

"Because I heard you've returned to Earth," the man replied.

"So, I guess you have spies all over the place?" Lee Shin asked again.

"Haha,?Reverse is worldwide," the man replied with confidence.

Reverse held far greater power and influence than most could fathom. Lee Shin was already aware of that. However, he also knew that the organization would crumble like a sandcastle once its leader died.

"Well, it's too bad that their leader would unexpectedly disappear soon," Lee Shin mocked.

"You seem very confident," the man replied.

"Well within reason," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin could hear the man chuckle from behind his mask.

"I've always wanted to meet you," said the man.

"Why is that?" Lee Shin asked.

"A mysterious Necromancer, a first-floor boss of an unknown origin, regained his senses one day and claimed to be a challenger from Korea. He then climbed the Tower and became the top-ranker. How could I not be curious?" The man replied.

As the man slowly walked up the altar stairs, he continued.

"Challengers are special beings. They successfully conquered many dreadful stages of the Tower, overcame trials, and achieved their goals, right?"

"Well, I think you're mistaken. The goal of the Tower is to reach the hundredth floor, not just the fiftieth floor or so," Lee Shin said to the man.

"That's also true. But aren't there also many losers who can't even achieve that?" the man asked.

Having reached the top of the stairs, the man started to touch the antiques. Lee Shin sneered because he could look through the man's trickery.

"Lee Shin, I thought you would be different—"

"I think you talk too much," Lee Shin said, cutting him off.

[Psychokinesis]

Lee Shin forcefully pulled the antiques that the man was touching, shocking the man. The man used his power to materialize a black hole in his palm. The black hole began pulling the antiques back, fighting Lee Shin's Psychokinesis.

[Blitz Gun]

Lee Shin believed there was no need to directly confront this man. Yet, as a golden blitz emerged from Lee Shin's fingertips, the man swiftly shattered an antique. Simultaneously, he conjured a much-stronger black hole in his other palm, which devoured Lee Shin's Blitz Gun.

Crunch—

Lee Shin could hear the man gritting his teeth under his mask. Of the ten antiques, he managed to grab eight, so the man only had two, one of which he had just destroyed. After putting all the antiques into the Subspace Pocket, Lee Shin laughed at the man.

"Well, sorry. It was too obvious that you were trying to buy time," Lee Shin said, looking at the man.

The man's unique ability let him draw power from objects to amplify his powers. In the past, this ability had taken down many challengers. Lee Shin's sudden arrival had likely prevented the man from absorbing power from the antiques beforehand.

The artifacts the man held weren't notably powerful. Even utilizing two artifacts like the Xuan-Yuan Sword wouldn't guarantee Lee Shin's defeat. Therefore, trying to confront Lee Shin with those two artifacts seemed like a ridiculous notion.

[Lightning Field]

His black lightning energy spread in all directions, surrounding the entire space.

[Dark Blitz Gun]

Soon after, he shot the dark blitz. Although the man quickly tried to summon a black hole to block Lee Shin's attack, the result could not be changed.

"Keugh...!" The man groaned in pain.

The man's face came to light as his mask shattered and the hood covering his head turned into ashes. His long black hair cascaded down. His pupils, glowing red, wandered for a moment before locking onto Lee Shin. Until now, everyone had assumed that Reverse's leader was a man, but it was a woman.

'Those eyes... I knew it.'

In the past, Lee Shin had killed her while trying to overpower her, so he had failed to sense it then. However, now, he could recognize the strange, sinister aura he had felt when he entered this place—death aura. A powerful demon soul was dormant within those glowing red pupils. As its host gradually lost control, the demon soul revealed its power.

'Well... Revealing your power is useless.'

Lee Shin drew Martyr from his waist. The demon soul trembled visibly upon seeing the blade's pure white gleam.

"S-Stop...!" cried out the woman.

Perhaps the mask also modified her voice, as she sounded nothing like the man from before. She sounded delicate, different from her old hoarse voice.

"Do you think it's possible?" Lee Shin asked Martyr, not the Reverse's leader.

- The demon soul is too deeply attached. The demon soul has dominated the host's body for so long; if we sever it like this, it might also harm her soul.

Lee Shin had two reasons for wanting to save her this time. First, he thought Earth could use her combat force. Second, he wondered if the demon soul infecting her was the reason for her evil nature.

He wouldn't have saved her if a demon soul hadn't been infecting her, regardless of her combat force. Because without it, she was just an evil human who had created a malicious organization that wanted to put one type of human above others. She would've been inherently wicked.

However, it was a different story if someone had manipulated her thoughts. Her heinous crimes might not disappear, but sincere remorse and repentance could lead to her living with the weight of those actions rather than escaping through death.

"Then what should we do?" Lee Shin asked Martyr.

- First, we need to separate her soul from the demon soul. But, it seems impossible with my abilities.

"Is there no other way?" Lee Shin asked again.

- Perhaps if a demon soul stronger than her tries separating it, it may work but...

"Really?" A thought just popped into Lee Shin's mind.

Lee Shin harnessed his Psychokinesis to immobilize her and locked eyes with her. The overwhelming force of the demon soul within her gaze was exceptional. He understood that this demon soul was likely beyond the control of most.

However, he had a demon soul perfect for the job: The devil that he had captured on the 29th floor in Isocia. Although she had fallen from the 72nd floor, Lee Shin could not ignore the caliber of power and achievements that she possessed.

[Necromancy]

Be careful. Necromancy can corrupt the sorcerer's mind!

Depending on your understanding of the demon souls, you can handle them more easily.

You can communicate with demon souls.

You can absorb demon souls.

You can summon the absorbed demon souls.

Lee Shin summoned the Great Devil Belial, whom he had absorbed in the past using necromancy.

‘Long time no see.’

Just restraining Belial with necromancy made Lee Shin more proficient in necromancy. While it seemed her resistance had waned after realizing she was only helping him get stronger, he knew that she still wanted to reclaim her body.

"Come out," Lee Shin said to Belial.

- You arrogant human, have you finally decided to willingly accept me after all this time?

A red soul hovering in the air glared at Lee Shin and spoke. Lee Shin replied with a wry smile.

"Don't talk nonsense, and look at her," Lee Shin replied.

- Do you think you can keep me captive forever?

Lee Shin could quickly tell that they could not have a proper conversation yet.

"Martyr," Lee Shin called out.

- Yes, Sir! Shall I kill her?

The cheerful tone sharply contrasted with the grim message it conveyed.

- W-w-what are you doing!

As soon as Lee Shin held Martyr close to her, Belial retreated, bewildered.

"Do you really think I kept you because I could not kill you? I am not the same as I was a year ago. You're not even the slightest threat to me," Lee Shin said coldly.

- Huh... huh....

After hearing Lee Shin's harsh words, Belial trembled as if her pride was wounded.

"Separate the demon soul attached to her body. Then, I will return your body," Lee Shin said.

- A-are you sure?

Belial looked at Lee Shin with surprise because of his unexpected words.

"We aren't the same, so I am not like you," Lee Shin replied.

- Make an oath under mana or something! Otherwise, I won't believe you.

"Fine, we will make a contract together then. If you remove the demon soul from her body and don't covet her body, I'll return your body," Lee Shin said.

- Hmph! Fine.

After finishing the contract with Belial by writing the oath under mana, Lee Shin put her inside the pupils of the fallen Reverse leader.

"Ugh...!" Reverse's leader began to writhe as if she was in pain.

- Do you think she would be alright?

"Well, there is nothing more I can do," Lee Shin replied.

If she ended up dying from this, it would also be her fate. This was all Lee Shin could do to save her. After struggling for about ten minutes, the color of her pupils turned black, then red and finally stopped flickering after turning red.

'Did Belial fail?'

Lee Shin really did not expect Belial to lose.

"Hahaha! You arrogant brat. How dare you try to defeat me!" cried Belial.

It seemed that she had won against the demon soul.

"Come out now, Belial," Lee Shin said.

As Lee Shin said that, Belial sneered at him.

"She has a remarkable body. Despite my class going up by one after absorbing the demon soul, she still accepted me easily... Besides, I'm amazed by her abilities. It would be great to use her abilities alongside my Illusioncraft."

She created a black hole with her hand. And soon, dozens of black holes appeared all around. Only one of them was real; all the rest were an illusion.

"Are you trying to break the contract right now?" Lee Shin asked Belial.

"Hmph, do you think I will fall for your deceitful words? How do I know for sure that you did not do anything to my body? Even if I regain my body, it's all useless if you kill me immediately!" Belial shouted at Lee Shin.

"All right. Just know that you broke the contract first," Lee Shin replied calmly.

Lee Shin pushed Martyr toward Belial's neck. However, Belial just smiled and did not avoid Martyr's blade.

"I'm aware that this insolent thing cannot cut down what's alive," Belial laughed at Martyr.

- D-d-did you just call me i-insolent?

Martyr stammered in shock.

"I've already become one with this woman. So there's nothing you can do about it now. Will you kill her with me?" Belial asked Lee Shin.

Lee Shin's expression stiffened at the audacious reply, and he stared at Martyr. Martyr also seemed frustrated.

- Ugh... Belial has latched onto her stronger than the demon soul from before. I'm sorry...

"That's all right. It's not your fault," Lee Shin replied.

Belial seemed to have tried to use her wits, but it was just a feeble attempt. After all, Lee Shin had already anticipated such a situation.

"Well, then I'll just kill both of you," Lee Shin said.

"Huh? What did you just say?" Belial started to panic.

Her surprise was evident in her voice. Ignoring her response, Lee Shin activated the Lightning Field once again.

[Dark Blitz Gun]

The magic had knocked down the woman a moment ago. Belial quickly summoned a black hole to block the Dark Blitz Gun.

"W-wait a second! Are you really going to kill us?" Belial started to stutter in shock.

Disregarding her words, Lee Shin pressed on with his assault, unleashing a barrage of spells and attacks. Surprisingly, Belial exhibited a level of proficiency with this skill that rivaled the former leader of Reverse. Yet, if Belial couldn't surpass that previous limit, her efforts would be in vain.

Belial tried to create confusion by creating black holes around Lee Shin, but it was futile trickery. Lee Shin's skill level far surpassed Belial's, making it difficult for her to overpower him. While attacking Belial, Lee Shin perfectly balanced offense and defense in the magical battle.

"I want to leave! I promise I'll leave!" Belial shouted in pain.

She had a composed tone before, but now she seemed to have forgotten all that as she pleaded on the ground. Lee Shin fired the Blitz Gun on her head.

"Keuahhh—!" Belial cried out in pain.

She was electrocuted, and her eyes rolled back. She did not actually lose consciousness, but she pretended to. When Lee Shin pressed Martyr against her neck, she quickly opened her eyes wide.

"Contract! I'll make a contract with you! I promise I will never ever take this body from you," Belial shouted.

"Fine. Also, don't mix lies into the contract because it won't work," Lee Shin replied coldly.

"Tsk." Belial clicked her tongue.

Belial entered a contract that prohibited her from taking over the woman's body or meddling in her affairs. After signing this contract, Belial released the mental interference, and the woman finally woke up.

"Umm..." The woman seemed confused.

Perhaps due to the presence of the demon soul inside her, her pupils were still red.

"Name," Lee Shin said, looking at the woman.

It was to confirm whether her mind was back to normal.

"It's Yu Jia," the woman replied.

Her pupils flickered with light. Finally, she regained her senses.

Pizz— Pizz—

A low-quality video was being broadcasted, showing numerous Indians prostrating on the ground in front of a collapsed temple.

"We will receive divine punishment! God will be angry!"

"Our bad karma has piled up. It's our fault for not protecting the temple well."

"Save us! Please save us!"

The live broadcast captured a variety of voices. The person behind the broadcast was a famous Chinese broadcaster, Liu Yi Tang. While traveling in India, he heard the news of the collapse of the Hindu temple and rushed here to start the broadcast.

'This is insane!'

A man and a giant Skeleton had abruptly arrived, and the temple collapsed soon after. The man had left the Skeleton at the temple entrance as he entered and still had not come out. Indian troops, who thought it was a terrorist attack, surrounded the area and waited for the man to exit. The broadcast spread rapidly in China, India, Russia, the United States, South Korea, Japan, and more.

"Chairman, please take a look at this. A challenger has attacked the Hindu temple in India," said a subordinate.

Jeon Jae-Yong, the Chairman of the Korean Challengers Association, turned on the broadcast clicking his tongue due to the sudden news.

"The world has gone crazy," Jeon Jae-Yong muttered.

The world was already in chaos due to Reverse, so he wondered who would dare to touch Hinduism. Considering the scale of Hinduism, it was evident that no matter how strong the challenger was, it would be difficult for him to be unscathed. Besides, many challengers practiced Hinduism.

"Um? Chairman?" The subordinate seemed confused.

"What now?" Jeon Jae-Yong was about to turn off the broadcast, so he asked without much interest.

"T-that man over there! Isn't that Lee Shin?" asked the subordinate.

"Lee Shin...? What did you just say? Lee Shin? You saw Lee Shin?" Startled by the name, Jeon Jae-Yong widened his eyes and looked at the screen again.

The low resolution and the distance made it difficult for Jeon Jae-Yong to confirm, but he could be sure. The purple hair and robe, the ability to handle that giant Skeleton, and the strength to single-handedly destroy a Hindu temple easily were proof enough.

'That is definitely Lee Shin... But then, how in the world is this possible?'

Jeon Jae-Yong suddenly felt light-headed. He could not be sure if what he saw was real.

"The Indian troops are trying to arrest Lee Shin," said the subordinate.

Hearing his subordinate's words, Jeon Jae-Yong came to his senses.

"Oh shit! Why are you hesitating while watching this?" Jeon Jae-Yong shouted.

"I'll immediately contact the Embassy!" replied the subordinate.

"What are you talking about?! Contact the government right now and request cooperation from the Prime Minister of India. Tell them it's my order," Jeon Jae-Yong shouted urgently.

"Understood!" The subordinate replied.

"And gather all the challengers who can cooperate in India or nearby and send them there right away," Jeon Jae-Yong continued.

"Yes, Sir!" The subordinate replied.

As his subordinate hurriedly left the room, Jeon Jae-Yong made a call somewhere, gritting his teeth.