

The Tower 190

Chapter 190

Two Gates of the Lostria Magic Empire were opened, one in the United States and one in China, as Lee Shin had predicted. The United States and China initiated exchanges with the Empire, and the WCA began to create global regulations for the use of magic.

"Ugh, tsk. The arrogance of these people is astonishing! They are utterly disregarding the potential of hextech!" Vian Stiger, who had crossed over to the Empire with the delegation representing Earth, expressed his irritation with a frustrated murmur.

"But aren't there things to gain from it as well in a sense?" Dr. Song Sotar, who accompanied him on the journey to the Empire, spoke with a slightly contented look.

"Tsk, it seems like they do possess abundant resources, but it's annoying how they constantly show their suspicion toward us!" Vian Stiger shouted.

"Yes, that's right. Even though we asserted our confidence in its effectiveness, their skeptical glances still annoyed me."

"Vian, it's not worth letting every little thing bother you," Yoon Sang, who had also crossed over with them, said in a composed manner.

"It seems like you're remarkably at ease. Are you finding excitement in the fact that those scums are teaching you magic?" Vian retorted.

"It's not like I'm learning it from them, so what's there to be excited about? But if I can reap some benefits from this situation, I don't want to waste energy on fussing over the small things. Besides... Judging by your temperament, I would advise you not to delve into politics," Yoon Sang advised.

"Tsk, you live like this?" Vian commented, shaking his head.

Contrary to Vian's irritation, the negotiations between the Empire and Earth had progressed very smoothly, and much faster than anyone had anticipated.

"The world is undergoing major changes." Yoon Sang, returning to Earth, found himself expressing emotions that he did not even realize he had as he gazed upon the view of Busan.

"Well now, if one cannot adapt, they will be left behind," Vian replied.

Yoon Sang nodded with a wry smile at Vian's words.

[You have entered the 65th floor.]

[Please make a selection.]

[Escort Mission / Convoy Mission]

"Convoy Mission." Lee Shin made his choice.

[You have selected the Convoy Mission.]

[You have become a delivery agent for the Space Delivery Center 'Quimoc'.]

[Deliver the 'Eternal Bead' to 'Razmo,' the Chief of the Gerg tribe on the planet Herte.]

This desolate land, a mix of gray and blue, was a world where cruelty thrived. In this place, slaughter was the order of the day; to its inhabitants, a tribe known as 'Gerg,' killing and getting killed were everything. Here, Lee Shin had to burst his way through the wriggling monsters to reach his destination.

"Are you the new delivery agent?"

When Lee Shin turned his head to see who was talking to him, he saw a man dressed in what looked like a robotic suit.

"How can you think of making deliveries without a battle suit...? That's quite impressive," the man said.

"Give me the goods," Lee Shin replied.

"Hey, you're quite impatient. Since you are new here, I will have to explain some things to you," said the man.

The man proceeded to brief Lee Shin about various things that he needed to do for the delivery.

"And lastly, put on this battle cap. If you want, you can detach the helmet automatically, but the cap will remain around your neck like a collar," the man added.

Following his instructions, Lee Shin placed the battle cap around his neck. When he pressed a button, the nano mechanisms automatically moved and transformed the cap into a helmet-like shape.

"Also, with this, you'll be able to communicate. And if you wish, you can return to the base. But you only have three chances. If something gets too dangerous, you can come back anytime using the battle cap," said the man.

There were only three chances to return. The difficulty level of the hell level on the 65th floor had become more difficult that such an offer was given, though Lee Shin did not intend to use the return feature.

"Well then, good luck to you. You'll have to find a path where there are no enemies," said the man.

When Lee Shin opened the small palm-sized container he had received from the man, he saw a small dazzling, shining bead inside. He placed the container into his Subspace Pocket and set off.

"Let's go, Veck Jack," Lee Shin said.

Veck Jack propelled off the ground and ascended into the air. At the same time, the monstrous creatures that sensed Veck Jack's presence began to approach them.

'We're going to break through them quickly.'

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Baaam—!

The outer walls of the building were shattered, and the Skeletons, somewhat hurt, landed in various spots.

"It's surprising you made it this far," Razmo said as soon as she saw Lee Shin.

"Nice to meet you Razmo, the Queen of Monsters," Lee Shin replied.

"Wow... you already know me?" Queen Razmo asked.

"Of course," Lee Shin replied.

The hell-level difficulty on the 65th floor was quite well known. Despite being a hell-level challenge, this floor had a systematic strategy that a challenger had come up with. Although this stage still had many variables and required high abilities, the clear rate was significantly higher on this floor, compared to that of the hell-level stages on other floors.

"What are you up to?" Lee Shin asked.

For some reason, she seemed to be in a good mood this time.

"Hurry up and give it to me," Queen Razmo said.

This floor was supposed to conclude by handing over the Eternal Bead to Razmo, the Queen of Monsters. However, there were times when Queen Razmo went berserk, and in those times, a battle to satisfy her was the only way to clear the stage. If she had been her berserk self, Lee Shin would have fought more comfortably. However, her mood seemed good today, as if she planned to just let Lee Shin move on once he handed over the package.

‘But I’m not planning on doing that.’

Lee Shin had another goal in mind. He wanted to defeat Queen Razmo and fulfill the conditions of [The Path to Become an Adversary].

[The Path to Become an Adversary]

Kill someone with a Divinity Class of 30 or higher (0/1).

Kill someone with a Divinity Class of 20 or higher (0/3).

Kill someone with a Divinity Class of 10 or higher (0/10).

Kill someone with a Divinity Class of 5 or higher (0/20).

* If all conditions are met, you will become an Adversary.

Lee Shin presumed that as the Queen of Monsters, her divinity class should be at least above ten.

"Do you want to have it?" Lee Shin asked.

"What did you just say?"

In response to Lee Shin's question, Queen Razmo let out a hollow laugh.

"Haha.?Aren't you an interesting one? Are you telling me to try to take that from you or something?" Queen Razmo asked.

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

"You're funny," Queen Razmo said.

She chuckled, and her hair stood. The strands of hair were like spears, dancing in the air.

'The physical abilities of the Queen of Monsters are incomparable to those other beings.'

Not to mention that she was the pinnacle of evolution among monsters; unforeseen abilities would come attacking her opponent at unexpected times.

'Of course, I'm planning on killing her before that happens.'

[Divine Realm Breaking Force]

The dense power of Transcendence weighed down on the atmosphere and clashed with her divinity class, lowering it.

"Keugh... How dare you...!" Queen Razmo glared at Lee Shin.

Her expression contorted, and she charged toward Lee Shin.

[Lightning Field]

[Thunderbolt Explosion]

[Shield]

Thunderbolts surged in all directions, followed by explosions. In the midst of this chaos, Queen Razmo's thorned tentacles that lunged toward Lee Shin were deflected by a shield.

"Argh! Damn it...!" Queen Razmo shouted.

[You have taken away Razmo's Strength.]

[Your Strength has increased by 1.]

[You have taken away Razmo's Agility]

[Your Agility has increased by 1.]

[You have taken away Razmo's Dominance]

[...]

Queen Razmo's face contorted.

As the battle raged on, the strange power of Lee Shin became more palpable. This insatiable force was as if devouring her, leaving behind a nasty sense of unease that was increasingly difficult to break away from.

'How dare you do this to me...!'

Though little by little, her strength was getting sucked away due to Lee Shin's power. Despite trying to remain composed, she only grew more anxious with this sensation that was clinging unto her. On the other hand, her opponent, Lee Shin, was at ease.

As time passed, he seemed to adapt to the battle, and his offense and defense were becoming more refined.

"Just die already!" Queen Razmo shouted at Lee Shin.

The next moment, Razmo threw herself down at Lee Shin. Her restlessness led to a poor decision. This was the dilemma that most who confronted Lee Shin experienced. Thanks to his ability to remember every single detail of what happened, Lee Shin remembered even the smallest habits of his enemies and was able to respond accordingly.

As time went on, the power of chaos allowed Lee Shin to steal more abilities from his opponent. Therefore, time was unequivocally on Lee Shin's side.

Crack—!

Lee Shin smirked. Suddenly, a steel spear emerged from a mana circle that had been created without her realizing, and pierced through her heart.

"Keugh..." Queen Razmo gasped in pain, and then vomited blood.

"My... children..." She called out to her subordinates, but there was no response from them.

In fact, monsters obeyed only the strong. The Queen on the brink of death was now nothing but their prey, their feed to help them grow.

"Farewell," Lee Shin muttered.

Splash—!

A fountain of blood erupted from her body, and Razmo collapsed weakly. Then, as she collapsed, a barrage of system messages poured in.

[You have acquired the 『Title - Monster Hunter』]

[You have cleared the 65th floor.]

[Your achievements will be...]

[...]

Kill someone with a Divinity Class of 10 or higher (1/10).

‘Well, it’s too bad.’

Internally, Lee Shin had hoped that Razmo’s divinity class would be above 20, but it was not the case.

To her credit, leading the monsters with a divinity class of merely above 10 was remarkable on its own.

"I'm going back," Lee Shin muttered.

The confrontation with Razmo took longer than Lee Shin had expected, owing to her extraordinary physical abilities, even in the absence of her divinity class.

"You have returned."

As soon as Lee Shin arrived at the Lardel Archipelago on the 50th floor, he headed straight to the Eternal Gate.

"It's not too late, right?" Lee Shin asked.

"No, you're good. The nobles have not arrived yet."

"Good." Lee Shin seemed relieved.

Now, there was a friendly showdown between the Lostria Magic Empire and Earth's representatives.

Gates had appeared, first in Korea, then in the United States and China. The envoys of the Lostria Empire had proposed friendly matches, in which representatives from these three countries would participate as representatives of the entire Earth.

The individuals from the Lostria Empire stated that they wanted to gauge the level the Earth's challengers were at, and the WCA accepted the proposal. Therefore, with five representatives from each country—Korea, the US, and China—they would do a total of three rounds of matches. Lostria also selected fifteen wizards to represent them.

Of course, not only Koreans but also individuals from other countries could participate as representatives of Korean challengers, with the approval of the Korean Challengers Association. The United States and China followed the same procedure for selecting their representatives. With that, fifteen representatives from each country were selected.

‘I recall that the result of these friendly matches pushed forward their invasion timeline.’

In the past, strong challengers were trapped within the Tower, and the ones who remained behind had to protect the Earth. However, they were defeated mercilessly. Not a single one out of the fifteen

representatives of the Earth had won the battle, when the Empire's Magic Vanguard had not even sent their strongest to represent them.

‘I won't let that happen this time.’

While the match with the Korean representatives was yet to come, today marked the start of the Chinese match. Even if Lee Shin was not going to participate in the match today, there was a need to be present and observe the combat force of the opponent and the representatives of Earth.

"Ah, hello Mr. Lee Shin," said Kang Sang-Jun.

As always, Kang Sang-Jun stood in front of the Eternal Gate as Lee Shin's assistant.

"Deputy Director, Kang Sang-Jun, are you not busy?" Lee Shin asked.

"Our Director told me to prioritize assisting you above all else," Kang Sang-Jun replied.

"...I think I've heard that exact phrase at least fifteen times," Lee Shin said.

Well, it was the exact same phrase all the time.

"Let's get going," said Kang Sang-Jun.

When they stepped outside, a helicopter was prepared there.

"We are planning to move to the location via our private jet," Kang Sang-Jun said.

"Can't I just ride my summoned creature?" Lee Shin asked.

"According to the world's rules, that is not allowed. If we arbitrarily grant exceptions for someone like you, Mr. Lee Shin, it would disrupt the order... Although, I guess it might be different in case of emergencies," Kang Sang-Jun replied.

"Alright then," Lee Shin said.

After Lee Shin and Kang Sang-Jun quickly got on the private jet, they set off for Nanjing, China. There was a massive arena, where scientific technology and hextech culminated. Powerful barriers were in operation to prevent sparks from flying into the audience, and the durability of the arena had been greatly enhanced.

"There are quite a lot of people here," Lee Shin said.

"People from all around the world have gathered here to watch this match," Kang Sang-Jun said.

In fact, this arena in Nanjing, China, was the world's largest national stadium and was capable of accommodating up to 200,000 people at once. When Lee Shin saw how crowded the stadium was, he was amazed. People seemed to be interested because the pride of Lostria and Earth were at stake in these matches.

The fervor was so intense that today had been designated a holiday throughout China. Broadcasting stations had brought in experts for commentary and analysis, engaging in heated discussions to predict the outcomes. The screens that were set up in all four directions allowed a close-up view of the arena, displaying the faces of familiar individuals.

- Hello, Mr. Samuel the Chairman of WCA! You seem quite tense as the match approaches. How do you see this match?"

A Chinese reporter asked Samuel in fluent English.

- I think it's a match that will not be easy to assess. We must not let our guard down.

Because Samuel's response was vague and formulaic, the reporter persistently asked other questions, but Samuel's response remained the same.

- Then, among the five Chinese representatives, who do you think is most likely to win?

To this question, Samuel hesitated for a moment and then gave a very surprising answer.

- I think it will be the challenger named Zhuge Yun. I think he has the best chance of winning.

Out of all the Chinese representatives, Zhuge Yun was evaluated to be in the third or fourth place among them. Moreover, his ranking was not even that high because he was still on a relatively lower floor in the Tower.

"I don't think the Chinese government would like that answer."

"That's probably what Chairman Samuel was going for."

Chairman Samuel was a sly person. Perhaps, since the ongoing feud between the Challengers Association and the government had not been resolved yet, he deliberately provoked them.

- Well then, what made you think that way?

The reporter's response was tinged with suspicion because Zhuge Yun openly opposed the Chinese government. All those who were steeped in Chinese ideology disliked him. On the other hand, those who did not buy into Chinese ideology supported the Chinese Challengers Association, of which Zhuge Yun was a significant figure.

- I believe the challenger named Zhuge Yun possesses exceptional abilities. While the other challengers might have strong combat prowess, they lack uniqueness. Besides, the representatives from the Empire are not opponents one should take lightly. That's why I've chosen to rely on Zhuge Yun's exceptional abilities as a variable that could bring about a change.

- Understood. Thank you for your time, Chairman Samuel.

The reporter hastily concluded the interview. As the screen switched, it showed the experts on the Chinese side shaking their heads.

- Chairman Samuel seems to not fully grasp the strength on the Chinese side.

- Yes, I think so too. Even judging by the rankings, Zhuge Yun is the lowest among the five.

- Since they are fighting against wizards, I think the four other challengers who use melee weapons are more likely to win than Zhuge Yun.

Watching the panelists' discussions, Lee Shin let out a chuckle. These so-called experts were humans who had not even climbed the Tower themselves yet. Theory and actual combat were entirely different. Those who had not experienced it would find it hard to grasp its essence.

"Let's get going. Chairman Samuel is waiting for us," Kang Sang-Jun said.

It seemed like Kang Sang-Jun had just received a message in the meantime as he rushed Lee Shin along.

"Alright," Lee Shin replied.

As Lee Shin turned his eyes to the arena, he could see the Empire's people gathered in the distance.

‘Let's see just how strong you guys are.’