

The Tower 198

Chapter 198

'Hmmm... Something's not right...'

Since everyone in the Lostria Magic Empire wielded and learned about magic, Lee Shin had imagined that the Emperor would be similarly skilled in magic as well. In fact, Lee Shin thought the Emperor was proficient in magic when he stood on the castle wall and caused a massive earthquake. However, the more Lee Shin saw the Emperor's magic, the more he felt something was awkward about it—as if a brilliant child was performing advanced magic without having gone through proper training.

'It's not like there's no one to teach the Emperor... Besides, there's also the Great Wizard, Para McMatain, around him, no?'

No matter how threatening the power of his magic was, wizards at this level of mastery were actually very easy to deal with. Taking away the control they had over their magic was as easy as picking up a coin on the ground.

Woong—!

Boom!

The Fire Strike hit the castle wall, destroying it and creating a fierce flame.

[Burn Fire]

The intense flames swelled, instantly forming a column of fire that covered one side of the castle wall. Those who were standing on top of the castle wall were busy trying to extinguish the flames on their clothes and escape by going down the castle wall. However, the Emperor, who was still looking at the flames, struck the castle wall with water elemental magic trying to put out the fire.

"You still have a long way to go, little one," Lee Shin said, looking at the Emperor.

After hearing Lee Shin's mocking words, the Emperor glared at Lee Shin, frowning.

"...You are the first one to talk like that to me, the Emperor of this Empire," the Emperor replied.

"...Well, does that bother you?" Lee Shin asked.

"No, rather than being bothered, I would say I'm more impressed," the Emperor replied.

The Emperor then smiled, revealing his white teeth.

"Does that mean you are a wizard too?" Lee Shin asked.

"Yes, I'm a wizard before being an Emperor," the Emperor replied.

The Emperor stared at Lee Shin with his green eyes shining.

"I have something to say to you, so can you stop the warriors of Earth for a second?" the Emperor asked Lee Shin in a calm voice.

"Why should I do that?" Lee Shin replied.

"Please," the Emperor said.

After saying that, the Emperor kneeled on the scorching castle wall. When Para saw that, he tried to help the Emperor up quickly, but he firmly stopped him.

"Leave me alone. I've already knelt thousands of times in front of a conman who was believed to be a god," the Emperor said to Para.

Lee Shin had not expected the Emperor to act this way. Just a moment ago, he had been casting magic spells in offense, but now he was on the floor, kneeling.

‘Well, I never intended to kill the citizens of the Empire anyway.’

Lee Shin stopped all the other challengers who were charging toward the castle wall.

"Yu Jia," Lee Shin called out.

"Yes," Yu Jia, who had been waiting near Lee Shin, came closer and responded.

"Go to the western and eastern gates and tell Cha Yu-Min and Kim Kang-Won to stop," Lee Shin ordered.

"Understood," Yu Jia replied.

Looking at the state of the southern gate, the conditions at the eastern and western gates were obvious. It was very likely that the challengers were overwhelming those places as well. Besides, with Cha Yu-Min's shadow skill, they might have even already broken through the castle wall.

"Lostria... will be subservient to Earth," the Emperor said.

Lee Shin did not expect the Emperor to say this before he even asked. He had not thought that the Emperor would so readily give in and humble himself toward Earth. Although Lee Shin was aware that there was probably no other way out, he had expected a last burst of fire from the Emperor.

"I actually realized from this battle that in order for me to protect this country, I should not hold my head up high," the Emperor said.

"What makes you trust us Earthlings? Earthlings might try to devour everything in the Empire," Lee Shin replied.

"I don't trust those Earthlings, but I trust you, Lee Shin," the Emperor replied.

"And why is that?" Lee Shin asked.

"I believe the existence of gods is probably not limited to this world. And, in that place called 'Astria,' there seem to be stronger gods, right? Do you have the confidence to protect Earth from those gods?" the Emperor asked Lee Shin with a serious look.

Lee Shin first asked a question to the Emperor, but he threw another question back immediately. There was a confident look in the Emperor's eyes, as if he was saying that Lee Shin's answer to that question would be his too.

"Well, you have no right to know about that. Besides, I never said that I would protect the Empire for you," Lee Shin replied.

After hearing these words from Lee Shin, the Emperor seemed worried.

"Besides, how can I trust the Empire?" Lee Shin added.

"If you want, I can step down from the throne as well. And you can establish the Emperor you desire. I don't mind becoming your hostage," the Emperor replied.

"Your Majesty! What are you saying? I would rather become a hostage," Para, who had been standing next to him, shouted in shock, trying to dissuade him.

"No, Your Majesty, no! I will go instead!" Ade McNaois shouted.

At some point, Ade McNaois, who had come up to the castle wall, knelt behind the Emperor. Laughing wryly, when Lee Shin looked within the castle wall, he noticed that all the wizards had gathered, all kneeling.

"They're quite funny," Lee Shin muttered and mocked them.

This was a touching display of camaraderie, but their past actions on Earth could not be forgotten that easily. However, if Lee Shin killed them all out of anger, he knew that it would be a foolish move.

"If you all wish, I'll take all of you hostages," Lee Shin said.

There was nothing else Lee Shin had to do now, because Lostria essentially became a colony of Earth. The rest of the work was now on the shoulders of Earth's experts, who had experienced countless events in the past.

In fact, for Lee Shin, the Emperor and Para McMatain, who was a Great Wizard, were sufficient as hostages, because he thought that those two were practically the entire combat power of the Empire.

'It seems like the Emperor has more potential than Para.'

With these individuals from the Empire, the combat power of Earth would become much stronger than before. This way, Lee Shin just added more might to confront the Apostles.

"Take everyone to Earth," Lee Shin ordered.

After restraining all the wizards with handcuffs that blocked their use of mana, they were placed onto Skeletons and headed for Earth.

After the tiresome battle with the Empire ended, Lee Shin began ascending the Tower once again. Through the recent fight against the God of the Golden String, he had become even more certain that he needed an absolute powerhouse to protect this world. Furthermore, he realized that he needed to find out exactly what the gods were trying to do and achieve.

'The Tower...'

That was the starting point of many changes to Earth, marking the end of this world as they had known it.

'I will have to reach the 90th floor at least for something to unravel.'

Lee Shin's transformation into a Great Wizard, his discovery of the gods' identities, and him stepping into the level of Transcendence had all occurred after reaching the 90th floor in his past life.

'I should not return to Earth until I reach the 80th floor.'

[You have entered the 70th floor.]

There were not many floors left before Lee Shin reached the 100th floor. He wondered if he would face off against a god on the 100th floor again in this life. Besides, he also wondered if the god who had fought him in the past would be waiting for him this time as well. What would happen if he killed that god? What would he be like at the end??

After the leaders of various countries at WCA held a conference, they decided to keep Pyon Dunaide on the Emperor's throne. They decided to get the active cooperation of the Empire and absorb the technology and know-how related to the enhancement of magical abilities, which had not been revealed until now.

It would be a superficial alliance with the Empire, that was in reality, more like the Empire was Earth's colony. Most of the core combat force of the Empire, the number one Magical Vanguard, moved to Earth and took charge of educating challengers and civilians who had a high likelihood of entering the Tower.

Most people thought they had turned the page on another transitional period, but the enemies did not grant them any time or peace. A Gate had appeared over the Comoro Islands in Africa.

Thump.

A devil who was entirely tinged with dark purple appeared out of the Gate. The surface of his writhing muscles undulated like liquid, and within them emerged a bald devil. Vibrant veins and ligaments protruded from the skin, forming a grotesque and monstrous appearance. Ronaz, a subordinate of Astaroth, looked around with a contorted smile.

"It seems like much of my power has been sealed. Is it because of a shortage of dimensional energy?" the devil muttered.

As he walked, there came a rustling sound—a man with a sunburned complexion appeared, strolling through the forest in light clothing.

"Hmm?" Upon spotting Ronaz, the man paused and gave a quizzical look. "What's that...?"

Whoosh!

Thud!

"Keaugh...!" the man screamed in agony.

Suddenly, a dark purple tentacle had stretched out and coiled around the man's neck, draining his life as it choked him.

Gulp— Gulp—

As the devil's muscles convulsed, the man's body shrank and crumpled, and he was thrown to the ground in an instant. Ronaz frowned as if he was dissatisfied, expressing his discontent.

"Consuming such a creature seems to help restore my strength to some extent, although quite slightly," Ronaz muttered.

Having realized that consuming humans would release his sealed power, Ronaz dashed out of the forest. Ahead of him was a beach, where numerous people were enjoying themselves on the sand.

"It seems like there are quite a few insects to have here," Ronaz said excitedly.

As Ronaz's body rolled up and swelled into a round shape, multiple tentacles burst out from his skin, snatching people away in a single motion.

"Ahhhh!"

"What, what's going on?"

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

"Run away, everyone!"

Amidst the chaos that engulfed the beach, Ronaz devoured the people. He felt his power recovering to some extent and continued to grow in size.

"Come out," Ronaz ordered.

When he said that, strange-looking dogs emerged within him and started running in all directions.

"Keaugh!" the people screamed in panic.

The dogs leaped with incredible speed, as if they did not want to let a single human escape their grasp. Then they swiftly tore at the humans' necks.

"Isn't there anyone more delicious?" Ronaz muttered.

Within a few minutes, Ronaz had devoured over a hundred humans, and then he started to move toward a village where many humans lived this time.

"Here, the scent of humans is much stronger," said Ronaz.

Just like his senses had told him, there were a few times more humans than there were at the beach.

"Devour them all. And let's expand our power here," Ronaz said with a smirk.

The demons multiplied immediately. Ronaz was the Devil of Reproduction. The demons poured out nonstop and people were slaughtered by these demons one after another in rapid succession. Among these people were challengers as well.

A challenger named Ukama, who lived on the Mayotte Islands, felt the turmoil and rushed toward Ronaz.

"When did this monster come here...!" the challenger muttered.

Having witnessed the tragedy that had occurred in Hawaii, Ukama, who had sworn not to leave Mayotte, was determined. The absence of a challenger was extremely fatal to a small island like this. If he could not buy even a moment of time, numerous people would be wiped out in an instant.

The muscular monster, with his deep violet body fully exposed as he parked himself in the center of the village, looked like a creature from the game "Space Craft."

'Is that the main body? More monsters keep coming out from there.'

Ukama thought that he would have to destroy that main body in an instant and eliminate the remnants.

"Hup!"

Swinging a staff in the air, he emitted mana. A circular mana ring formed along the end of the staff as it spun and hovered in the air, emitting a pale green light.

"Die!" Ukama shouted.

As the staff spun vigorously, along with the mana ring, it tore through a portion of Ronaz's body. Roaring in pain, Ronaz spotted Ukama and immediately extended his tentacles to attack him.

Swoosh— Bang!

Ukama evaded the tentacles by jumping, and the tentacles repeatedly hit the ground in vain. The asphalt floor struck by the tentacles cracked, and debris flew up. Having assessed Ronaz's condition, Ukama became certain.

'He is slower and weaker than I thought. I can kill him.'

Ukama picked up the hovering staff and wrapped it with mana once again. In the meantime, the injured parts of Ronaz's body were slowly regenerating, perhaps as he consumed the people around him.

'I'll kill him in one go.'

The tentacles headed in Ukama's direction once again. With agile movements, Ukama evaded the tentacles and swiftly approached the main body.

Woosh—!

He leaped four times in rapid succession, stepping on the ground, rocks, and the walls of buildings. Ronaz, flustered by this seamless agility, hurriedly added more muscle to his body to enhance his defense. However, it was already too late. Ukama's staff had already pierced through his skin.

"It's ove— Keugh!" Before Ukama could even finish talking, he gasped in pain.

Swoosh—

Ukama felt a chilling sensation below his neck. His control over mana was rapidly deteriorating. When he lowered his head, he could see a sharp claw protruding from his heart.

Drip... Drip...

Drops of blood fell from his mouth onto those claws.

‘When did he...?’

Swoosh—!

As Ukama turned his head to see the face of the one who had stabbed him, his body collapsed weakly, being drawn into the muscles of Ronaz.

"You came too late. I nearly died." Ronaz peeked out from the muscular mass and said to the devil he had created.

"Well, you didn't die yet, so we're good. Heh heh," The devil with black horns on his forehead replied and laughed at Ronaz.

"You're still slow. Kill more humans faster and bring them to me," Ronaz said to the devil.

"Alright," the devil replied.

"Devouring this one seems to have restored about half of my strength," Ronaz muttered.

The quivering muscle mass began to grow and swell rapidly.

"We will make this island ours," Ronaz said with determination.