

The Tower 204

Chapter 204

The space began to shake. The pressure Lee Shin was experiencing now was completely different from when he was countering the attacks of the Grand Spirits of the seven elements just a moment ago.

'The Spirit King...'

The Spirit King had a distinctive presence, but then, its appearance, which was as immense as a mountain, began to rapidly diminish.

- This should be more comfortable for you, Successor.

The next moment, a stunningly beautiful woman appeared in front of Lee Shin. She had long golden hair that was down to her waist and eyes that resembled gemstones. She was so beautiful that she seemed unreal to Lee Shin.

"Spirit... King...?" Lee Shin muttered looking at the beautiful woman who was standing in front of him.

"Nice to meet you, human successor," the Spirit King replied.

The title, the Great King of Kings, referred to the king who ruled over one of the four great realms. The Spirit King was the ruler of the Underworld, and stood shoulder to shoulder with the Heavenly God, the Demon God, and the Reaper.

'I'm fortunate to be the Successor. It seems like the Spirit King is showing me favor.'

It was evident that the Spirit King was showing favor to Lee Shin because she appeared in front of him and was talking to him. Since Lee Shin had acquired the title, Successor of Spirits, he wanted to seize this opportunity.

"Honored to meet you, Your Majesty," Lee Shin greeted the Spirit King.

"Dear Successor of Spirits, in our Underworld, there has been a legend that passed down for generations," said the Spirit King.

"What is that, Your Majesty?" Lee Shin asked.

"It said that the Successor of Spirits will save the Underworld," the Spirit King replied.

"Huh? What does that... mean?" Lee Shin asked with a confused look.

Lee Shin did not know what she meant by save the Underworld, because it seemed like the Underworld was free of problems to begin with.

"To speak about that, I will first have to tell you a few things about the secret of the Tower," said the Spirit King.

"The secret... of the Tower?" Lee Shin stared at the Spirit King, unable to even maintain his facial expression.

Lee Shin contemplated what the secret of the Tower could be. All he knew was that the gods of Astria were involved in creating the stages of the Tower. Even as He Who Knows Death, Lee Shin had known only fragments of that secret. Now, he had the chance to gain more information.

"Lee Shin, I am able to share this much information with you because you have become the Successor of Spirits. So listen carefully," the Spirit King said.

"Yes, Your Majesty," Lee Shin replied, nodding.

"Do you think the Tower belongs to the gods?" the Spirit King asked.

"...No, I don't believe so," Lee Shin replied.

Certainly, there were numerous gods in Astria, and not only them, but gods with higher ranks from various dimensions were also involved in the matters of the Tower. However, the gods could not freely intervene in the stages as they pleased, and even the gods found themselves pushed around by the challengers.

'That means, there must be something beyond mere opposition among the gods that limits them.'

Lee Shin could not think of anything concrete just yet. The gods wreaked havoc upon different worlds, created the stages and constructed the world known as the Tower. However, they had neither been able to peer into the first floor, nor to fully control the Tower. The discrepancy remained unexplained in Lee Shin's mind.

"...Just by having that conviction qualifies you to hear this story," the Spirit King said.

For the first time, the expression of the Spirit King displayed a hint of surprise.

"The Tower was not created by the gods. From the start, the Tower existed before most of the gods did," the Spirit King explained.

"The Tower existed before gods...? What does that mean?" Lee Shin asked.

"The origin of the Tower lies in a world that traverses dimensions... Therefore, the Tower is a world that has existed since the very beginning, meaning it was brought about from the dimension itself," the Spirit King explained.

Lee Shin furrowed his eyebrows subconsciously. He could not understand what the Spirit King meant by a world that was brought about by a dimension.

'Hmmm... A world that traverses dimensions... What does she mean by a world that traverses dimensions...?'

Lee Shin contemplated her words, lost in thought, trying to interpret the information.

"You are already thinking too much," the Spirit King said as if she could read Lee Shin's mind.

"But isn't it natural that such information would complicate my thoughts?" Lee Shin replied.

"First, listen carefully to the whole story before letting your thoughts roam," the Spirit King said.

"Alright, Your Majesty," Lee Shin replied, nodding.

Since her story was not done yet, he could think later after hearing the rest of the secret from the Spirit King.

"In the beginning, the dimension kept expanding and multiplying. But there was no entity to manage the countless dimensions," said the Spirit King.

As Lee Shin listened to the Spirit King's story, his eyes opened wide. Then, something suddenly came to his mind.

"Wait... the manager of dimensions...? Then could it be...?" Lee Shin muttered.

"That's right. Just as the world of Earth evolved for its own survival, dimensions also did the same," the Spirit King said.

Creak—! Crack—!

Suddenly, the world began to shake. Looking around, Lee Shin was able to see that the Grand Spirits who were in their human forms, were now revealing their true appearances and raising their class.

"Please don't mind them," the Spirit King said.

"...Understood," Lee Shin replied.

The Spirit King was sustaining the world with her own power. It seemed like the banished gods were forcefully shaking this world.

"To create a manager who could manage dimensions, the concept of the Tower was born, which then gave birth to numerous gods," the Spirit King explained.

Lee Shin had not known that the gods themselves were born out of the world of the Tower. Now, he wondered, had the gods built the Tower to create more gods? Was the reason for trying to elevate Lee Shin to an Apostle on the 100th floor, when he had the qualification to become a manager of the Tower, to raise their own divinity class by making him their Apostle?

'But there's something still unclear about this... What is it?'

"Didn't I tell you to listen to the end of my explanation?" the Spirit King chided Lee Shin as she noticed his stern expression.

"I'm sorry," Lee Shin replied.

"The existing gods destroyed the Tower to prevent the birth of gods, which seemed to be faster than the expansion of dimensions. However, despite their efforts, it was impossible to entirely destroy the Tower with their divinity class, and so the Tower was cast aside, into a dimension," the Spirit King explained.

"...So, that means the existing gods must have devoured the continuously expanding dimensions and grown more powerful," Lee Shin said.

"That's right," the Spirit King replied.

The Spirit King looked at Lee Shin with a bitter expression.

Rumble— Crack!

At the same time, the Underworld started to shake even more strongly.

"The Underworld is gradually losing its lifespan due to the greed of the gods. As the successor who is climbing the Tower, only you can change the fate of the Underworld," the Spirit King said.

The imposing presence that Lee Shin first felt from the Spirit King had completely disappeared. All that remained was a warm energy that protected him. Even the Spirit King, who appeared serene this whole time, seemed to be struggling now.

'She's not struggling because of the gods. Could it be due to constraints from the Tower?'

Surely, she had revealed an enormous secret that could not be normally obtained on the 80th floor. She had given Lee Shin far more information than what would have sufficed for being the Successor of Spirits.

"...The potential of the Tower far surpasses your expectations. It's not just about becoming a god..." the Spirit King left her last words to Lee Shin.

After saying this, her voice trailed off. At the same time, the world of the Underworld crumbled, and darkness enveloped his vision.

[The causality rate has reached its limit.]

[You have been forced to transition to the 80th floor.]

When Lee Shin opened his eyes, a familiar scene came into his view, along with a tiresome voice.

"Lee Shin! You've cleared the 80th floor! I knew you could do it," Larzien shouted.

When Lee Shin turned around, Larzien was running toward him with a big smile. He already had enough things to think about, but Larzien started nagging him as soon as he returned. Why wasn't there a world for the 81st floor? Until Lee Shin cleared the 89th floor, Lee Shin would always return to this city, so it seemed impossible to avoid this sticky situation for a while.

"Didn't I say that I'm not interested in becoming your successor?" Lee Shin said.

"But, didn't you also say that you would consider it again if I find a way to get to the heavenly realm?" Larzien replied.

'No way, did he find the way already?'

Lee Shin was flustered, yet he could not bear to walk away from the possible answer.

"You seem really curious," Larzien said, looking at Lee Shin's facial expression.

"So, what is it that you found out? How can I get there?" Lee Shin asked.

"First, promise me that you'll become my successor. Then I'll tell you the method," Larzien replied.

"I said I would reconsider. I didn't say that I would become the successor," Lee Shin said.

Larzien's expression subtly twisted upon hearing his words.

"Hmph! Well, what if I tell you the method and you just walk away? Won't I be the only one looking like a fool?" Larzien said.

"Then isn't it simple? Just don't tell me," Lee Shin replied.

Realizing that Larzien was probably up to something again, Lee Shin immediately turned away.

"Alright! Alright! I'll tell you, so if it helps you even a little bit, please think positively about becoming my successor," Larzien said.

"Understood," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin nodded obediently, but truthfully, he had no such luxury. Even if Larzien was willing to offer accurate information, he had no intention of staying behind to be his successor. Lee Shin thought of paying gratuity instead.

"I've heard that the Demon Monarchs of the fifth district are capable of opening a portal to the heavenly realm," Larzien said.

"...So?" Lee Shin asked.

"What do you mean by that? Can't you just defeat the Demon Monarchs of the fifth district and go to the heavenly realm?"

With an innocent expression on his face, Larzien spoke to Lee Shin. His shameless tone and expression almost made Lee Shin want to strike him with a thunderbolt.

"I will get going," Lee Shin said.

"Wait, hold on! I haven't finished speaking yet," Larzien tried to stop Lee Shin from leaving.

"...Okay, you can continue," Lee Shin said.

If this person were not Larzien, Lee Shin would have punched them already.

"There's a saying that the fifth district is where the Great Devils, up to the one on the twelfth throne, can go. And starting from the Great Devil sitting on the twenty-fourth throne, the authority to access the fifth district is granted," Larzien explained.

"...So what?" Lee Shin replied.

"What do you mean, 'so what?' You can go to the fourth district, capture any one of the top twelve Great Devils over there, and beat the crap out of them... Hey, wait! You can't just ignore me and start walking away!" Larzien shouted urgently.

Lee Shin thought he was foolish for trying to listen to the ramblings of an old man who had lost his mind trying to secure a successor.

"Man, why are you so impatient? I haven't finished talking yet," Larzien said.

"Ha... This is the last time," Lee Shin sighed and replied.

Larzien was clinging to Lee Shin's leg, making it impossible for Lee Shin to simply ignore him. It seemed difficult to break free without investing a considerable amount of his combat power, given how strong Larzien's control over the psychokinesis was.

"Thank you," Larzien replied.

The next moment, Larzien stood up, adjusted his clothes, cleared his throat, and continued explaining.

"There's a devil named Zephyr in the third district who roams around looking for humans and responding to summoners' calls. It's said that this Zephyr guy can send someone to the fourth district as long as the person gives something good in return..." Larzien explained.

"Really? Are you talking about Zephyr?" Lee Shin asked.

"What, do you know something about him already?" Larzien asked back.

Lee Shin chuckled involuntarily at the familiar name that emerged unexpectedly. Was that guy Zephyr still alive?

"But you're mistaken," Lee Shin continued on.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Larzien asked.

"Zephyr might be able to establish a connection from the third district to the fourth district, but he cannot establish a connection from a different dimension to the fourth district," Lee Shin explained.

"Huh? What are you talking about? H-how do you know about that?" Larzien seemed surprised.

A look of disbelief crossed his face once again. It was clear from Larzien's expression that he was only pretending not to fully know about this matter.

'Ha... What should I do with this shameless trickster...'

Lee Shin could not help but wonder just how far his connections extended, how he knew someone who knew about devil summoning, and how he had heard rumors about the Demon World.

"You see, Zephyr is my subordinate," Lee Shin replied.

"...What? What kind of nonsense are you talking about..." Larzien could not hide his astonishment, but Lee Shin just ignored him and moved toward the administrator at the 80th floor.

"Take me to the 50th floor," Lee Shin said.

Returning to Earth, Lee Shin could only furrow his eyebrows at the palpable power that he was feeling.

'This must be...'

As white energy gathered in the blue sky, a massive gate formed. Sensing the change in dimensional energy, challengers from South Korea and the government forces rushed to Daejeon.

"H-hyung..." Cha Yu-Min called Lee Shin with an awkward look.

"Yeah?" At such a sight, Lee Shin laughed and replied to Cha Yu-Min.

"Umm... Uh, it's nothing," Cha Yu-Min replied.

He held back his urge to ask, why are you only telling me to call you hyung? Cha Yu-Min already knew that he would not get an answer even if he asked.

"Just do it if I told you to," Lee Shin said, as if he had read Cha Yu-Min's thoughts.

Woong—

Soon, the gate that was forming in the air began to tear open.

"It's coming," Lee Shin muttered.

From the gate that was three times larger than the previous one, an Angel with three pairs of wings walked out.

"Huh...? What is that?"

"Look! He has three pairs of wings!"

"No way..."

"Are you kidding me right now? The Great Angel is here?"

Challengers who had gathered around looked up, eyes wide open, at the Great Angel who had crossed over to Earth. His name was Michael, the Great Angel who had blue hair and a white sword. As he ascended into the sky and scanned the challengers, dozens of Combat Angels followed after him.

"This is insane..."

The challengers' hearts raced as the sky filled with a flurry of white wings.

"Behold, humans of Earth," Michael said.

As Michael raised his swords, flames began to linger on his sword.

"I, Michael, the Great Angel of the Red Flame, have come," Michael said.

The wisps of flame swirled and wrapped around the sword as they shot skyward in a spiral.

"Grand Flame Burst."

Dozens of fiery strands of Red Flame burst forth in all directions. Wherever they passed, red flowers bloomed.

"Tsk," Lee Shin clicked his tongue and activated his mana upon seeing the flame.

[Psychokinesis]

Lee Shin had learned a new application of magic by stealing and studying intermediate and advanced magic books from Larzien.

[Fly]

Ascending into the sky, Lee Shin faced Michael and let out a mocking laugh.

"Haha. How ridiculous."