

## **The Tower 21**

### Chapter 21: The Second Floor

Lee Shin felt like the mana blood vessels in his entire body were about to burst.

All his muscles were throbbing and Lee Shin's condition was so severe that he had to recuperate quietly for a while.

Lee Shin forced his weak legs to move and went down the stairs that took him to the deep underground. He became so weak that he could barely use basic level one mana. Nevertheless, he mustered all his strength and walked down the stairs.

'I can't feel death,' Lee Shin thought.

If this place was truly dangerous, Lee Shin could have felt death coming near. However, that was not the case. Rather, he felt like he had to go down here to survive. After some time, he saw a small altar at the end of the stairs.

"Wait, this is..." Lee Shin muttered.

In front of the altar, there was a monument similar to the one he had seen above ground. Lee Shin approached the monument and read the writing there. It was an ancient language, just as he expected.

"Only those who are qualified can climb," Lee Shin read the inscription aloud.

What kind of qualification were they talking about? This was the only sentence he could read among several. Lee Shin passed the monument and stood on top of the altar. There stood an indecipherable gargoyle, a mysterious figure with such intricate details it was hard to make sense of what it was.

'Hmmm... This is...' Lee Shin thought.

Below it, there was a pattern and an ancient language written on the altar.

- Those who are qualified, engrave your mana here.

It seemed like Lee Shin had to engrave his mana here. There was no reason for him to hesitate here. His intuition was telling him to follow the instruction, and he decided to go with his intuition.

'I am disqualified as a magus,' Lee Shin thought.

A magus was supposed to calculate everything in advance and move as planned, but Lee Shin was relying on his intuition.

Lee Shin laughed at this thought and put his hand on the gargoyle to engrave his mana. It was not difficult for Lee Shin to engrave the mana following the patterns.

The patterns quickly absorbed the Dark Mana. As the Dark Mana outlined the patterns, the gargoyle began to move as it shone. The gargoyle was filled with ominous energy.

- Those who endure endless chaos will prove their qualifications.

'What's endless chaos?' Lee Shin wondered, but there was no time to think.

The ominous energy emanating from the gargoyle pressed down on Lee Shin.

[Chaos is seeping in.]

[You become immune to it.]

[Chaos is seeping in.]

[You become immune to it.]

[Chaos is seeping in.]

[You become immune to it.]

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The ominous energy entered Lee Shin's body, but nothing changed. Only the message rising in the air was repeated.

'Is this energy what they meant by chaos?' Lee Shin wondered.

It was Lee Shin's first time seeing this chaos, even though he had climbed to the 100th floor before. And he did not know why he was immune to it.

'Huh?''Lee Shin was so distracted by the sudden chaos that he did not notice but there was a faint spirit watching him near the gargoyle.

It seemed as if the spirit was laughing at Lee Shin as he was being eroded by chaos. Unlike other human souls, that spirit did not have any shape. However, Lee Shin could vaguely feel the emotions it contained.

'I think it's waiting for me to be eroded by chaos,'?Lee Shin thought.

Lee Shin did not know what that was, but he decided to act just as the spirit wished. Lee Shin performed with all his might as if he was eroding away.

"Keugh—" Lee Shin groaned.

Flop—

Pretending like he had lost all his strength, Lee Shin fell down to the floor, grabbed his head, and continued to groan. Occasionally, he glanced at the spirit, but the spirit was still floating in the air watching Lee Shin.

Well, Lee Shin was not even sure if the spirit was looking at him. He just continued to pretend to be eroded by chaos just in case, looking as if he was in severe pain, pain that gradually increased in intensity.

[Chaos is seeping in.]

[You became immune to it.]

"Ahhh!" Lee Shin fell to the ground.

As soon as that happened, the spirit that had been still all this time rushed toward Lee Shin.

- I am the leader of chaos. You who don't deserve it will be in chaos.

The voice of the spirit rang in Lee Shin's head.

"Keugh... What does it mean to be in chaos?" Lee Shin asked with a struggling voice.

- You must have the power to speak. It will naturally be known to you after it has been done.

[Chaos is seeping in.]

[Chaos is seeping in.]

[Chaos is seeping in.]

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[You became immune to it.]

- What? How is this possible!

The spirit came near Lee Shin, and when it contacted him and realized that he was not actually eroded by chaos, it shouted in surprise.

Lee Shin, who no longer had to pretend, rose again and slowly moved his mana.

- Oh my God! No way! The chaos is—

[Chaos is seeping in.]

[You became immune to it.]

[ 『Stat: Chaos』 is created.]

Huh? A new stat is created? Lee Shin never knew there was a stat called Chaos.

‘Stat [Chaos]’ Lee Shin repeated in his head.

[Chaos]

The power created by the failure of all forces to harmonize and eventually disintegrate. Deny everything and accept it all at the same time.

# Resistance to all elements +10%

# Random amount of stat extortion at a very low chance from the stat in the opponent's possession when hit.

# Random amount of stat extortion at a very low chance from the stat in the opponent's possession when attacking.

'I can't believe this...'

Lee Shin's jaw dropped in amazement when he saw the effect of the stat, Chaos. Having 10% of resistance to all properties was an unprecedented defense capability. Lee Shin knew, for the first time, that a resistance to all elements existed.

And the most amazing thing was the stat extortion.

It was of course amazing to rob stats such as strength, agility, and intelligence.

However, they were nothing compared to the divine status.

# Divine Status: 1

Not long ago, Lee Shin had acquired the title of [Legendary Doll Maker] and now acquired this divine status.

With this divine status, one could rob the opponent's divine status. Lee Shin did not know how slight the probability was, but he thought it would not be lower than the probability of acquiring divine status.

[Divine Status]

You are considered divine.

# All stats are increased by 10% when you encounter those who have a lower level of the divine status.

This ability was very simple, but was an outstanding one. It was incredible to get a 10% increase in all of his stats. How many people could possibly have divine status? With the exception of encountering the few who have divine status, Lee Shin could get additional power most of the time.

Moreover, due to having the ability Chaos, it was no longer burdensome for him to meet someone who was stronger than him. Lee Shin thought it would be a good opportunity, because he could take away their divine status.

- No way... What is so special about you?

"I guess you're still alive," Lee Shin answered.

- I don't die... I mean... Oh, I see... That's how it was...

The spirit murmured to itself as if it had realized something.

"Sorry? What do you mean by that's how it was?" Lee Shin asked.

- So... was this part of the revelation...? Then there's one thing I have to do.

"A revelation?" Lee Shin asked.

- That's right, a revelation. Ignore what I'm saying and just continue walking your way.

The spirit continued to say mysterious things.

- Your body... is destroyed... by a very strong curse...

"Wait... can you help me recover it?" Lee Shin asked.

- It's impossible for me to fix it entirely. But I can feel your divine status, even though it's quite weak right now. Since you have divine status, I can help you out a bit.

Lee Shin could feel the force of the spirit permeating his body and spreading abnormally. Some of the broken mana vessels were restored to their original state. In the process, the power in the spirit which he had felt gradually died down.

"Umm... What would happen to you?" Lee Shin asked.

- I'm the one who doesn't die. My body may disappear, but my existence will not disappear.

"Is that so?" Lee Shin asked.

- I raised the class of your body a little bit with my Spiritual Power. The curse on you is too strong; this is all I can do for you.

The mana of Lee Shin's whole body became smoother as if a part of the blocked sewer had been cleared. His body which was destroyed at the entrance to the altar recovered to its best condition.

[Mana Power Level 3]



Lee Shin tried circulating the mana in his body. His mana was moving faster and smoother than before.

'With this power, if I try really hard, I can probably use up to the fifth level mana,' Lee Shin thought.

Even so, he would barely make it to the top of the wizard's list. He would only qualify as a magus when he is able to control at least the sixth-level mana. As of now, Lee Shin was considered to be just like a normal human.

- Keep on... getting stronger...

With these last words, the voice of the spirit could no longer be heard. Lee Shin turned around and returned to Undermost.

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As people from Undermost climbed the first floor, the ranking on the second floor was finally updated for the first time in nearly two years.

The people on the second floor who were looking at the rankings, waiting for the challengers on the first floor to come up, were the first ones to notice the dramatic change in the ranking. And an uproar began inside the tower.

└ This is a scoop! This is an exclusive!

└ Why? What is it? Why are you making a fuss all of a sudden?

└The ranking on the second floor has been updated! Go check it out!

└ The challengers are starting to clear the first floor just like Cha Yu-Min said! And that's not all!

↳ That can't be real? How is this possible? No way, I can't even believe that people managed to come up to the second floor, but now you're telling me that the first ranker on the second floor has changed?

In an instant, the small disturbance in the community spread like wildfire. And after hearing the news about the change, people hurriedly returned to the village to check the ranking.

# First. Shin Young-Woo: 11,200 points

# Second. Cha Yu-Min: 10,700 points

# Third. Han Sang-Won: 8,960 points

# Fourth. Baek Kang-Woo - 8,120 points

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↳ That's crazy, isn't it? They already defeated the Lizardman the Great Warrior?

↳ Seeing that they have scored above 10,000 points, it seems like they defeated the Lizardman even faster than Cha Yu-Min. But how?

↳ Bro, who cares about that right now? The first-floor people are finally liberated! Finally, we will get new recruits, too!

↳ Wait a second... Is it because of that guy, Shin Young-Woo, that Korea will soon become the highest rank?

It was not just that the ranking had been updated, but the top ranker position had changed as well. The change in the top ranker caused even more confusion to the challengers.

↳ Shit! The ranking changed again!

↳ It's probably because there were more new recruits who came up. But who cares!

↳ Look at the ranking! The first place changed again!

↳ What?

# First. Kang Hyun-Woo: 14,110 points

# Second. Park Ji-Min: 13,400 points

# Third. Shin Young-Woo: 11,200 points

# Fourth. Cha Yu-Min - 10,700 points

# Fifth. Han Sang-Won: 8,960 points

# Sixth. Baek Kang-Woo - 8,120 points

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↳ W-w-what's going on? How can this be possible?

↳ That score doesn't even make sense.

↳ Cha Yu-Min barely managed to defeat the Lizardman the Great Warrior!

↳ No way, that can't be true. A second-floor challenger can already defeat the Lizardman hunter?

↳ It's not just one, but there were more than three people who already defeated him?

↳ It's not just three, look at the ranking!

↳ Shit! Did it change again?

↳ What happened on the first floor?

\* \* \*

Whoooong—?Whoooong—?Whoooong—?Whoooong—?Whoooong—

Five streaks of light fell on the waiting area on the second floor. It was Kim Kang-Chun and his friends.

"Is this the waiting area on the second floor?"

"Wow... This place is fascinating."

"I think this place is totally different from the waiting area on the first floor."

The waiting area on the second floor was a swamp with mud puddles everywhere. And there was a lizard.

"Finally the challengers are rushing in all of a sudden," the Lizard said.

"Are you the manager here?" Baek Hyun asked.

"Yes, I am. Are you going to challenge the second floor?" the Lizard asked.

The waiting area on the second floor was not a place where people could stay for a long time. It was so humid and muddy that they did not want to stay there for a long time. All five of them accepted the manager's offer and went to challenge the second floor.

[You have entered the second floor.]

With the message, the challengers arrived at a swamp. The area was damp and humid, and every step they took sent mud splattering onto their feet. The challengers were all separated. Each challenger was on their own; because unlike the first floor, the second floor was a stage where each individual had to clear independently.

[Defeat the Lizardman the Great Warrior.]

Baek Hyun saw the Lizardman Warrior holding a shabby sword in front of him.

"Keughhh—" the Lizardman roared.

However, Baek Hyun did not feel particularly scared or afraid. With the Lizardman Warrior in front of him, Baek Hyun did not feel the pressure like what he had felt encountering May and Warrie.

Baek Hyun rushed to the Lizardman Warrior. He was still a little bit nervous, because it was his first attempt. However, that nervousness was only for a moment. When the Lizardman Warrior raised his arm to make a counterattack, Baek Hyun's sword was about to slice the Lizardman Warrior's neck.

Chop!

His sword cut off the Lizardman Warrior's head in an instant.

"Is that it?"

Baek Hyun could not believe it was this easy. Was it because it was the first stage? He had expected it to be easy, but not this simple. Baek Hyun tilted his head in confusion and wrapped up his sword.

[You have defeated the Lizardman Warrior.]

[Do you want to challenge the next stage? The next stage is the Lizardman Archer.]

"Yes," Baek Hyun replied.

Baek Hyun disappeared with a streak of light.