

The Tower 213

Chapter 213

Endo's physical presence alone was overwhelming. His eyes were shining with charisma, and the fit physique and sturdy wings were enough to cut the opponent's morale before the fight even began.

'Is he able to transform into a full-fledged dragon now?'

Endo exuded a completely different aura compared to the time when Lee Shin had faced him on the 20th floor. Lee Shin thought that it would be a real battle with a dragon this time.

'How interesting.'

Pizz— Pizz—!

Sparks of thunderbolt crackled above his clenched fist. After reaching the level of Great Wizard, Lee Shin could wield most of the elemental spells, but his nature was still a thundermancer.

As he looked at Endo, he wondered why and how Endo came. Did he come just to kill Lee Shin? Lee Shin had many questions in his mind, but he told himself that he would be able to figure them out once this battle was over.

'Hmm... I can feel his determination already.'

Behind those eyes was a blazing determination. Lee Shin could tell that those were the eyes of someone who had spent time pondering over past defeats. He could tell that Endo had come this far to turn those scars into badges of honor and victory.

"Well then, let's see how much you have improved," Lee Shin said.

Pizz—!

The next moment, Lee Shin turned his hand upward and gathered thunderbolts in his palm. Then, he hurled the swirling yellow thunderbolts that formed into a sphere toward Endo.

[White Thunder]

The thunderbolt, which spun wildly in the air, turned pure white and instantly expanded in diameter to several dozens of meters.

Woong—

At the same time, Endo's entire body was covered in thunderbolts as he flapped his wings and stepped back. The next moment, a torrent of yellow thunderbolts gushed out from his mouth.

Kwaahhh!

"Keuk...!" Lee Shin gasped.

Endo had just unleashed a skill called Breath, which was a unique ability of the dragon tribe. He had transformed surrounding mana into his own element, creating a highly compressed mana cannon.

'I'm pretty sure he is a half-human, half-dragon though...' Lee Shin thought. Yet, the aura that he exuded was no less powerful than that of a pure-blooded dragon.

Bababam— Baaam—!

The collision of White Thunder and Endo's Breath caused a massive explosion in the air. As a result, fragments of the lightning energy scattered in all directions.

Crack...!

In an instant, Lee Shin drew upon all of his mana to delineate an area for himself.

‘Did he intend to do this?’

For a moment, the situation gave Lee Shin a sense of déjà vu. Like how they had met on the 20th floor, Endo's gaze was fixed on Lee Shin and he could tell that Endo's eyes were filled with desire. It was clear that Endo was determined to surpass Lee Shin.

‘Ha. Then, I can't afford to disappoint him.’

Waves of thunderbolts surged like a flood, melting away the grass and trees in an instant, leaving no trace behind. If there were any other devils nearby, they would have been annihilated without even a chance to fight back. The sheer volume of thunderbolts that Endo unleashed felt similar to when Lee Shin had faced the attacks of the Grand Spirits in the Underworld.

"How could you have abandoned your bloodline?" Lee Shin asked Endo.

"I begged my father... just to defeat you," Endo replied.

Lee Shin had not expected a response from Endo to his question, but Endo willingly provided one.

‘Did he actually abandon his bloodline for the sake of becoming stronger?’

Lee Shin did not know that this was an option. If Endo had really abandoned his human blood, Lee Shin had to be more careful. That was because mixed-blood dragons and pure-blood dragons exhibited different levels of strength.

"Did you really abandon your bloodline just because you wanted to be stronger? I didn't think of you that way, but you're quite narrow-minded," Lee Shin said, trying to provoke Endo.

Slowly, Lee Shin rotated his mana and drew a mana circle on the ground, taunting Endo.

"...Don't blabber when you don't know anything!" Endo shouted.

It seemed like Lee Shin's provocation hit the mark, as Endo prepared to launch the second Breath attack. The next moment, the mana circle glowed faintly, and from within it, something composed of the lightning energy burst forth.

"I, Pazit, the Grand Spirit of Electricity, is here!" Pazit appeared as he introduced himself.

Pazit looked up as he sensed an unusual wave. It was Endo's Breath that was coming at him from the sky.

"Oh shoot!" Pazit muttered in shock.

[Reverse Thunder]

A surge of thunderbolts erupted from the ground.

Pizz— Pizz—!

Pazit, who completely transformed into lightning energy, merged into the Reverse Thunder and collided with Endo's breath.

Bababam—!

Pazit's body absorbed the surrounding lightning energy and pierced through Endo's Breath, his head, and then his body. As Endo recognized Pazit's presence and closed his mouth, the Breath disappeared.

Woong— Pizz—!

The next moment, Pazit, who now revealed his original form, punched Endo's head. It seemed like Endo was about to crash into the ground, but he spread his wings and ascended back into the sky. He shook his head.

"Wow, I didn't know that you tamed even the Grand Spirit... Truly, you are the human I've acknowledged. But this won't be enough this time...!" Endo said.

In an instant, Endo shot up higher into the sky, penetrating the clouds. He hid himself among the clouds and released hundreds of electric currents in all directions. From the clouds that gathered around Endo and the lightning energy surging within, a chilling sound of thunder boomed.

Babababam—!

"What's going on...?"

Laurent and Jack rushed over to Lee Shin as they heard the loud noise. Zephyr was there too, dragged along by Jack's tail.

"Eeeik!" Zephyr gasped.

As Zephyr, who was crouching on the ground, stared at the sky, he started to tremble. The facial expressions of Laurent and Jack stiffened, sensing that something was amiss. They clenched their teeth.

'Ugh... it's getting troublesome.'

The face of Endo, who was soaring into the sky, flashed before the four. There was a look of determination on his face. Although they could not see what was going on due to the clouds that surrounded him, the power that could be felt was far from anything that could be taken lightly.

"Damn it! I told you that I didn't want to come!" Zephyr shouted at Laurent and Jack.

After he had ascended to the level of a Great Devil, Zephyr started to become a bit more arrogant. Perhaps he had become stronger, so he could now more clearly understand what was happening.

"Damn it! Mr. Lee Shin, I'll open a portal right now, why don't you please run away..." Zephyr said in a worried voice.

"It's too late," Lee Shin replied.

The streaks of thunderbolts that had been spinning around Endo were already changing their direction and converging into a spiral form.

'Hmmm... Endo's heartbeat is slowing down drastically.'

Lee Shin could feel that Endo's class was getting absorbed by the waves of thunderbolts that were gathering in the sky.

Had that earlier expression hinted at a sacrifice? Lee Shin wondered why Endo was so determined to kill him. However, soon, he realized that there was no time to think about what was happening with Endo. He first needed to figure out how to stop the impending deluge of thunderbolts.

'Jack and Zephyr won't be of any help in this situation.'

However, Lee Shin thought that they might have a chance with Laurent's Demonbreaker attribute.

"Laurent!" Lee Shin called out urgently.

At Lee Shin's call, Laurent looked at Lee Shin and nodded. From his response, Lee Shin could tell that Laurent already understood the severity of the situation, even without words. In his mind, he had likely already calculated how his ability would be of help to Lee Shin at this moment.

Clang—

A rough metallic sound echoed. Time slowed down due to Lee Shin's Transcendence skill. There was a lengthy period of contemplation. Lee Shin's mana had been in motion even before Endo pierced the sky.

[Divine Realm Breaking Force]

This was an awe-inspiring ability unique to Transcendence, which instantly erased the divinity class of the opponent. As Lee Shin's Transcendence extended into the sky, it seized Endo's divinity class.

Bababam—!

Lee Shin could feel the instability in Endo's wave of thunderbolts. The never-ending surge of Endo's thunderbolt finally showed its first vulnerability.

'Now is the time!'

There was no need for Lee Shin to say it out loud, though. Laurent would have already made the same judgment.

Baaang—!

With a rough detonation sound, the Demonbreaker Bullet soared accurately, touching Endo's reverse thunder.

Baaam—!

At the same time, the waves of thunderbolts that had been gathering rained down on the ground. As a result, Lee Shin had to summon all seven of the Grand Spirits at once and he even summoned Lilian. Lee Shin poured out all his combat power.

'Damn it! This is insane...!'

Due to the unique spreading nature of the lightning energy, Lee Shin could not just block only a narrow area. Lee Shin had to protect everything around him, including Jack, Zephyr, and Laurent, who had been neutralized after shooting the Demonbreaker Bullet.

"Kraaaaaa!"

Whoosh—

The avalanche of thunderbolts ceased. Everything around, except for the area protected by Lee Shin's shield, had melted and the ground turned black.

"Ha... Ha..."

The air was heated up due to the electric current. Sweating profusely from the heat, Lee Shin diverted his gaze to the giant golden dragon that was descending from the sky.

Baaam—!

Vibrations came from the other side of the ground. A tremendous cloud of dust rose into the air, and a small crater appeared on the ground.

"Man... I thought we were really going to die this time..." Zephyr muttered and released a sigh of relief.

Zephyr, having used his demon power to block the thunderbolts, could tell how incredibly fierce that attack was. If Lee Shin had not stopped that attack, the surrounding terrain within a few kilometers would have been wiped out because of Endo.

"Ugh..." Struggling to get up, Laurent frowned and looked around. "This is crazy. Is this the power of the dragon tribe?"

Indeed, it was an incredible force. Although Lee Shin had found the weak spot of the opponent and hit him with the Demonbreaker Bullet just before the attack was completed, Endo was still able to display such power. It was just unbelievable how such a creature could erase the world with a single strike.

'And the one who stopped this attack is even more of a monster.'

Lee Shin was able to block the attack that a member of the dragon tribe had unleashed at his full might, without suffering any injuries. The real monster was not the dragon but the human who had emerged victorious. He not only had a natural talent for magic. Lee Shin possessed something that no ordinary challenger had. It was clear that Lee Shin had something that was given to those who could surpass their limits every moment.

'It seems like he knows how to win.'

Regardless of the gap that existed between Lee Shin and his opponent, Lee Shin was constantly narrowing or surpassing the gap as if it was only natural. No matter how far up in the rankings he could get, Laurent realized that there would always be a chasm between him and Lee Shin that could never be bridged. This was a truth he keenly felt today.

"You guys can stay over here. I'll go alone," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin left the three of them who had collapsed there, venturing alone across the desolate ground.

The gray cloud of dust swirled around, revealing a faint silhouette within. The figure was too feeble and small to be called a dragon compared to what they had seen earlier. Lee Shin pushed away all the dust that was blocking his view and spotted Endo lying there, struggling to breathe.

"Is it you... Lee Shin...?" Endo asked with a weak voice.

His dim eyes turned toward Lee Shin. Seeing the golden glow in Endo's eyes fade little by little, Lee Shin could tell that he did not have much time left. He drew closer to Endo and kneeled beside him.

"Why... Why did you hesitate?" Lee Shin asked Endo.

Lee Shin could sense that Endo had briefly hesitated before the last attack. He also knew that tiny moment of hesitation had made a significant difference in the outcome.

"Even if I had not hesitated... the result would have been the same..." Endo muttered, looking at Lee Shin.

"That's something you don't know for sure, just like how we won't know what is written on the back of a paper," Lee Shin replied.

"Stop with all the meaningless talk... Kek!" Endo's condition deteriorated rapidly as he coughed up blood. "Ever since I lost to you... I've never once forgotten that moment."

"So, was that why you tried to kill me?" Lee Shin asked.

"... I wanted to win against you, because I felt like if I could not surpass you, I would be stuck in the same place forever. Kek... So, I abandoned my human blood, even though that meant I would suffer under my father," Endo explained.

"Is your father the Dream-Eating Dragon?" Lee Shin asked.

"Yes, that's right... My father told me to kill you," Endo replied.

The next moment, Endo's eyes were filled with anger.

"I am aware that there is enmity between you and the gods. But be careful. It's not that the gods don't exercise their power because they are lacking...!" Endo said to Lee Shin.

"What do you mean by that?" Lee Shin asked.

"The gods are... Ugh! Keuk! Kek!" It seemed like Endo was having a hard time trying to speak, because he kept coughing up blood.

"Are you okay?" Lee Shin asked.

"Ugh... It seems like I don't have much time left..." Endo muttered.

The next moment, Endo's trembling hand reached out and grabbed Lee Shin.

"Thank you... I was able to fight without regrets... I don't regret dying like this..." Endo thanked Lee Shin.

Lee Shin could not believe that Endo was thanking the person who had killed him. He let out a bitter laugh and held onto Endo's fading form.

'His existence is fading away.'

The reason why his existence was fading away was because Endo had put his own existence into that final blow. He had poured in all he had gotten. That was why Lee Shin had wondered why Endo had gone to such lengths.

"The Dream-Eating Dragon..." Lee Shin muttered as he thought about him.

What kind of god was he to interfere like this? And why did he try to kill Lee Shin even at the cost of Endo's life? What were their objectives, and why weren't the gods actively moving? Lee Shin had so many questions in his head.

'Is there a difference in objectives among the gods in Astria...?'

That possibility had to be considered as well, because the more secrets he uncovered, the more inconsistencies he could see in the actions of the gods.

"Mr. Lee Shin, are you all right?" Zephyr asked, while he was rushing toward him across the desolate ground.

'If I use Zephyr, I can get to the fifth district...'

However, Lee Shin started to wonder whether that was the right thing to do. Doubts started to flood his mind. They had already faced a crisis just because of an attack from Endo when he had put his own existence into that final blow.

Besides, the fifth district was a place where Great Devils, who were much stronger than Endo, resided. Moreover, among them was Baal, who was seated on the first throne.

‘Baal... I think I'll have to postpone our meeting a little bit.’

Lee Shin grabbed Zephyr's shoulder as he stood up.

"Cancel the plan to go to the fifth district," Lee Shin said, looking at Zephyr.

Zephyr's expression noticeably brightened when Lee Shin said that.

"Are you sure?" Zephyr asked.

"Yeah," Lee Shin replied.

Behind Zephyr's shoulder, Lee Shin could see Laurent and Jack.

"We will be returning to Earth," Lee Shin said.

"I'll open the portal, sir!" Zephyr replied with excitement.

"Good, and make sure to organize your rankings properly amongst the devils. If the demons cross over to Earth again, we will have to go to the fifth district for real. And I will be going there with you," Lee Shin said.

"O-of course!" Zephyr replied.

The next moment, Lee Shin looked up and gazed at the gloomy sky.

‘There's not much time left.’

Lee Shin thought he would be able to reach the 100th floor soon. Soon, he would unlock the secrets of the tower, discover the gods' objectives, and reach the end of this long journey.