

## **The Tower 215**

### Chapter 215

An abrupt, pungent smell struck Lee Shin as the man dressed in dark clothes approached him.

"Hmm... A human? This is quite unusual," said the man.

Somehow, the voice felt familiar to Lee Shin, as if he were to remove the shadow enveloping the man, a familiar face would greet him.

"I have a question. What is a human doing here?" Lee Shin asked, looking at the man.

The second Lee Shin asked that question, the man stopped talking. He was probably wondering how Lee Shin figured out his identity, something the man hadn't anticipated. The man was shrouded in darkness, but Lee Shin could still see his eyes twitching, a sign of nervousness.

"How do you know that I am a human?" the man asked Lee Shin, confused.

"Well... is there a need to talk about that right now?" Lee Shin replied coldly.

"What do you mean by that?" replied the man while touching his lips, looking puzzled.

"You came here to fight, didn't you? So, why don't you subdue your opponent before questioning him?" Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin's response seemed to please him, and a smile appeared on his face.

"Well, okay, I guess that's true," the man replied.

Swoosh!

The man's shadow morphed into a sword in the blink of an eye, emitting a sharp, slicing sound. The sword had cleaved the light sphere floating in the air. The Shadow Slimes under Lee Shin's feet converged toward the man, the Shadow King. Witnessing this spectacle, Lee Shin pondered the sheer number of shadows concealed within the man's shadow.

"Well then... talk to you in a bit," said the Shadow King, looking at Lee Shin.

They were in a realm consumed by absolute darkness. Only night prevailed in Obscarit, providing the Shadow King unparalleled freedom to unleash his powers.

'Sounds good.'

[Video On]

Translucent cameras floated up from all directions. It had been a long time since Lee Shin recorded a video of him clearing a stage.

"What are you doing?" the Shadow King asked, baffled by Lee Shin's act of setting up cameras.

Whoosh!

With a sound that seemed to tear through space, shadows rushed toward the cameras. Lee Shin had foreseen this, so he had created a shield near the cameras to block the shadows.

Bang, bang, bang!

The shadows bounced off the shield, and Lee Shin snapped his finger simultaneously, lighting them on fire.

"This noxious odor... I have to do something about it," Lee Shin muttered, trying to locate the smell's origin.

The origin was the Shadow Stone. Named after its caliginous shadow-like appearance, this Stone tended to explode violently when it encountered flames.

‘Perhaps he wants to detonate the stone, but..’

It wasn’t a problem because Lee Shin had a trick up his sleeves. When the Shadow King noticed the flame and heard Lee Shin’s words, his expression distorted, and he swiftly extended his shadow.

Swoosh— Swoosh!

Several shadows surged toward Lee Shin, trying to extinguish his flames.

[Flower Fire]

The flame touching the sky transformed into blossoms, blooming before erupting into numerous flames.

"What a reckless move...!" shouted the Shadow King, a bit anxious.

"Is it really reckless?" Lee Shin replied with a smirk.

Ignoring his desperate cry, Lee Shin continued to cast his spell. The flames, hovering in the air, as if sentient, began revolving in perfect harmony, shaping a circle and increasing the ambient temperature as they grew.

[Heat Wave]

The expanded flames fragmented into dozens again.

"Stop!" the Shadow King shouted.

However, the flames didn't stop and exploded.

Kwaahhhhh!

A raging wind engulfed everything around. The scorching heat wave enveloped Obscarit, assaulting the monsters and the Shadow King, reaching even the distant dark rocks. And then, the second explosion occurred.

Kwaaagggg!

This explosion was stronger than the one Lee Shin had created; it occurred in numerous locations. Lee Shin swiftly erected shields around himself to ward off the scorching heat wave. The shields quivered as if on the verge of collapse; thankfully, his defensive magic had progressed since he fought against Endo.

Handling explosions at this level was less challenging than before. The intense heat that had engulfed Lee Shin dissipated, and a thick haze filled the surroundings. Shadows, hiding in the darkness, looked for an opening. He felt confident that the explosion had eliminated the lurking creatures, but he knew certainty could only come from personal observation.

[Light]

Mana streamed out from his fingertips, creating a radiant white sphere that floated in the air. The light radiating from the sphere illuminated the surroundings. Many monsters lay motionless on the ground, oozing dark red blood. The ground was littered with monster corpses and limbs, and only one monster was still standing.

'Hmm... this is quite surprising...'

The Shadow King, covered in blood, glared belligerently at Lee Shin. Lee Shin had expected that this one move would defeat him. He had not only detonated all the Shadow Stones around them but also channeled a substantial amount of his mana into the spell.

"Keugh..." the Shadow King groaned in pain.

Whether Shadow King could continue fighting was another question entirely. He just stood there, unable to react appropriately, even as Lee Shin approached. Lee Shin placed his palm on the Shadow King's head and poured out his mana.

Baaam!

The shadows enveloping the Shadow King gave way instantly before Lee Shin's mana. As the shadows covering him vanished, his true appearance emerged.

There were faint wrinkles around Shadow King's eyes and mouth. At first glance, he appeared older, but overall, he did not seem that old. His face seemed familiar to Lee Shin, despite a slight difference in age from the face in Lee Shin's memories.

"It's not over yet, is it?" Lee Shin asked the Shadow King.

The man's trembling pupils focused on Lee Shin, and he instantly turned black. The surrounding air grew heavy, pressing down on the space.

"Krrr..." The Shadow King growled.

A bizarre voice emanated from the Shadow King's mouth. His physique became more visible as the flames pushed the dark shadows further.

Ssss...

The shadows that had receded began to rise from his feet once again. But these shadows felt different. As if alive, they gradually took control of his body as they moved.

‘Complete Shadowization.’

This skill could harness the complete power of the shadows. However, it also made it easy for the shadows to overtake the user's mind, making mastery difficult without achieving a high level of proficiency.

Observing the skill, Lee Shin muttered, "Phantom...."—his eyes moved as he observed the shadows move like splattered paint behind him—"Slash."

The flames illuminating the area disappeared as the darkness devoured them, leaving only faint, ashy shadows in the chilling atmosphere behind.

'Is this the real Phantom Slash?'

Phantom Slash was one of Cha Yu-Min's signature skills, and now the Shadow King had displayed the same ability. Dexter, the opponent Lee Shin faced in the finals of the 10th floor of Gret Ciel, was actually the Shadow King, a human living within Obscarit. He was also Cha Yu-Min's mentor, who taught him shadow techniques.

'On the 10th floor, Cha Yu-Min built a friendship with Dexter and learned his skills.'

The ultimate power that Cha Yu-Min strived to achieve unfolded before Lee Shin's eyes.

'If I show this to him, he can grow even faster.'

He was briefly lost in thought, contemplating and observing Dexter's skills. However, he quickly activated his mana as hundreds of shadow swords converged at him from all directions.

Unlike Cha Yu-Min's Phantom Slash, where the power contained in each sword varied, the power in each sword here remained constant. Therefore, it was impossible to tell the real ones from the fakes. Besides, everything could be real or fake. That was what made this Phantom Slash so frightening.

'The second I try to go against the shadows directly, I will lose.'

This skill fundamentally manipulated the area. Without removing the shadow realm that covered the area, one could not escape endless torment from the shadows constantly sprouting forth.

[White Light]

Lee Shin's pupils turned white and shone. His mana surged powerfully, causing his entire right arm to glow fiercely; soon, a light sphere materialized in his fist. This spell channeled the bulk of his mana reserves into a concentrated orb. Though its casting was swift, unleashing such an attack imposed tremendous strain.

'Without the "Successor of Spirits from the Underworld" title and Chaos, I would have been toast.'

Thankfully, Lee Shin had both. Chaos increased all his elemental resistances by up to 20%, and "the Successor of Spirits" title further increased his resistances by 50%. As a result, Lee Shin could withstand the intense light that pierced his entire body.

Woong—!

Once all the light had gathered in his right hand, he unleashed it toward the empty space.

Kwaahhh!

The light partially covered the shadow swords, collided with the background, and exploded. The brilliance of the explosion was enough to wipe out the shadows.

"Keugh...!" When the Phantom Slash fell apart, Dexter groaned in pain.

Suddenly, dark-colored blades emerged from the ground and rushed like waves.

"Lia," Lee Shin called out.

A light sphere extended from his hand and struck the empty space.

Woong—!

A figure sheathed in radiance from the gloomy darkness materialized, advancing steadily toward where Lee Shin stood.

"Deal with him." Lee Shin ordered.

"Oh my Lord, calling me to such a vulgar place. This is very mean..." Lia muttered, looking at Lee Shin.

Lee Shin conjured a light arrow to fend off the approaching shadows.

'Don't go too hard.'

Taken aback by Lee Shin's words, Lia nodded slightly and scattered the light.

"Are you kidding me!" Dexter shouted at Lee Shin.

Seeing that Lee Shin had stepped back from the fight, Dexter rushed toward him with a shout, but Lia quickly blocked him, making him clench his teeth.

Bababam—!

The shadows and light continuously collided, locked in an endless fight. Lee Shin observed it all from behind his camera, capturing each moment.

[White Light]

After gathering enough information, Lee Shin unleashed White Light again to incapacitate Dexter.



"How are you so strong?" Dexter, lying on the ground, voiced his doubts.

"It's all possible if you die and get another go at life," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin's comment was meant as half a joke, but there was also truth to it. In reality, he struggled to find better words to describe his situation because even he found his rapid growth difficult to comprehend. He was getting stronger every day, constantly discovering new techniques and mastering skills.

'This remarkable boost in this seemingly impossible ability probably came from the rewards of the stages but also...'

Lee Shin knew the Immortal Sphere was also contributing to his growth. As a wizard, never forgetting provided an immense advantage—it allowed him to recall sensations, insights, occurrences, and other fleeting moments in great detail. In magic, a field that required both exploring knowledge and unraveling principles and relying on intuition at times, this ability to remember absolutely everything could be described as invaluable.

'Now that I've experienced it firsthand, I can understand.'

The gap between Lee Shin's magical abilities when he first regained his memories and his current capabilities had become vast. While magic typically grew more challenging the deeper one delved into the field, Lee Shin was progressing at an unprecedented rate. Ironically, compared to his present speed of advancement, his past growth seemed almost slow.

"Are you trying to say that I won't work truly hard until I face death?" Dexter seemed depressed that he had not done enough.

However, Lee Shin knew that if a human had reached such a level, they must have worked really hard. He was not trying to deny his efforts.

"Well, all right... If there's a next life. I will try harder..," Dexter muttered.

Swoosh—

The shadow scattered and disappeared.

Swish—!

Only the sound of monster corpses burning filled the silent space.

"Rise," Lee Shin ordered.

Gggg—

Bones twisted, and blood splattered everywhere as flesh melted away, revealing a skeleton that rose from the gruesome scene, emitting a sinister gleam.

"Nice to meet you, Dexter," Lee Shin said.

Dexter looked at Lee Shin and bowed his head.

"Yes, Master," Dexter replied.

A shadow rose above him, forming an outfit that resembled what he wore in life.

"Well, since you lived here, you would know well where the Great Evil is," Lee Shin said.

Capturing Dexter did not trigger the stage clear message, as he was not the true Great Evil.

"I'm sorry, Master, but I don't really know much about the Great Evil that exists here," Dexter replied.

"Oh, Is that so?" Lee Shin asked.

He thought that Dexter would know the location. Lee Shin could not predict how long it would take him in that case.

- Master, I know!

Martyr, who had been silent until now, spoke. Lee Shin took Martyr out of his waist.

"Really?" Lee Shin asked.

- Yes! My power is responding naturally.

Martyr represented Saintess Belle's will, but only her strength had remained after her soul had departed. Could it be that her will had also been left behind?

"Then guide me there," Lee Shin said to Martyr.

- Please give me divine power.

After granting Martyr's request, he saw divine power in the form of golden light emitted from the sword tip, extending and connecting to somewhere beyond.

- Follow this path. There will be the Great Evil there.

"All right," Lee Shin replied to Martyr.

At the end of this path lay the Great Evil to end this stage.