

## **The Tower 22**

### Chapter 22

Lee Shin returned from the altar and arrived at Undermost. There was silence.

Was it because many people left Undermost to go to the second floor?

The place where the festival was held was all clean and looked organized. Most of the people who remained seemed to be sleeping in their own homes.

It was not yet a day since Lee Shin had left. However, there was a sense of strangeness in the appearance of Undermost now and before they had left.

'Hmm... Something's wrong,' thought Lee Shin.

Lee Shin saw a man running near the park. It was his first time seeing this man. Lee Shin frowned.

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"Excuse me, sir," Lee Shin approached the man.

The man stopped and looked at Lee Shin as he called him.

"How many days has it been since the first floor was liberated?" Lee Shin asked.

"The liberation on the first floor? Ah... I heard it's been about a week, why?" the man asked, tilting his head.

"Oh, nothing. Thank you." Lee Shin turned around to leave after a short greeting.

The man looked at Lee Shin, then began to run again. Lee Shin went straight to the Central Square and went into the portal, up to the first floor. It had not been that long since he entered the altar, but a week had already passed here.

'The altar and Undermost were following a different timeline,' thought Lee Shin.?

This meant that it had already been a while since others had started climbing the tower. Lee Shin laughed at the thought of how the tower would become a mess.

'I wonder if they are doing well.'?Lee Shin laughed to himself.

When he came out of the portal, he noticed that the first floor did not look like it had changed much. Lee Shin headed boldly toward the boss room on the first floor. There was already a path created by many people who had gone through.

When Lee Shin opened the door of the boss's room, the boss he had created was there. The boss looked surprised at the sight of Lee Shin, but then he smiled again.

"I've been waiting for you. Are you finally going up?" the boss asked.

"Yes," Lee Shin replied.

In response to Lee Shin's warm appearance, the boss fixed his glasses and closed the book he was reading.

"I've already died countless times and my memory has been reset, but I still remember you, master," the boss said.

"Yes, that's because I made you like that," Lee Shin replied.

"Why did you do that?" the boss asked.

Lee Shin smiled bitterly at his question.

"Well... it's really sad to be forgotten," Lee Shin replied.

"I see." The boss nodded.

"Is Gene doing well?" Lee Shin asked.

"Yes, he is still unconscious but he is doing fine inside me," the boss replied.

"Please take good care of him," said Lee Shin.

"I will," the boss answered.

Lee Shin smiled and moved his mana.

"Alright then, let's have our final showdown." Lee Shin suggested.

"Sounds good," the boss replied.

\* \* \*

Chop—

Thud

The Lizardman Archer's neck fell off very easily. His body, which remained on the tree until the end, also fell to the ground.

"Is this really it?" Kang Ji-Hoon looked at the Lizardman Archer lying on the floor with a puzzled face.

[You have defeated the Lizardman Archer.]

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

"I will go for it!" Immediately after those words, Kang Ji-Hoon's body disappeared with the streak of light.

\* \* \*

Swoosh— Swoosh—

The flames spread over the trees. From the tip of the Lizardman Sorcerer's magic branch, a fireball was created and sent directly toward Ji Eun-Ju.

However, Ji Eun-Ju avoided it with ease while wondering about the difficulty of the fight.?

Then the fireball flew past her and hit the tree behind. Ji Eun-Ju was shocked by such a slow casting.

"Stone Ball." Ji Eun-Ju used merely a second-level elemental mana.

She gently tossed it to the opponent.

Puck!

"Keugh—" The Lizardman Sorcerer collapsed.

[You have defeated the Lizardman Sorcerer.]

"What the hell..." Ji Eun-Ju scratched her head in confusion.

[The level of difficulty will increase dramatically starting from the next stage.]

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

Ji Eun-Ju thought she could manage it even if the level of difficulty rose rapidly. In addition, she thought it was worth a challenge because she could give up at any point.

"I'll give it a try," Ji Eun-Ju replied confidently.

Her body disappeared with a streak of light.

\* \* \*

Clang—

The mighty sword of the Great Warrior clashed with Kim Kang-Chun's sword.

Swish— Schwing—

As the blades scratched against each other, the friction caused a sound.

"Crrr! You're amazing," the Great Warrior complimented Kim Kang-Chun.

"Oh yeah?" Kim Kang-Chun replied.

Unlike the Lizardman the Great Warrior, who was excited to meet an outstanding warrior, Kim Kang-Chun was expressionless.

"Crrr!" Lizardman the Great Warrior became fierce and struck his dull sword.

Kook—

However, the sword of the Great Warrior got stuck on the ground. Due to his dramatic attacking motion, his path of attack was obvious.

Kim Kang-Chun, who avoided the attack easily, swung his sword.

"That's amazing! You have avoided my sword." The Great Warrior was amazed.

"What's amazing; just die." Kim Kang-Chun's sword pierced the neck of the Lizardman the Great Warrior.

[You have defeated the Lizardman the Great Warrior.]

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

"I'll go for it," Kim Kang-Chun replied.

\* \* \*

Whip— Whip— Whip—

Because of the swamp, there were considerable restrictions on the challenger's mobility. Park Hye-Won, who was a wizard, could barely move. She had to deal with the opponent while being stuck in one place. The Lizardman Hunter, who moved sharply and fired arrows from afar, was an annoying one to deal with.

"This guy's pretty annoying," Park Hye-Won muttered.

Unlike her, the Lizardman Hunter seemed to have no restrictions on movement even in the swamp. This place was his battlefield. Her skill was effective against opponents who were not wizards.

"Wind Cutter!" Park Hye-Won shouted.

This skill was a third-level mana. The blade of the wind swept across the wide area before her. All the trees that the Lizardman Hunter utilized to run around and hide were cut down. And at the same time, his arm fell after getting struck by the wind cutter.

"Oh my gosh, what are you going to do now? Can you shoot an arrow with just one arm?" Park Hye-Won made fun of the Lizardman Hunter.

"What a despicable human being!" the Lizardman Hunter shouted.

"Who are you to say that?" Park Hye-Won replied.

Park Hye-Won gave him an absurd look and used her mana. The Lizardman Hunter pulled out a dagger with his remaining arm and rushed towards Park Hye-Won. However, it was futile.

"Air Bomb!" Park Hye-Won shouted.

The air exploded in front of the Lizardman Hunter's head and he collapsed.

[You have defeated the Lizardman Hunter.]

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

"Sounds good! A mana battle is my speciality," Park Hye-Won replied confidently.

Her body disappeared with a streak of light.

\* \* \*

The difficulty level of the second floor was not too high for those who came up from Undermost. However, at stage 4 and stage 7, the level of difficulty increased sharply compared to the previous stages. And these stages were not easy for the people of Undermost either.

Those who came up from the first floor without sufficient growth struggled with the Lizardman the Great Warrior; but very few actually lost to him. Their struggle was not because of their lack of competence. They made mistakes because they were scared of their first real game.

Such an outstanding performance was possible because the minimum requirement to clear the first floor, set by Lee Shin, was enough to beat the Lizardman the Great Warrior.

Shin Young-Woo, who was the first to challenge the second floor, was shocked looking at the ranking. His ranking continued to drop in real-time, leaving him no time to be pleased with the fact that he had ranked first originally. In an instant, his ranking fell to a three-digit.

What was comforting was that Cha Yu-Min still ranked below him.

He had expected that his ranking would drop, but it was surprising to see that his ranking was not much different from the famous Cha Yu-Min.

"Is this the difference in talent... Ha..." Shin Young-Woo sighed.

Cha Yu-Min had come up to the second floor without having done much on the first floor. And still, Cha Yu-Min had defeated the Lizardman the Great Warrior.



Shin Young-Woo had gone through several training sessions to increase his ability at Undermost before climbing up. And yet, there was only a slight difference between him and Cha Yu-Min.

"What an idiot I am." Shin Young-Woo regretted not doing more training at Undermost before coming up to the second floor.

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[You have defeated the Lizardman the Great Sorcerer.]

[From the next stage, the level of difficulty increases very rapidly! You cannot give up in the middle.]

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

Many of those who came up to the second floor were troubled when they saw the system message. Considering how the difficulty increased when moving from the third stage to the fourth stage, it seemed that the difficulty would increase even more drastically this time.

Most had a hard time just dealing with the Lizardman the Great Sorcerer. However, from this stage on, they could not even give up in the middle of the fight.

If they made a wrong move, they could potentially die as soon as they start. Most people thought that they had already made enough achievements just by coming this far, the second floor. There was no need to strain.

Very few people from Undermost had challenged the seventh stage.

"Master once said that when we try to look for stability, our growth will eventually stop. So, I'll challenge myself." Kim Kang-Chun decided to proceed to the next stage.

"Eh, if I'm already getting scared at this level, I don't deserve to be a ranker! So, I'm going to try!" Baek Hyun decided to challenge the next stage.

"Even if I can't make it, I'm still going to try! I will challenge myself to the next stage!" Kang Ji-Hoon decided to challenge the next stage.

"What should I do... The Great Sorcerer was somewhat doable... I wonder if all my other friends have decided to challenge themselves to the next stage. Oh well, the master said that we should be able to manage up to stage seven, so I'll give it a try!" Park Hye-Won decided to proceed to the next stage.

"Umm... I'll stop here." Ji Eun-Ju decided to give up the challenge.

She was fully capable of defeating the Great Sorcerer, but she did not want to risk her life to challenge a stage. At first, she was going for the challenge, but when the time came to finally choose, she was scared.

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[Defeat the Lizardman Berserker.]

The Lizardman Berserker was twice as big as all the other Lizardmen, and had armor all over his body as well as an ax that looked threatening. His red eyes gave him a look of a battle-crazy warrior.

"Well... This guy definitely has a different aura compared to the ones I've encountered before." Park Joo-Hyuk shot a cold look at the Lizardman Berserker.

"You decided to challenge me? I'll see how good you are!" the Lizardman Berserker shouted.

The Lizardman Berserker charged toward Park Joo-Hyuk. He moved deftly, in contrast to his body size. However, the moves were all too obvious to Park Joo-Hyuk.

Clomp— Clomp— Clomp—

Park Joo-Hyuk calmly aimed for the Lizardman Berserker's weak spots, and the damage accumulated.

Park Joo-Hyuk strengthened his body using mana. Then, with his effective mana manipulation, he inflicted damage on the opponent and used mana only when he had to block the opponent's attack.

The Berserker's entire body had already become bloody, but Park Joo-Hyuk was not injured in any way. Also, he still had enough mana.

"I guess it's not that bad," Park Joo-Hyuk muttered.

"Hahaha! You arrogant human being. The real game starts now!" The Lizardman Berserker laughed at him.

Kang! Kang! Kang! Kang!?

Park Joo-Hyuk blocked the Lizardman Berserker's ax with his sword, but he also knew he was gradually reaching his limit. He felt that something was going wrong. He thought the more damage he inflicted, the more tired and weak the enemy should have gotten. However, the opponent was getting stronger.

"Keugh!" Park Joo-Hyuk had momentarily missed the Berserker's ax, and flew backward due to the opposing force against the blade he tried to block the ax with.

It seemed like the durability of the sword that blocked the ax was gradually reaching its limit. Park Joo-Hyuk had applied his mana on the sword a little late and that had caused a serious damage to its durability.

'I should have inflicted enough damage. But why is his speed and power still increasing?' Park Joo-Hyuk was confused.

Across the globe, there was not a single challenger who could defeat the Berserker on the second floor. As a result, there was no information on the Berserker. And Park Joo-Hyuk was in panic.

The more damage the enemy suffered, the stronger it became. So what did he have to do? Should he knock down the Berserker at once with a powerful blow? Or should he continue to inflict damage on

him? While he was thinking, the battle continued. The Berserker was gradually catching up with Park Joo-Hyuk's speed, which was much more advanced at the start.

'Damn it, is this all I can do?' Park Joo-Hyuk thought.

Park Joo-Hyuk was hoping to clear at least this stage without using his unique ability... However, if his opponent was already this strong, he thought it would be impossible to clear the next stage even with the help of his unique ability.

In that case, Park Joo-Hyuk thought it would be better to use his unique ability now instead of saving it for later and focus on reducing the clear time.

"Die!" Park Joo-Hyuk shouted.

The Lizardman Berserker's red mana power lingered around his ax and then the Berserker swung his ax toward Park Joo-Hyuk.

Kwang! Chang—!

The sword that blocked the ax broke, and the ax swung forward at a speed that could potentially decapitate Park Joo-Hyuk's head.

At that moment, a golden light emerged from Park Joo-Hyuk's body. And then, the world, including the Lizardman Berserker, stopped momentarily. Then their bodies went back to the conditions before Park Joo-Hyuk's sword broke. Park Joo-Hyuk's unique ability was in effect.

[Power of resurgence.]

# You can change what has happened.

Unlike what was happening a while ago, the ax held by the Lizardman Berserker was now broken by Park Joo-Hyuk's sword instead.

[300 resurgence energy has been consumed.]

"Keugh! There's no way...!" the Lizardman Berserker groaned in pain.

"Die!" Not giving the Lizard Berserker a moment to rest, Park Joo-Hyuk got closer to him and plunged the sword right into his neck.

Thwack—!

"That's awesome..." Park Joo-Hyuk was surprised.

[You have defeated the Lizardman Berserker.]

[This is an amazing achievement!]

[There is a sharp increase in the difficulty level. You cannot give up mid-way.]

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

Park Joo-hyuk looked at the system message window with a heavy breath.

# Resurgence Energy: 200/500

Park Joo-hyuk had seen a crack in the Berserker's ax, and he thought that he could break the ax easily if he put enough mana onto it. Even so, he had spent 300 resurgence energy.

'Was it something too challenging for me?' Park Joo-Hyuk looked at the system message window with his teeth clenched.

"I give up," Park Joo-Hyuk replied.

[You will be moving to the waiting area on the third floor.]

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The community was still very active and it showed no sign of becoming quiet. All of the people were paying close attention to the challengers who just came up from the first floor. And the rankings were updated from time to time as more than a thousand challengers climbed at once. People enjoyed just watching the changes and talking about them.

└ Is the first place almost fixed?

└ Well... We don't know yet. It's only the third day.

└ But the first place already has 20,300 points. So is it even possible to get a score that's higher than this? It's already been more than a day since the top three rankings were fixed.

└ I think it will be renewed once or twice more.

└ Do you want to bet whether the ranking will be renewed or not?

└ Sure, let's make a bet. How can someone get a score that's even higher than this? Open a betting room!

└ Okay! Let's do it!

└ Wait a second! The ranking has been updated again!

└ What?

# First. Park Joo-Hyuk: 38,420 points

# Second. Baek Hyun: 37,180 points

# Third. Kim Kang-Chun: 34,750 points

# Fourth. Hwang Kang-Woong: 34,380 points

# Fifth. Kang Ji-Hoon - 33,010 points

# Sixth. Park Hye-Won: 31,830 points

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↳ What the hell... Is this happening for real?

↳ Their scores are above 30,000 points? Wow, the first ranking's score is close to 40,000 points!

↳ What? How far did they get to?

↳ What's happening? Are they the same Koreans as us?

The shocking ranking, which was refreshed once again, had drawn people's attention to the community one more time. Now, those who reached the second floor were able to tap on the community to connect with the other people in the tower.

They thought it was amazing and fun to communicate with people on the upper floor of the tower.

└ Hey! Excuse me! Please join the community! Please!

└ What the hell happened on the first floor? Please give us some information!

└ What's the secret to your strength!

People started to get some information from the challengers of Undermost and only then did they know exactly what happened on the first floor. Everyone in the community could finally understand the reason why the newcomers were getting such a high-performance score.

The boss on the first floor was a necromancer who had climbed the tower before.

And because the boss came to his senses, all the challengers on the first floor could not climb to the second floor. The challengers were then trained by the necromancer who offered to help them to become stronger. Everyone who was hearing this account had no choice but to take their word for it since all the stories from the newcomers were the same.

The important part was that the necromancer was still on the first floor. There were many rumors that he would probably climb the tower, too. Many people did not know how the boss of a floor could climb the tower. All they knew was that the boss had used the Heart of the Soul Scavenger.

With their limited knowledge, they could not infer the method that Lee Shin had used. People just wondered how the frail first-floor boss could change and how he would advance to the next floor. Over time, not only the second floor but also the third and fourth floors saw dramatic changes in their rankings. And those who took the top places were already fixed.

# First. Baek Hyun: 53,100 points



# Second. Park Hye-Won: 52,380 points

# Third. Park Joo-Hyuk: 46,300 points

# Fourth. Hwang Kang-Woong: 43,200 points

# Fifth. Kim Kang-Chun: 42,830 points

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Within the top places, their rankings continued to change according to the concept of the stage. Those people who had been ranked below the median or were in the three-digit placings, began to be pushed out of the top 1,000, one after another.

└ I guess the top ranks are almost fixed now.

└ Wow, is Cha Yu-Min gone now?

└ Well, we don't know yet. Can't you see that there are people on the third floor who are scoring lower than Cha Yu-Min?

└ But don't you think it would be impossible for Cha Yu-Min to be at the top now?

Cha Yu-Min, who had always been ranked at the top of each floor, was pushed out of the top 1,000 on the second floor now. He had become an ordinary challenger. Nevertheless, on the third and fourth

floors, his ranking was in the three-digit range. Now the challengers' attention was on the fifth floor. It was the first floor where challengers could set the level of difficulty. There were countless challengers who died on this floor having been fooling around.

↳ I'm pretty sure the top rankers will go for the difficulty level of Hell, don't you think so?

↳ No way, Hell level is crazy... What if they die?

↳ The Extreme level is enough, guys! So please don't be too greedy!

↳ What are you guys saying! Those challengers who have achieved that high of a score deserve to challenge the Hell level.

↳ You are saying that after you've been through at least the Hard level, right? It's not human territory starting from the Extreme level.

All the challengers who reached the fifth floor were in agony. There was a lot of information about the level of difficulty. And there was a lot of information from the challengers of the tower who had already experienced this floor. However, starting from the Extreme level, it was very difficult to find any information. And one could only make assumptions for the Hell level.

When the top rankers gathered and exchanged their opinions on the difficulty level of the fifth floor, the community was on fire, once again.

"Oh my gosh! Guys, take a look at this!" Everyone's attention was drawn to Park Hye-Won, looking at the community.

"Why? What's wrong?"

"Did the master come up or something...? ... Wait, really?"

"Hurry up and look at the ranking!" Park Hye-Won shouted.

At Park Hye-Won's words, everyone hurriedly checked the ranking with serious faces.

# First. Lee Shin: 108,320 points

# Second. Park Joo-Hyuk: 38,420 points

# Third. Baek Hyun: 37,180 points

# Fourth. Kim Kang-Chun: 34,750 points

# Fifth. Hwang Kang-Woong: 34,380 points

"No way... Is this happening for real?"

"How far did he get to?"

"What an initiation ceremony..."

They shook their heads as they watched the ranking. Meanwhile, within the community, the hot topic of the day was the name Lee Shin.