

The Tower 238

Chapter 238

Just as Lee Shin was interrogating the Karaxes, a chilly wind rustled in his ears.

Ssss—

Green particles that came into contact with Lee Shin's eyes began to turn white. Like ink dispersing in water, these white particles were gradually moving in his direction.

Ggggg—

Lee Shin could tell that something was approaching from the harsh sound of metal scraping against the rough ground. From within the green mist, a black shadow was swaying slightly, revealing the form of the stranger. It was a ghost who was wearing a dark and tattered robe.

An iron chain that extended from the inside of his robe and a sickle that hung from the iron chain was dragged along on the ground.

- Who is that guy?

"He's the executioner," Lee Shin replied to Gene Ebrium.

- An executioner?

"He's one of the punishers who capture the ghosts who cause trouble in this Archipelago," Lee Shin explained.

- Oh I see...

The next moment, a bright white light flickered from the inside of the ghost's robe.

"Is it you who has set foot upon this world as an anomaly?" the ghost asked, looking at Lee Shin.

"What are you talking about?" Lee Shin asked back with a confused look.

"Hmm... So, I wasn't mistaken..." the ghost muttered.

The ghost had a completely different aura from the executioner Lee Shin knew. Everything about the air around him changed as the ghost moved. Also, he was talking nonsense. Therefore, contrary to Lee Shin's assumptions, this guy could not be an executioner.

"I am the master of the punishers, as well as the ruler of the Archipelago of Punishment," the ghost introduced himself to Lee Shin.

"So, you are the ruler of this place?" Lee Shin asked.

Lee Shin scanned the ghost rapidly as if trying to figure out something.

'Why would the ruler be here...'

The ruler of this place was typically confined to their own territory and did not move about. Therefore, if he moved out of their territory, it must mean that something had changed. Perhaps it had something to do with the anomaly that the ruler mentioned earlier.

"Yes, that's right. Actually, I have been thinking that something was off about the Archipelago of Shadow... but I guess it's from the power of Transcendence," the ruler replied to Lee Shin.

That he was able to sense Lee Shin's power of Transcendence probably indicated that he was also of a similar class. In fact, the only being with such a class in this world was the ruler.

'He really is the ruler. But then that means...'

- Was this what Baal was talking about?

Only by becoming an Adversary could Lee Shin obtain the key to unlock the secrets of the 98th floor. Lee Shin realized that what was happening right now was what Baal had mentioned to him earlier.

"Why have you revealed yourself to me?" Lee Shin asked.

"Please, kill me," the ruler said.

"...Excuse me?" Lee Shin asked again.

"The power of Transcendence... Someone who has reached the pinnacle of Transcendence like you might be able to do it," the ruler said.

Out of nowhere, the executioner was asking Lee Shin to kill him. While Lee Shin was trying to figure out what was going on, a series of system messages appeared in front of him.

[Hidden Stage – Soul Scavenger]

[The Soul Scavenger who rules the Archipelago of Punishment is bound here due to certain circumstances. Follow his request and kill him.]

The Soul Scavenger was the original owner of the fake heart that Lee Shin had used in the past to transfer souls from the first floor. He was the ruler of the Archipelago of Punishment. However, now, he was asking to be killed.

"Why do you want to be killed?" Lee Shin asked.

"I was bound here by some guy. I'm in a situation where I can't die even if I want to. If you can kill me, I will be freed from these shackles," the ruler of the Archipelago said.

"But what good is there if you die?" Lee Shin asked.

"I'll lose my current class, but I will eventually come back to life, no matter how long it takes. But if I stay here, I will be exploited for the rest of my life without being able to live or die fully," the ruler of the Archipelago explained.

"And who made you like this?" Lee Shin asked.

"Well, for that one, I will tell you if you come find me," the ruler replied.

After saying that, the bright white light of the ruler dimmed into complete darkness, and the particles that had turned white were changing back to green again.

"Is he seriously just leaving because he's done talking?" Lee Shin muttered.

- Do you know where he lives?

"No, I don't know," Lee Shin replied.

- Then can you find him within 30 days?

"Yes, I can do that," Lee Shin replied with confidence.

- You seem relaxed.

The next moment, Lee Shin noticed that the green mist was growing denser. Then, a series of system messages appeared in front of him.

[You have become the target of the Soul Scavenger.]

[Your location has been exposed to the Punishers.]

Lee Shin realized that Gene Ebrium was somewhat annoyed and decided to hold back his chuckle.

- Ugh... the Punishers will be swarming in shortly.

"We'll just have to keep moving in the direction where the strong ones appear," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin thought moving in the direction where the strong ones appear was the best way to find the Soul Scavenger.

Euuuggghhh...

Where is it...? Where is it...?

Shortly after, annoying voices could be heard. Not only the Punishers, but also the ghosts that were dominated by the Punishers were gathering there.

"There are quite a lot of them," Lee Shin muttered.

At Lee Shin's words, Gene Ebrium looked around. Black shadows filled the surroundings with fog. If they were already swarming in like this as soon as Lee Shin became the target, they would be a real nuisance later. Moreover, the executioner, who had been earlier possessed by the Soul Scavenger, now regained his senses. Therefore, for Lee Shin to make any moves, he had to deal with all these guys first.

- I guess we will have to move a bit faster.

"No, there's no need for that actually," Lee Shin replied.

The whip of earth that had rounded the Karaxes up hit the ground. After taking a slow step forward, Lee Shin took out the black Gourd Shaped Bottle.

- What is that?

"This is something I got from capturing a monster stronger than these guys," Lee Shin explained.

It was the Gourd Shaped Bottle he had obtained from the evil spirit on the Hell Level stage on the 85th floor.

[The Gourd Shaped Bottle of Tolcher]

This is a gourd shaped bottle that can contain souls endlessly. Rumor has it that Tolcher had put in over tens of millions of souls inside here...

You can forcibly contain souls.

You can take out the contained souls.

You can store the souls infinitely.

Tolcher was an evil spirit who took pleasure in forcibly binding and tormenting souls. Lee Shin acquired this Gourd Shaped Bottle after killing him.

Pop!

When Lee Shin removed the stopper of the Gourd Shaped Bottle using his psychokinesis, an eerie pressure bore down on the space.

Euuuggghhh...

The next moment, ghosts pierced through the green mist and approached Lee Shin. At the same time, a strong suction force from the opening of the Gourd Shaped Bottle started to sweep the ghosts toward the Bottle.

The ghosts who had been chasing Lee Shin according to the Punishers' orders were sucked into the Gourd Shaped Bottle without knowing what was going on, and Lee Shin put the stopper back on.

- Wow, this is insane. What is this?

Gene Ebrium looked at the black Gourd Shaped Bottle with amazement. That was because Lee Shin was able to wield the bottle just by having the desire to open the lid and forcibly put in the ghosts that were before him.

‘It's more effective than I thought but...’

The problem was that the souls inside this Gourd Shaped Bottle eventually turned into demon souls. Besides, when one pulled the stopper out, an immense spiritual pressure was released. It seemed like this was a backlash caused by having so many souls in the Bottle.

‘Tsk, I feel like the demon souls that are inside this Bottle might all come out into the world.’

Tolcher was an evil soul who wielded the power of souls. Unlike Tolcher, Lee Shin was not very used to experiencing the pressure of souls. Therefore, he could potentially end up releasing all the souls from the Bottle if he were to fail to control the spirit pressure well.

- It looks quite dangerous.

"Yes, I should restrain myself from using this," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin had thought about releasing all the demon souls somewhere else and then using them as he wished. However, the relentless malice that could be felt from within the Bottle made it seem impossible for even Lee Shin to handle the consequences easily.

‘Yeah, it's an absurd idea.’

Besides, even Tolcher did not release all these demon souls when he was fighting against Lee Shin. Perhaps even Tolcher himself did not have the confidence to handle all the demon souls by himself.

- Another group is coming.

When Lee Shin looked up, there were countless ghosts entering Lee Shin’s sensory range. Among them were also the Punishers.

The next moment, Lee Shin immediately wrapped mana around his right hand. Then, a searing flame swept away everything in front of him. Pillars of fire, rising from the ground, incinerated all the souls that he had sensed.

"We are going to just push through like this," Lee Shin said to Gene Ebrium.

- Yes, this is a very conventional approach.

[You have twenty-one days remaining.]

Nine days passed since Lee Shin had arrived at the Archipelago of Punishment, and finally, he found it.

- It's unbelievably vast.

Gene Ebrium shook his head as he looked at the massive altar in front of him. This archipelago was so vast that it took nearly half a day to cross even one of some of these islands. Lee Shin was not walking at a slow pace; in fact, he was flying at a rapid speed.

After passing dozens of islands, the altar finally came into view.

The altar had a design that looked rugged yet at the same time dignified and elegant, fully capturing the Soul Scavenger's style.

- What are you going to do now?

"I guess I should go meet him," Lee Shin replied to Gene's question.

A sinister and chilling aura emanated from inside. Just standing at the entrance of the altar was enough for him to feel a sense of oppression.

[Flare]

Lee Shin, with a flick, lit a small flame at the tip of his finger and pointed toward the altar.

Whoosh!

The flame spread across the floor and quickly engulfed the entire altar. Then, he stirred up the wind and swept it toward the altar, which had become a massive lighthouse that illuminated the dark archipelago.

Woong—!

The wind that spun around the altar turned into a tempest, and the flames created a pillar of fire, steadily growing stronger.

- Do you think he'll be able to withstand this?

"I feel like he will come out soon," Lee Shin replied.

At the moment when the altar disintegrated into ashes and the scorching wind subsided, a faint figure could be detected by Lee Shin's mana wave.

A black shadow swayed in the flickering flames. A Giant who had been sitting squarely in a massive chair finally stood up and emerged.

He had white hair, pale skin, and unfocused pupils. Lee Shin could tell from his appearance that he was annoyed. Lee Shin was stunned to see the Giant emerge with such a casual attitude in the midst of the gust of wind that had instantly wiped out the altar.

- He looks quite different from when we first met him.

The Giant slowly turned to Lee Shin and opened his eyes wide. At the same time, tremendous pressure began to weigh down on the space.

- Is he using spiritual power right now?

The green particles that were visible to Lee Shin's quickly turned into white particles and began to press down on the space. This was the same phenomenon as when the Soul Scavenger possessed the executioner's body earlier.

'Hmm... I feel like it will be doable...'

Having seen it once, Lee Shin was aware that those without spiritual power would have a hard time escaping from this pressure.

'I can finally understand why I had to become an Adversary.'

Lee Shin soon realized that he would not have understood such a phenomenon without this title. Furthermore, he would not have been able to deal with this kind of situation.

Besides, it was not just any ordinary spiritual pressure; it was the spiritual power used by a monster at the level of a Soul Scavenger. Lee Shin was aware that if he could not handle the situation properly, he would end up dead.

‘First things first.’

Lee Shin dispersed his mana to push away the white particles and altered their elements. He planned to use an unconventional technique that utilized the transformation of mana elements. If one did not have a good understanding of the power of souls, one would not have been able to attempt it. However, Lee Shin had enough research experience.

Moreover, he had already finished analyzing the phenomenon based on what the executioner had created earlier. Therefore, this was a problem that one with a fertile imagination and keen intuition could easily solve.

- Huh...

Lee Shin’s blue mana caused the particles to revert to their original form, and the pressure that had been bearing down on his entire body gradually disappeared. Gene Ebrium seemed impressed. Looking at Lee Shin, he could not help but think that Lee Shin was even more exceptional than his past self.

His ability to quickly adapt to any situation and tailor his magic accordingly was truly extraordinary. Gene Ebrium thought that Lee Shin was the top among geniuses.

Swoosh—!

Lee Shin, who had pushed away all the spiritual pressure, stared at the Soul Scavenger. Although his spiritual pressure had been destroyed, the Soul Scavenger was still gazing at Lee Shin with an indifferent look.

For a second, it seemed like white smoke was flowing out from various parts of his body. However, soon, he dissipated like smoke and reappeared in front of Lee Shin.

Baaaam—!

The Soul Scavenger's punch was blocked by Lee Shin's shield. For the first time, the Soul Scavenger looked surprised because not only Lee Shin had responded to his attack, but he had also managed to block it. In the eyes of any observer, the move would have looked like teleportation.

Thunk! Thunk! Thunk! Thunk!

White smoke continued to flow out from the Soul Scavenger's fist as he continued to throw punches. While Lee Shin was blocking the attacks, he was analyzing the Soul Scavenger's power. He quickly figured out that the white smoke contained the power of souls. When he took a good look at the white smoke, he could see many souls laying dormant in it.

Lee Shin wondered how many souls the Soul Scavenger had devoured. He was sure that as soon as those souls made contact with him, they would inject tremendous confusion and suffering into him.

"It seems like you've eaten quite a lot," Lee Shin said, looking at the Soul Scavenger.

"And you will become one of my meals as well, a tasty one!" The Soul Scavenger replied to Lee Shin with excitement.

The Soul Scavenger spoke for the first time. Greed slowly began to emerge in his unfocused pupils.

[Soul Annihilation Flame]

Lee Shin flicked his finger to make flames. Behind his glittering eyes was profound imagination. There was a harmonious blend of spiritual power and mana.

Lee Shin was trying to use flames to destroy the spiritual power. In an instant, he created a gust of wind that swept across his surroundings and infused the power of soul annihilation into it.

Then, Lee Shin muttered with a smirk, "I will kill you as you wished."