

The Tower 247

Chapter 247. The Same Place

‘Did he send me to the past or something...?’

There was still no certainty. What Lee Shin knew was that he was forced to confront a piece of his past that he had been reluctant to think about.

Lee Shin had returned to the time when he felt the most powerless, the time when he felt utterly helpless.

There had been a sudden outbreak of fire, which turned into a roaring blaze that engulfed the entire building, claiming the lives of everyone in Lee Shin’s family except for him.

Fortunately, firefighters eventually arrived, which was why he survived. However, his parents, who had shielded him with their bodies, could not escape and met their untimely demise.

‘Something that I can do here is...’

Even if Lee Shin tried hard to think about what he could do, he could come up with nothing. Perhaps if he had returned to a slightly earlier time, there would have been something he could do. However, now, at the age of seven, there was nothing in his means to avert the catastrophe.

The fire had already grown uncontrollably, and the time left to escape was dwindling rapidly.

Lee Shin started to think that there was surely a reason why the God of Time had sent him to this moment. This event was something he had hidden deep in his heart, but it was not something that he could easily forget with merely time.

Just because he had to face this incident again did not necessarily mean he would be disheartened or lose his focus. Yet, having grown through the years did not mean he had the power to do anything in this situation either, and this sense of powerlessness continued to weigh heavily on him.

‘Perhaps this is what he was going for.’

Lee Shin started to wonder what would happen if he were to die in this memory. Would he die in real life? Would he return to his original world? Or would this situation repeat itself? Countless questions swirled in his mind, but there was only one conclusion.

‘I just have to survive.’

In the past, mana did not exist as an energy source on Earth. It could be that mana was too little to be recognized as a force. However, for Lee Shin, there was another magnificent power that could replace the use of mana.

[Harmony Manifestation]

The reason behind it was unknown, but even in his current body that returned to his past memory, the skill of Harmony Manifestation was still active. Harmony Manifestation was a new energy that was created by mixing mana and divine power with chaos.

Woong— Woong—

When Lee Shin activated the skill of Harmony Manifestation, he could clearly sense the atmosphere around him.

‘So, did mana actually exist on Earth?’

Lee Shin could tell that there was a very faint trace of mana in the atmosphere. This mana, which seemed to be tainted by various impurities, was different from the one inside the Tower and had limited utility. It was almost unfathomable to be using this mana.

‘Maybe it can be used a few times.’

However, he was only referring to the limit of what ordinary people could do with this mana, because Lee Shin had the ability to purify and use this mana.

"Don't worry, son..." said Lee Shin's mother, trying to comfort him.

His mother's voice reached him, and he started to wonder if this person in front of him was, in fact, his real mother. However, this was only a passing thought—his only focus at the moment was to save these people.

Swoosh—!

The next moment, a pillar of fire was about to fall over the person who resembled his father, and he immediately manipulated the purified mana to contain the fire.

[Psychokinesis]

Crack—!

Woong—! Baaang—!

The pillar of fire got distorted and fell, breaking through the wall and then landing on the ground.

"What's going on all of a sudden?" Lee Shin's parents seemed confused.

"Mother, Father." Lee Shin calmly called out to them. "I'm sorry."

Lee Shin expressed the emotions that he was currently feeling openly to them.

"Shin, my dear! What are you talking about all of a sudden...?" his parents asked.

At that moment, the manhole cover outside the building dislodged and fell, and a jet of water shot out, pouring toward the building's outer wall.

"Keugh!"

Kwaaaaah!

Startled by the sudden deluge of water, Lee Shin's parents, who had embraced him, fell to the ground, covering him entirely with their bodies. However, the torrent of water split precisely around the three of them, only extinguishing the flames that were clinging to the building.

"Huh...?"

"What on earth is happening right now?"

The two of them, still unable to comprehend the situation, looked around as if they were waiting for the firefighters to arrive. However, the fire truck was still on its way, as they could see it coming from a distance out the window.

"Hey Shin, are you okay?" his parents asked.

"Yes," Lee Shin replied.

"Why are you suddenly—" His parents seemed confused.

Lee Shin looked up with a cold, penetrating gaze. He could see the sky through the wall that had crumbled. When Lee Shin sent his Harmony Manifestation to that spot, he could tell that the power of time was flowing.

"..."

"Hey, Shin?"

"I am not your son," Lee Shin replied.

"W-what do you mean?"

"Hey, Shin! Did something hit your head? Why are you acting so strange all of a sudden?"

The child they were searching for was not him, Lee Shin thought. It was probably another version of him from this time period. Therefore, Lee Shin did not bother answering their questions and extended his force of Harmony Manifestation, twisting the power of time.

"Please take good care of this child," Lee Shin said to his parents.

The sky split open, and a Gate appeared. The next moment, Lee Shin's body appeared translucent and ethereal, and he left the seven-year-old him behind.

"Hey Shin! Lee Shin! What's going on! Wake up! Why are you doing this all of a sudden!"

"Dial 911! Please! Please dial 911! Our child is..."

Voices from behind reached his ears. A sense of discomfort suppressed his emotions for a while, but he still went into the Gate.

Woong—!

The background flickered white, and the familiar green plateau reappeared. Time, which had been accelerated, had now reverted to its original state.

"But how...?" The God of Time seemed confused, looking at Lee Shin.

This time, even the God of Time let out a stunned, feeble groan. He had probably never expected Lee Shin to return so quickly from the past. Perhaps he had thought Lee Shin would never be able to return.

"Too bad for you," Lee Shin muttered, looking at the God of Time.

Lee Shin immediately activated his skill of Harmony Manifestation. The time for the God of Time to unleash an attack was over. Now, it was his turn to demonstrate his power.

[Harmony Manifestation]

Lee Shin twisted the ability of a deity related to time and created a new path.

Wooong—!

"Now, it's time to put an end to this tiresome time," Lee Shin said with determination.

[Godslayer]

The sharp edge of the Harmony Manifestation power became a streak of light that pierced through his chest and shattered the giant hourglass.

Swoosh—!

Crack—!

The giant hourglass that symbolized the Temple of Time was destroyed by Lee Shin's skill, Godslayer. It stopped moving and its contents started to spill out.

"Time... it has truly stopped..." the God of Time muttered, looking at what was going on.

The God of Time, who did not even let out a single whimper and was seemingly unharmed even until the last moment, smiled ruefully and looked at Lee Shin. His power, which had appeared to overflow with no bounds, began to gradually fade.

"So, in the end... you've cleared the Tower," the God of Time said.

"Yeah, that's right," Lee Shin replied.

"So what is it that you desire?" the God of Time asked.

"I want beings from the countless other dimensions not to be dismissed as mere pawns by these damn gods," Lee Shin said with a determined voice.

He looked at the ground and remembered the countless challengers he had encountered so far while climbing the Tower.

"So many of them have been sacrificed," Lee Shin said.

"Is that it? That's all you want?" the God of Time asked.

"I want those who died unjustly in events like this to come back to life. And... I want to make sure that such events never happen again," Lee Shin added.

"That's an absurd wish," the God of Time replied.

"No, it's entirely possible," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin had been hearing about secrets of this world from many people throughout his journey. Since the day he heard about the origin of the Tower and the gods from the Spirit King in the Underworld, Lee Shin had been thinking about one thing.

"Send me back in time," Lee Shin said to the God of Time.

"... Does that mean you want to repeat the same thing all over again?" the God of Time asked Lee Shin with a confused look.

"No, send me to the time before the Tower was created. I want to go back to the time when the Tower was still forming within the dimensions," Lee Shin replied.

"Huh? Wait a second..." the God of Time muttered.

Once again, the God of Time began to show interest in what Lee Shin was about to do.

"I'm going to prevent it from happening. I'm not going to allow such an absurd world to be created," Lee Shin said.

"Do you even know what that means?" the God of Time asked.

"Yes, of course," Lee Shin replied with unwavering conviction.

After hearing his response, the God of Time closed his eyes.

- Lee Shin! How much more burden are you trying to carry? Don't try to bear it all by yourself.

Gene Ebrium, who was floating next to Lee Shin, grabbed his shoulder and looked into his eyes, voicing his concerns harshly. It seemed like Gene Ebrium had also figured out what Lee Shin was trying to do.

Lee Shin deliberately ignored his gaze and approached the God of Time.

- Lee Shin!

"You've become a presence so immense that I cannot contain you anymore. So... sending someone like you to the past is...well, haha," said the God of Time.

The God of Time blinked and chuckled in disbelief.

"No, it can't be..." the God of Time muttered.

"Why? What is it?" Lee Shin asked, looking confused.

"Actually... I think... it will be possible... The Tower has allowed me to do it," the God of Time replied.

A golden radiance emerged from the God of Time and scattered in all directions.

[You have passed the trial of the God of Time.]

[You have cleared the 100th floor.]

[Your achievement has been calculated.]

[The rewards corresponding to your achievements will be granted.]

[Please state your desired rewards.]

Countless messages appeared in front of Lee Shin, so he slowly closed his eyes and voiced the thought that had been running through his mind this whole time.

"Send me to the time when the Tower first appeared," Lee Shin said.

[The Tower has accepted the challenger's request.]

"Interesting. You are indeed the human I've chosen," the God of Time said, his eyes wide open.

"Go. Go and try your best. That life will be incomparably more difficult and challenging than what you have just gone through. All the gods will conspire to kill you," the God of Time said.

"It doesn't matter, because I'm used to that," Lee Shin replied.

The God of Time nodded. Then, the next moment, a white light descended from the sky upon him.

Lee Shin arrived at a world that was shaded with hues of black and swirling blue light. White and yellow lights illuminated various areas, and diagonal lines sprawled haphazardly everywhere.

Alone, Lee Shin gulped when he noticed a black silhouette that appeared in front of him. In this dimension where even the sound of the lazily blowing wind could not be heard, Lee Shin pushed himself forward.

A black shadow shrouded Lee Shin's vision. When he opened his eyes, he saw nothing but the empty expanse of space.

[Welcome, the first discoverer of the Tower.]

"Who are you?" Lee Shin asked.

[My name is 'Tower,' which constitutes this world. However, that's just a name attached to me in the past. It can be changed at any time.]

"Tower... I see. Why have you appeared now after lying dormant for so long?" Lee Shin asked.

[So you already knew about my existence! Maybe that's why you seemed familiar to me for some reason.]

[I have appeared because it is time, according to the order of things.]

"What difference can the first discoverer make?" Lee Shin asked.

[The first discoverer of the Tower can regulate everything about the Tower.]

"Hmm... I can regulate everything...?" Lee Shin muttered.

Lee Shin immediately realized that due to this authority, the God of Chaos had been able to change the first floor as he pleased.

"Alright, can I make my decision right away?" Lee Shin asked.

[Yes, you can do it right now.]

There was no need for Lee Shin to hesitate or organize his thoughts again, because he had already thought about this thoroughly.

"Then let the Tower be reduced to just one floor," Lee Shin said.

[You want it to be just a single floor?]

"Yes, that's right. We don't need an upper floor, because nobody will be able to come up from the first floor," Lee Shin replied.

[Understood.]

"And the challengers will be the gods who will encounter the Tower," Lee Shin said.

[Are you referring to the Managers of Dimension?]

"Yes. And..." Lee Shin closed his eyes, lost in thought.

A moment later, he opened his eyes and said, "I will become the boss of the first floor of the Tower."

[Does that mean you want to be the one to guard the first floor?]

"Yes, that's right," Lee Shin replied.

[Understood.]

[Do you have any other conditions?]

"Other conditions are..." Lee Shin listed all the things that he had carefully planned beforehand.

Lee Shin carefully designed the first floor of the Tower, specifying all the smallest details that he had thought about. In fact, the design was not very elaborate; it was not significantly different from the existing first floor.

[The construction of the Tower has begun.]

Woong—!

A massive group of lights fell from the sky. A portal extended over a wide open field, radiating brilliance. The first challenger stepped into the portal.

When this challenger entered the portal, he noticed a large chamber. Also, there was a large bridge and a gigantic door at the end of the chamber. The challenger approached the door and pushed it open.

Creak...

When he opened the door, a dry voice echoed, tinged with both boredom and a hint of excitement. The challenger's eyes gleamed when he heard the voice.

"You're finally here," said the boss of the first floor.

"What is this place? The overall amount of my power has reduced significantly," the challenger complained.

Even though the challenger was upset that his power had been diminished due to an unknown external influence, he still seemed composed. When the challenger noticed that before him was a human seated with crossed legs leaning against his chair, he frowned at that human with purple hair.

"Who are you? Are you a human?" the challenger asked.

"Yes, I am. I'm human. Back where I come from, there's a saying that before you ask someone a question, you should start with an introduction of yourself," the boss of the first floor said.

"Hmm... What a funny guy. Very well. My name is the God of Chaos," said the challenger, the God of Chaos.

The God of Chaos smirked and exposed his vicious fangs.

"I have no need for your introduction," said the God of Chaos.

A violet energy began to ascend from behind him, releasing chaos that was filled with greed into the air. In the very next instant, this newfound energy surged forth with relentless determination, racing toward the boss.

Swoosh—!

"I'll find out myself after I devour you," the God of Chaos said.

Crack—! Crack! Creak!

The tentacles of the God of Chaos were caught by an intangible force sent forth by the first-floor boss, snapped and broke.

"What the hell? What happened to my chaos...!" the God of Chaos started to panic.

"Well, since I think your plan will no longer proceed, I'll just introduce myself," said the boss of the first floor.

The boss, who had been giving a cold look to the God of Chaos got up from his seat.

"My name is Lee Shin," said the boss of the first floor.

The next moment, a smooth, purple arrow conjured above his palm.

[Dark Arrow]

The purple arrow appeared rudimentary, but it spun rapidly and pierced straight into the chest of the God of Chaos.

"Keugh...!" the God of Chaos gasped.

When the bewildered God of Chaos realized that his chaos had no effect on the opponent, he gasped in disbelief, his mouth agape. Then, his head dropped.

Seeing the response, Lee Shin could not help but let out a faint, mocking smile as he spoke.

"And I am the first-floor boss of the Tower," Lee Shin said, smirking at the God of Chaos.

- The End of <I Became the First Floor Boss of the Tower> -