

## The Tower 39

### Chapter 39: The Second Dimension Gate

"Hello, this is reporter Cha Eun-Joo from BBC News. We are at Gwanghwamun where the Dimension Gate will soon open. There's already a huge crowd, so the government and the association are working hard on crowd control..." said the reporter, Cha Eun-Joo.

Time had passed, and it was time for the Dimension Gate to be opened again after the incident in which the challengers of the tower had disappeared. More people gathered at the Gwanghwamun compared to last time.

Wooong—

It was midnight on December 1st. A huge gate appeared in Gwanghwamun, and the challengers poured out of the tower.

"They are out! They are coming out!"

"Hello, this is reporter Kim Young-Hyun from 'I like challengers.' May I please interview you for a sec—"

"Hello, this is reporter Song Kyung-Joon from SBC! Did the challengers on the first floor come up?"

"Hello, I am a reporter from Hanyang..."

The challengers who were walking through the bustling crowd had serious looks on their faces. Some of them even seemed to be angry. Seeing those expressions, the reporters found it hard to shove their microphones in their faces to interview them.

"Hey!" Baek Kang-Woo called out.

"Hey Kang-Woo!" Shin Ji-Won greeted him.

Shin Ji-Won, who came out through the Dimension Gate, waved at Baek Kang-Woo, who was waiting for her.

"Why does everyone look so depressed? Has no one come out of the first floor yet?" Baek Kang-Woo asked.

Shin Ji-Won became serious when she heard Baek Kang-Woo's question.

"No, it's the other way around actually. There was a problem because people broke through the first floor so well," Shin Ji-Won muttered.

"What? What does that mean?" Baek Kang-Woo asked.

"Where is Yu-Min? We really need him now," Shin Ji-Won asked.

"Uh, well..." Baek Kang-Woo seemed hesitant.

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Not only was this happening in Korea, but there was an uproar at the Dimension Gates in other countries as well. The news about South Korea's challengers had spread around the world and the stories of their unconventional behaviors were heard everywhere. And there were countless articles about Lee Shin.

[The wall that was blocking the first floor of the Korean tower had collapsed. All the challengers on the first floor started to climb the tower.]

[The ranking innovation took place from the second floor. New challengers have ranked from first to the thousandth place.]

[The number one ranker Cha Yu-Min, was pushed back to the 1,000th place in the second-floor ranking...]

[New supernovas have appeared in large numbers. Will there be new trouble in the tower?]

[The name of the boss who was blocking the first floor is Lee Shin? Who is Lee Shin? Is he really Korean?]

[He had broken all the records from the second to the tenth floor! Is Lee Shin a real person? Or was he a person made by the tower?]

That the challengers climbed beyond the first floor where they used to be stuck had caused an upheaval on Earth so tremendous that it was beyond their imagination. People on Earth were shocked to hear this story, as expected by many of those in the tower.

└ What? All the rankings had been changed from the first place to the thousandth place?

└ No way, Cha Yu-Min got pushed to a rank in the thousands? What the hell is going on? You're lying, right?

└ Lee Shin? Who is Lee Shin? He's the top ranker right now?

└ Hey guys! This is all true. Someone I know came out of the tower this time, and he told me all of this was true.

└ Can you believe that Lee Shin's achievement score is 140,000? How can he achieve this amount of points on the second floor?

└ Hey, take a look at the fourth floor! Look at the gap between Lee Shin's score and the score of the second place! Does this even make sense?

└ Is he really Korean? I heard that this guy named Lee Shin was the boss of the first floor! What's happening?

Curiosity about Lee Shin rose exponentially all over the world. He was the master teacher of the challengers who was now dominating the top rankings of the lower floors. People found it strange because he had stopped the challengers from climbing, but now he was like a monster, crushing each floor with his ranking.

The challengers who returned to Earth through the Dimension Gate were those who had not yet met Lee Shin and never came into contact with the people from the Undermost—those who had encountered Lee Shin. Their information on him was limited. However, that was not the only news they brought.

"What did you say? Merteng had collapsed?" Baek Kang-Woo asked.

"Yeah! Well, to be exact, it could be considered collapsed," Shin Ji-Won explained.

"What about other countries? You have allies! Did they not help you?" Baek Kang-Woo asked again.

"They did not bother to help us. In fact, they betrayed us. Those sons of a bitch!" Shin Ji-Won explained in anger.

Baek Kang-Woo was stunned by the unbelievable news. Isocia was a new world on the 21st floor, and the country where Korean challengers belonged was called Merteng. It was one of the top five strongest regions in the entire continent up until last year. However, that place was now on the verge of collapse.

"What about the other challengers? What happened to those people?"

"... I don't know. I've lost contact with all of them."

"What...?"

Like Shin Ji-Won, the other Korean challengers returned depressed, and began spreading the same news in anger.

[Merteng in the Isocia continent is about to come to an end!]

[Challengers from all over the world had started to kill Merteng.]

[After the liberation of the first floor, Merteng's power suddenly nosedived. Is this a coincidence?]

[The whereabouts of Korean challengers who were active in Merteng are unknown...]

[England's supernova, Vergo: "England has no idea."]

[The U.S., China, and Japan are all silent. Some challengers say, "We don't know anything about that. It all happened on the lower floors."]

The Korean people expressed their anger about the fact that all the other countries were ignorant about the crisis in Korea.

└ Don't tell me that they betrayed us because they thought our country would become stronger.

└ How can they betray us though? How many times did Korea help them?

└ Are they out of their minds? How can they pretend they don't know? They used to talk about the continent Isocia to get what they wanted, but now they are saying they don't know anything all of the sudden?

└ You motherfuckers!

└ What the hell is going on? How can the strong Merteng collapse like this overnight! Does this even make sense?

└ Damn it! How far did the people who were released from the first floor go?

↳ Did they attack Merteng to keep Korea under control? Is that what really happened?

From the first floor to the 49th floor, the largest number of challengers were in Isocia, where the 21st to 29th floors had been integrated. Isocia was the only section in the lower floors where nine floors were classified into one world. The Isocia continent was now a big deal all over the world.

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[You have entered the 21st floor.]

[Save the world that is drowning in hell.]

[You need to obtain a 'pattern' to get a 'qualification.']

[You can get additional skills depending on the type of 'pattern.']

[Revitalize the country 'Merteng.']

"What the hell is this place..."

In the far distance, clouds of black fog covered the entire city which was now in ruins.

"No way... Is that really Merteng?"

"Oppa..."

"So our master was right?"

"Really... Did other countries betray us?"

When the challengers climbed up to the 21st floor together according to Lee Shin's advice, they were shocked at the current state of the city.

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[The new timeline will be expanded.]

[You have entered the 11th floor.]

[There are no more waiting areas on each floor.]

[Examinations will be held every 15 days.]

Lee Shin stepped into the new world. It was a big city, and there was a large clock tower standing tall in the center. There were numbers from 1 to 15 written on it and the large second hand was on 14.

"I'm just in time," Lee Shin muttered.

That clock represented the time when the stage started. The fact that the second hand was on 14 meant that 14 days had passed since the last stage had begun. The next stage was about to begin.

Lee Shin opened the community window and saw the time. It was December 29th and it was already time for the Dimension Gate to close. For Lee Shin, who was on the 11th floor, this date was not a very meaningful marker for time. However, this date would have been meaningful for others. The earth would have been in chaos because of the two big news, the Isocian continent and the liberation of the ground floor.

There would be an awful lot of people who wanted to get out now and spread the news right now.

"Ha..." Lee Shin sighed.

Lee Shin's climbing speed was much slower than what he had expected. It took more time to clear each floor because there was a lot of work for him to do on each.

In particular, Lee Shin was unintentionally delayed on the 10th floor for a few days, because there were several days from the round of 64 to the next game. However, Lee Shin could not give up the prize. Now that the unfortunate situation in Isocia had occurred, the most important item was Martyr.

Lee Shin opened the community window and saw numerous posts that were coming up in real-time. Among them, Lee Shin saw a post that caught his attention.

\* Is Cha Yu-Min really gone missing or what! Are other countries really determined to kill Korea?

↳ I think so, because Cha Yu-Min has the skill [Inter-Floor Traveler].

↳ No way... Are they afraid that Cha Yu-Min will come down to the 21st floor? So they decided to kidnap Cha Yu-Min or something?

↳ Are you kidding? They would have killed him. They won't just stop at kidnapping him. People say that Cha Yu-Min cannot be reached even on Earth. He didn't even enter the tower during the last Dimension Gate.

↳ No way... You think Cha Yu-Min is dead?

↳ I don't think so... The challengers ghosts sometimes. Why would Cha Yu-Min die? Who would be able to kill Cha Yu-Min? There's no one stronger than him.

↳ Well, I don't know that. Cha Yu-Min could have died if he had been careless.

When there was news that Cha Yu-Min had disappeared, most people were convinced he was already dead. The look on Lee Shin's face stiffened. He checked all the messages that were sent to him. Lee Shin

had told Cha Yu-Min to enter the tower when the Dimension Gate opened this time. However, there was no reply from Cha Yu-Min. Was he really gone missing? Was Cha Yu-Min really dead?

It was foolish to judge hastily. As someone had already mentioned, the challengers of the tower were out of touch with one another for months. And that happened many times. This was the case, even if the challengers were not in the tower, but on Earth.

Lee Shin checked all the other messages.

# Kim Kang-Chun - Master, we are going back in.

# Park Hye-Won - We'll do our best to do something about it. Please come up quickly.

# Ji Eun-Ju - Master... You have to hurry up and come...!

# Kang Ji-Hoon - Just trust me, Master!

# Hwang Kang-Woong: Hey, come up quickly. Don't let this old man suffer.

# Park Joo-Hyuk - Hi Master, I might kill them all. I'm sorry.

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There was a huge pile of messages. If all the information provided so far were true, it would be difficult for them no matter how much they tried. Potentially, some of them could die. Since Lee Shin had told them to gather on the 20th floor and go up together, they could challenge the floors together, but that was still not enough.

If killing the Demons were their task on the 21st floor, Lee Shin would not have to worry about anything. However, there could be fights with other enemies, and he did not know how many there were. Also, there could be betrayal of those whom they thought were allies. The challengers had to overcome the loneliness of being surrounded by enemies and being attacked on all sides, and win.

"I'm counting on you guys," Lee Shin muttered.

Tick.

The big second hand of the clock tower moved to 15.

[The stage on the 11th floor has begun.]

[If you want to participate, please enter the portal.]

A message popped up in front of Lee Shin. When he looked at the status window, there was a new class, Death Ruler. His class had changed to the Death Ruler, and he could use the class skill, Summoning of the World of Death. After seeing the descriptions of the two, Lee Shin smiled unconsciously.

"This really..." Lee Shin was speechless.

Then, the next moment, Lee Shin saw a large portal that was created in front of the clock tower.

"... doesn't make sense." Lee Shin laughed and walked slowly to the portal.

\* \* \*

"Oh, my God, you bastards!"

"Damn it! We're all gonna die if we don't get through this!"

"Oppa! Behind you!"

"Ugh!"

The place was covered with black fog, and so the surroundings were all covered in darkness. Every step they took, the demons were only looking for opportunities to bite the challengers. And the long darkness had made them increasingly exhausted.

Chop—!

"Ugh, huh... Why are there so many traps?"

"We're almost there. Hang in there," said Hwang Kang-Woong.

"Ha... Do you have any more potions, Mr. Hwang?"

"We have to save them for later. If I had known this, I would have bought a bigger Subspace Pocket."

[You have discovered the Nucleus of the Demon Realm. Break the Nucleus.]

"There it is!" Park Hye-Won found the Nucleus of the Demon Realm and shouted.

The other five who were fighting fiercely moved quickly in the direction of her voice.

"It's Keros! Kang-Chun oppa!"

"Alright, I'll take care of the front. Ji-Hoon, you help me! Hye-Won and Eun-Ju, you cover us and take care of the monsters on the sides with Mr. Hwang! And Joo-Hyuk can—keugh!" Kang-Chun gasped.

A flying dagger that emerged from the dark scratched Kang-Chun's side. He had tried, but he could not manage to dodge it properly, because it was such a sudden surprise.

"Whoa... You have good reflexes. Are you the challengers who were achieving top ranks recently?" The man who popped out of the darkness looked down at them with a sneer.

"What the hell? Why are you guys here...?"

"Haha, why do you care? You're all going to die tod—"

Chang! Kang!

Park Joo-Hyuk approached him before he even realized and stabbed him several times. The man blocked all his attacks with a response speed like no other, despite it being a surprise attack from Park Joo-Hyuk. However, he did seem a bit surprised. He then stared at Park Joo-Hyuk. He had keen eyes with a sharp, tough look.

"You must be Park Joo-Hyuk."

"How can you betray fellow human beings? Are you afraid that we will be stronger than you guys? You sons of a bitch!" Park Joo-Hyuk shouted with anger.

"Well, to be exact, we didn't betray humans. We betrayed Korea. Right?" The man laughed.

Behind him appeared other people. Enemies had gathered to kill the challengers. It was hard to see clearly because it was dark; but with a quick glance, one could tell that these people were not from one country—they were a mixture of different races.

The challengers' facial expressions started to harden because they only barely managed to break through the demon realm and finally found the nucleus.

"Kill them all."

Chang! Kang! Swoosh—

In the demon realm that was covered with complete darkness, the challengers and enemies had a fierce battle in order to survive.