

## The Tower 64

### Chapter 64

Lee Shin and his group arrived at the starting point of the wave. They were shocked to see a purple portal that seemed dangerous. The portal was increasing in size as well as its concentration of mana.

"You're saying that monsters will be pouring out of here, right?"

"I'll do my best not to let a single one of them get away!"

"Ha... I can't believe it turned out like this, but we'll be okay since we have you..." Alice said, looking at Lee Shin with a look full of trust.

"Actually no, you three will be in charge of this place," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin was not planning on staying, because there was another place he had to go.

"Don't worry, there aren't that many monsters from this portal here," said Lee Shin.

Despite Lee Shin's request, Alice and Fletta could not hide their anxiety.

"But where are you going?" Fletta asked.

"You want us to deal with this place by ourselves? No way! I only came here because you c—" Alice was worried.

"Please," Lee Shin said.

Alice was about to say more, but upon hearing that she closed her mouth instead. Her face was stiff. She had suddenly realized that she had been relying too much on Lee Shin.

"I will be dealing with other portals," Lee Shin said.

"That's right! I'm sure Lee Shin has an idea." Mariel supported Lee Shin.

When Alice and Fletta saw that Mariel was supporting Lee Shin, they could not do anything but nod. Lee Shin, who had been closely watching Alice for a long time, found that her gaze settled somewhere else for a moment.

'What was that? I thought she was looking at something.'

Alice, who had seemed unlikely to follow Lee Shin's opinion until the end, stared at the blank space for a moment, suddenly changed her attitude and looked ready to accept the new challenge.

'So, what kind of ability does she have?'

It was clear to Lee Shin that she had changed her attitude after seeing the system message, which meant that she had received a clue to lead her to this decision. Lee Shin tried to think of what Alice's ability was and thought, maybe it was the ability to predict the future or the equivalent...

'No way...'

There were some possibilities that came to Lee Shin's mind, but he thought it was still too early to jump into conclusions. First of all, Lee Shin had to focus on dealing with the wave.

"Even after you defeat all the monsters, stay here. I'll come back," said Lee Shin.

After saying that, Lee Shin immediately moved to the starting point of another wave. That place was not too far away, but far enough.

"Here it is," Lee Shin muttered.

A faint mana wave was detected by Lee Shin's mana detection zone. There was a device hidden here, which was difficult to find unless Lee Shin specifically tried to search this place with his mana. When Lee Shin pushed a part of the wall with his hand, a hole was formed in the floor and Lee Shin disappeared into it.

Lee Shin could feel the shifting/moving of the space in there. The momentary sensation soon disappeared and the black surroundings reverted to someplace in the labyrinth. It was a huge space that made one look small standing alone there. The stench of the place filled his nostrils and the floor was covered with the remains of corpses. Then, energy gathered rapidly on one side of the wall and a black portal began to form.

[The first wave begins.]

[You have 2:00:00 until the wave ends.]

The army of the dead walked out from the black portal. The eyes of the Skeleton Knight, who was immersed in the darkness, shone blue in the dark. The Skeleton Knight rode the Skeleton Horse and came out of the portal, leading the undead out of the portal.

"You are..." the Skeleton Knight muttered.

"You're Declan, the corpse cleaner," Lee Shin replied.

"... Are you a challenger? So, you came here with some knowledge," Declan, the Skeleton Knight, said.

"That's right," Lee Shin replied.

"Well, I don't know how you already know about this, but you are a fool," Declan replied.

The Death Knight, who was also referred to as the corpse cleaner, drew his sword with black mana surrounding him. The number of his soldiers was not so great yet, but Lee Shin was aware that the size of his army would grow much larger during the two hours until this wave ended.

Crack— Thud!

Part of one of the walls in this huge space opened and an avalanche of dead bodies poured out from it.

"Wake up, soldiers of the dead," Declan ordered.

The monsters twisted their bodies and got up. Then, Lee Shin heard the screams of those who were forced to become an undead and suffer eternal death.

Aaaahhhh—!

This was a place where the dead bodies of the labyrinth gathered. The Death Knight, was an undead that had the power to make more undead. He used to be a commander of a military force who had become more powerful over time. He was a hidden boss the challengers had to face if they failed to escape from the labyrinth within a certain period of time. However, Lee Shin decided to come here to block the last wave on his own.

"You should be my soldier, too," Declan ordered.

[Hidden Stage - The Corpse Cleaner Declan]

[The knight, Declan, who was trapped in the labyrinth and suffering from hunger, began to eat the dead bodies around him and he eventually could not overcome the energy of death and became the Death Knight. Declan, who wandered aimlessly through the labyrinth, unable to live or die, began stockpiling dead bodies in his loneliness, and he received the power to create undead from the God of Death. Free Declan, who became the corpse cleaner, from this eternal death.]

Pieces of dead bodies poured out every minute, and these pieces came together and became the undead, the soldiers of Declan.

"You cannot do anything... alone," said Declan.

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

Black mana swirled over Lee Shin's silver wand.

Woong—

With a single swing from Lee Shin, a black fog formed, along its trajectory, covering the undead.

"No way! How can a human have the power of death...!" Declan was shocked.

[Black Mana]

# Death element.

# You will have a strong dominance over the undead species.

[The Black Mana exerts dominance.]

Aaaahh—

The undead, which had hardened like stone statues, screamed with fear.

"What the hell...!" It became increasingly difficult for Declan to exert control over the undead.

"This is ridiculous," Declan muttered.

Declan had thought it was impossible for his power, that had the power of death, to be defeated so easily. Yet, this power was becoming unstable.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

One by one, starting from the small Skeleton Goblins to the giant Devagar Cows, they began to escape Declan's control and knelt in front of Lee Shin.

[Death Ruler]

# The dead are easily afraid of you.

# Your Dominance over the dead is strengthened.

# You are easily acknowledged by the dead.

To the dead, in the presence of the Death Ruler, a ruler more powerful than any other king had come to this place.

[You have taken away the dominance over Silver Mane Wolves from Declan.]

[Because of your title, the Death Ruler, the required dominance of the Silver Mane Wolf was reduced from 5 to 4.]

[You have taken away the dominance over Devagar Cow from Declan.]

[Because of your title, the Death Ruler...]

[You have taken away Declan's dominance.]

[Your dominance has increased by 1.]

[You have taken away the dominance over long-legged ground rats from Declan.]

[You have taken away the dominance...]

Declan, who was in denial that his power was weaker than that of a human, got on the Skeleton Horse and charged toward Lee Shin.

Clang!

"How dare you," Beltiar said.

The greatsword that rose from the floor blocked Declan's sword.

"How dare an undead do that to me? I was chosen by the God of Death!" Declan shouted in anger, directing his powers at Beltiar.

"I'm Beltiar, the Head of the Army of Death," Beltiar introduced himself.

The black mana that surrounded Beltiar did not allow Declan's power to approach him.

"Keugh...!" Declan gasped.

Declan looked at Beltiar with a surprised look when he realized that his power was nothing compared to Beltiar's.

"The Army... of Death...?" Declan muttered.

"Yes, that's right," Beltiar replied.

In his panic, Declan's sword trembled slightly. At the same time, Lee Shin's black mana, which rose up like a wave, hit Declan.

Wooosh—

"Keugh... you... you... are..." Declan could not speak properly.

Lee Shin was able to exert a power that was greater than anyone else, because his Black Mana was much darker than Declan's darkness. Until a few moments ago, Lee Shin had not been able to appreciate how great of a power the title [Death Ruler] endowed, but he finally started to realize.

It was the same with [Black Mana], because wielding such mana alone seemed enough to put one to death. After confronting Lee Shin's mana and sensing its essence, Declan came down from his Skeleton Horse and knelt on the floor.

"Death... Ruler... the one Who Knows Death..." Declan muttered.

"Declan, be my subordinate," Lee Shin ordered.

"There is one thing I want to ask you," said Declan.

"What is it?" Lee Shin asked.

"Are you... a living human being?" Declan asked.

This question that came out of the blue shook Lee Shin's heart like ripples in a quiet lake, because it was a question that hit the crux of his greatest concern. Declan had not known such a significance, but by a stroke of luck, he asked the right question.

"...You're right," Lee Shin replied.

"I want to stop this boring life where I can't live or die," said Declan.



"...Well then, try your best and fight back until the end. I'll give you one last chance," said Lee Shin.

Unlike his original intention, Lee Shin truly planned on giving him a chance.

[You have 1:51:17 until the end of the wave.]

"Make all the dead bodies that are strewn here into your soldiers from now until the end of the wave," said Lee Shin.

"You may regret saying that," Declan said.

Lee Shin smirked at Declan's unnecessary worries. Declan's strategy seemed to be about depleting Lee Shin's mana, but taking over the dominance using the Black Mana was not the only way.

Crack! Thud!

A part of the wall opened up and piles of corpses poured out of it. This meant that the wave had begun and that many monsters were dying.

Thud!

When Declan hit the floor with his sword, the power of death spread throughout the entire space. The creaking Skeletons rose to their feet and their eyes shone blue. Hundreds of undead were created in a single moment, and if other challengers had seen this ridiculous power, they would have tried to run away immediately.

"I will do my best," said Declan.

"Do your best, so it helps you at least a bit," Lee Shin said.

At first, Lee Shin thought that dealing with the wave might be a little challenging, because this ridiculous power of Declan was more than enough to be called a one-man corps. However, things were different now.

"Come out," Lee Shin ordered.

One by one, Lee Shin's subordinates walked out of the shadow space. Declan's undead army was afraid of Lee Shin's, who were covered by black mana, having been influenced by Lee Shin's mana. Now, Lee Shin was finally aware of how much influence the absolute power of death exerted over the dead.

[The Black Mana exerts dominance.]

[You have taken away the dominance over Red Striped Snake from Declan.]

[Because of your title, the Death Ruler...]

[You have taken away the dominance over...]

[...]

[You have taken away Declan's dominance.]

[Your dominance has increased by 1.]

As Lee Shin climbed the tower, he had analyzed the mechanism of the stat extortion of the skill Chaos. The increase in the number of simple hits and damage did not increase the probability of the stat extortion. It was only when there was valid damage done to the opponent that the probability increased. Besides, there was also a clear difference in the probability of acquiring each stat.

If someone had done damage using their strength, they were more likely to extort the strength stat, and if they used their magic, they were more likely to extort the intelligence stat. The results of his analysis

were evident even now. When Lee Shin exerted dominance over Declan's subordinates one by one, his dominance stat increased despite the low probability, and this was the proof.

'This is the chance to increase my dominance stat significantly.'

By now, it was obvious that Lee Shin was placed first in the achievement score for this wave.

\* \* \*

"Keugh..." Declan was battered and was barely managing to hold out. He leaned on his sword that had been plunged into the floor for support.

He had truly tried his best to beat Lee Shin, but it was impossible.

[The first wave has ended.]

[The rank of the first wave is being calculated.]

[First. Lee Shin - 32,407 points.]

[Second. Decan - 8,730 points.]

[Third. Versailla - 3,820 points.]

[...]

There was a great difference in scores between first and second place, but it made sense because Lee Shin had basically managed to deal with all the waves on his own.

[You have become the first place in the first wave.]

[The prize for the first place winner will be rewarded.]

[You have acquired a Random Card (Silver).]

Lee Shin had pushed aside the Random Card (Silver) that appeared over the system window for a while, and went to Declan.

"Declan," Lee Shin called out.

"I did... my best," Declan replied.

"Yes, you did a great job," Lee Shin said.

The black mana that appeared from the tip of Lee Shin's wand engulfed Declan.

[The Black Mana tries to dominate Declan, the corpse cleaner.]

[Declan accepts the Black Mana.]

[Declan has become your subordinate.]

[Your dominance has increased.]

[Your dominance has increased.]

[Your dominance has increased.]

Lee Shin's dominance did not increase as much as he had hoped. Perhaps it was because Declan had lost a lot of dominance during the battle. However, that was still okay, because Lee Shin had already taken over a lot of his dominance.

"Harpness," Lee Shin called out.

- Yes, Ruler.

"Send Declan back to rest," Lee Shin ordered.

- Alright.

[The Black Mana was lifted from Declan.]

The black fog Harpness created expanded instantly and the sickle of death cut Declan diagonally.

Swoosh—!

The black lines that were similar to ghosts were cut off by the sickle of death and the last restraint that remained on him was released.

"Thank you, master..." Declan thanked Lee Shin.

[Declan has gone back to rest.]

[You have cleared the 『Hidden Stage - The Corpse Cleaner Declan』.]

[The prize for the Hidden Stage will be rewarded.]

[You have acquired a Random Card (Gold).]

Both the Random Card (Silver) and the Random Card (Gold) appeared in the air. The Random Cards were cards that were given out at random that grants an ability corresponding to the achievements one had made while climbing the tower. There were three types of ability that these cards gave out: skill, title, and stats.

Although the Bronze and Silver did not allow one to choose, one could start choosing from any of the three types with the Gold Card and beyond. It went from Bronze, Silver, Gold, White, and then Black.

The higher the level, the higher the probability of getting a higher level of ability. Gold and Silver were in the mid-range, but even then, there were still plenty of decent abilities available.

‘I’ll start with the Silver card.’

When Lee Shin tapped the back of the Silver Card, the card began to turn at a high speed. Then, it slowed down and the card front was revealed.

[You have acquired a 『Skill - Charisma of the Conductor』 .]

[Charisma of the Conductor]

# There is a 10% increase in dominance when leading more than 50 military units.

‘Nice.’

Lee Shin got the perfect skill, and just in time too. To be honest, he needed an ability to support him as a necromancer rather than his ability in the field of magic. Next up was the Random Card (Gold), and this was the real game. When Lee Shin tapped the Gold Card, the card spun fiercely with a whirring sound. Then, it slowed down and the reward was revealed.

Lee Shin was surprised. "What?"