

The Tower 71

Chapter 71: The Intervention

Lee Shin had to do something on the 18th floor before going to the 19th floor.

"Wait a second. You should get changed," Lee Shin said to Vuela.

Lee Shin was walking on the street with Vuela but frowned when he noticed the glares Vuela was receiving. Vuela's appearance drew a lot of unwanted attention wherever they went, so he had no choice but to act.

"I think your clothes are too flashy," said Lee Shin.

"What's so flashy about them? It's actually just my glorious appearance doing its job," Vuela replied confidently.

Elves were renowned for their extraordinary beauty, admired by humans and many other species. And Vuela's beauty was exceptional even among those Elves. Lee Shin was also quite handsome; he didn't really stand out next to Vuela.

"Too much attention isn't always good. Wear this," said Lee Shin.

"What is this?" Vuela asked, looking disgusted.

Lee Shin handed Vuela the Herman cowl he had received after clearing the 17th floor. It was a simple, plain-looking, brown-colored cowl identical to the ones worn by the monks in the temple.

"How am I supposed to wear this!" Vuela shouted at Lee Shin.

Compared to his current clothes, the cowl looked too shabby, almost like a beggar's clothing. The sheer sight of the cowl filled Vuela with disgust.

"This is the Herman cowl. Wearing this will be good for training, so put it on," Lee Shin said.

"Ugh... How will this help?" Vuela muttered.

[Herman cowl]

The Herman Temple's patriarch used to wear this while training.

When worn, it reduces physical ability by 50%

When worn, it increases stat growth by 80%

When worn, it reduces mana sensitivity by 50%

When worn, it increases mental strength by 30%

When worn, it increases concentration by 30%

"Oh... This is actually quite nice," Vuela muttered.

The 80% increase in stat growth and 30% increase in mental strength and concentration proved that the suit had been designed to maximize training efficiency. Additionally, the 50% decrease in mana sensitivity was optimal for practicing mana control, even though it would significantly increase the training difficulty.

However, wearing this cowl in a battle could be dangerous since it reduced combat ability by over 50% by decreasing physical capabilities.

"Ha... Still... This is a bit..." Vuela sighed.

Since many people were around them, Vuela felt embarrassed to wear such a shabby-looking cowl. Vuela could have worn it if he were alone, but he didn't want to wear something like that in front of so many people.

"Just put it on," Lee Shin said.

"I don't want to," Vuela replied with annoyance.

"Put it on," Lee Shin said again.

"How on earth can I wear something like this!" Vuela shouted at Lee Shin.

"Just wear it. This is my last warning," Lee Shin told Vuela coldly.

The veiled threat made Vuela reluctantly agree; he didn't want to anger Lee Shin.

"Fine, I will," said Vuela.

Vuela grumbled and walked off to change. Lee Shin checked the community and saw that he had received a message from Alice. Quite some time had passed since he received it, so he concluded that she sent it before starting the test on the 17th floor.

'Is she still on that stage?'

Putting Alice's message aside, Lee Shin checked to see if there were any messages from the challengers of the Undermost who had climbed up to Isocia. However, as he had expected, there were no messages from them.

'Hang in there as long as you can.'

"I'm here." Vuela stood in front of Lee Shin with a new style.

While Lee Shin had been browsing the community, Vuela had changed and now stood before him awkwardly.

"Oh my, oh my. You still look handsome!"

"Indeed! Clothes are not important."

"Kurruk! The tribal chief would love to see Vuela like this!" suggested one of the Trolls.

"I know... Besides, the tribal chief doesn't seem to be in a good mood these days, so maybe we should increase the number of our tribe membe—" another Troll said.

Swoosh—

A wave of mana had erupted from Vuela. His mana had become violent and wild, as if responding to the Troll's comment, flashing in the street fiercely.

"I feel so hungry. Where can I find some tough and robust Troll meat nearby? I'm going to cut their muscles and..." Vuela muttered.

"Kuruok! Oh, wait, I think our chief doesn't really like Elves," said the Troll.

"Kururook!?Yeah, you're right! I actually think that there are too many tribal members," said another Troll.

The two Trolls had heard what Vuela had muttered, and the statement had made their eyes dart around in fear. Then, the two disappeared quickly, chatting with each other. And gradually, the attention Vuela had been receiving also faded as if the curious onlookers now had an important event to attend.

"What did those damn things say to me? Take me to their tribal chief? Like I wouldn't have butchered them before that could even happen!" Vuela shouted.

"Your temper has gotten worse," said Lee Shin.

"It didn't get worse. I've just been holding it back until now. And now I am sure that holding back anger can make you sick," Vuela explained to Lee Shin.

"So... You are weak because you are sick?" Lee Shin asked.

"What did you say? Did you say I am weak? Me? Oh man, if I'm weak, then who do you think is st... fucking bastard." Vuela trailed off.

Vuela finally stopped himself after spewing a series of abusive words, but he was still evidently annoyed.

'This guy's personality seems to be getting increasingly violent.'

When Lee Shin first saw Vuela, he seemed like a decent guy. Feeling he had misjudged Vuela, Lee Shin sent him to another place and went to the city's central square alone.

A portal was in the middle of the central square, and a man was sitting beside it, looking bored. Lee Shin approached the man.

"What is it?" the man asked Lee Shin.

"I want to ask you something," Lee Shin said.

"Ask someone else. I'm too tired to deal with you right now," said the man.

"Are you sure? I have a lot of points," said Lee Shin.

"Oh really? How many points do you have?" the man asked, now a bit too interested in helping Lee Shin.

A second ago, the man had been in a reclined position, almost lying down; now, he was as attentive as a hawk targeting its prey.

‘This guy hasn’t changed a bit.’

The man, lazy like a sloth and dressed like a tramp, was a manager. However, unlike his appearance, he cared about points. His seemingly casual remarks had deceived a great many challengers.

"I have enough points to buy some information from you," Lee Shin said.

"Hmm... all right. So, 5,000 points for simple information about the next floor. If you want to know more, 20,000 points. And... information about yourself will be 100,000 points," said the manager.

The manager had spoken quite convincingly, but all those things were only abstract concepts. In other words, even information as basic and mundane as “there are humans on the next floor” would cost 5,000 points.

‘Tsk.’

Lee Shin decided not to drag it out with this manager.

"I want to buy some information about God," Lee Shin said.

"... Uhm,?what kind of god?" the manager asked Lee Shin.

"I want to know about the God of Destruction," said Lee Shin.

Lee Shin briefly felt a strange sensation on his skin. And before Lee Shin even realized it, an energy membrane surrounded them. The manager had raised the barrier to prevent sound from leaking out. His laid-back countenance was gone, replaced by a distorted look.

"Do you even know how expensive that information is?" the manager asked.

"How much will it cost?" Lee Shin asked the manager.

"Well, it will be at least two millio—"

"I'll give it to you." Lee Shin interrupted the manager before he could even finish the sentence.

"What? What did you say? Do you really have 2 million points?" The manager was shocked to hear that.

The manager looked at Lee Shin with an absurd look on his face. Lee Shin remained composed, with no hint of deception in his demeanor.

"I knew you were a crazy guy, but... You really are crazy," said the manager.

"Well, should I give it to you?" Lee Shin asked the manager.

"I just threw out a random number. Information about the God of Destruction is beyond my authority," said the manager.

"Are you sure? It's 2 million," said Lee Shin, trying to convince the manager.

"No matter how crazy I am about points... what's the use if I die?" said the manager.

The manager's answer disappointed Lee Shin. Although it seemed like a passing remark, the manager had given him a warning.

It seemed to Lee Shin that the manager was telling him, 'The God of Destruction is a god who can even destroy me, so stop there.'

‘Was the God of Destruction that kind of god?’

Since the manager had shown favor, it was best for Lee Shin to stop asking about the God of Destruction. After that, Lee Shin was lost in thought about what to ask.

"How about some information on the God of Blessings? Is this possible?" Lee Shin asked the manager.

Again, the manager's face contorted into a weird expression; this time, he didn't refuse the request outright.

"One million points," said the manager.

[You have paid 1,000,000 points.]

When Lee Shin promptly made the payment, the manager couldn't help but laugh silently. He hadn't expected to encounter a challenger who could hand out such a large sum on the 18th floor so casually.

"Why are you willingly giving me such a large sum of money? Do you even know what kind of information I'm going to give you?" the manager asked Lee Shin.

"Some gods are kind to me," said Lee Shin.

"Are you threatening me or something?" the manager asked.

Despite the pressure the man was putting on him, Lee Shin did not back down.

"Tsk, at least act like you're scared," the manager muttered, wondering if Lee Shin had any sense of humor.

The manager also stopped pressuring Lee Shin, and an expression that said that “he was no longer amused by Lee Shin’s antics” appeared on his face.

"Listen carefully because I won't be saying it twice," said the manager.

"I don't forget what I heard once," Lee Shin said.

"Ugh,?you bastard. The gods are divided over you. But mainly, there are two groups," the manager said.

Lee Shin wasn't expecting that.

"One believes that you must be left alone to climb the tower and grow just like this, but..." The manager trailed off.

The manager took a cigarette from his pocket and held it in his mouth. After lighting it, he exhaled a big cloud of cigarette smoke. It was just a common sight of someone smoking a cigarette, but the manager's face was filled with very complex emotions.

"The other group wants you dead. And that's what the two groups think about you," the manager said.

"Is that so?" Lee Shin asked.

"You seem calmer than I thought. Most gods hold the former position, while the latter is a minority viewpoint."

The statement made Lee Shin chuckle. He thought, 'Who are they to decide that?'

"Still, it's a good thing that the majority of the gods are friendlies," said Lee Shin.

"Well... There is one very strong god in the minority group. That god alone can overwhelm the influence of the majority of the gods. Again, I cannot speak of that god, just in case you are wondering. That god is beyond my authority."

"All right. Is this it?" Lee Shin asked the manager.

With another complicated look, the manager inhaled deeply and then exhaled another puff of smoke.

"Hey man, you're quite short-tempered. It gets more important from now on," said the manager.

"Okay," Lee Shin replied.

"God of Blessings is in that minority group," said the manager.

The manager had given this information to answer Lee Shin's questions, and he had a reason for doing so.

"They plan to kill you before you move on to the 20th floor," explained the manager.

Lee Shin's eyes turned icy.

"Since you've already passed the 17th floor, you should know the plan has already begun," said the manager.

Lee Shin had expected that they would start directly intervening in the process. But he had assumed he would get a breather after their plan to intervene using Patriarch Ahn Jin had failed.

'So... they will kill me before I reach the 21st floor...'

The remaining test stages were on the 18th, 19th, and 20th floors. The extent of their power was evident in their plan to intervene in all the remaining stages. Intervening on the lower floors meant that

the gods had to use more karma because the lower the floor, the more karma it took to intervene in the tower.

And since they were using proxies and tricks, Lee Shin could not let his guard down, considering what had happened on the 17th floor. That move could have really killed him. Lee Shin could not be sure where the danger was hiding.

However, Lee Shin told himself that he would not be scared. Besides, he did not intend to bow just because there was danger ahead. The more they intervened in the stage, the greater the risk. To be manipulated by the gods once was enough. Lee Shin was determined never to kneel before the gods again.

"Lee Shin!" Vuela shouted.

Before Lee Shin knew it, the barrier was gone, and so was the manager. And from far away, Lee Shin could see Vuela walking toward him, seemingly having finished his business.

"The start of the stage is not far away, so let's eat something before we begin," Vuela suggested.

Vuela smiled brightly and ate some meat, utterly unaware and unworried of what was to come.

'I'm sorry for getting you involved for no reason.'

Someone like Vuela could twist the trajectory of the gods' prepared danger at least once.