

The Tower 86

Chapter 86

The ship followed the compass direction, eventually bringing Lee Shin and his group to a small island.

"It feels eerie for some reason," Vuela muttered.

"Let's rest here today," Hwang Il-Han suggested.

At Hwang Il-Han's instruction, all the ships anchored on one side of the island.

"The night sky is beautiful," said Hwang Il-Han, who was relatively older than the other challengers.

"This old man is more sentimental than I thought," Vuela muttered, looking at Hwang Il-Han.

Hwang Il-Han chuckled at Vuela's straightforward words.

"That's right. I didn't know I would climb the tower at this age... Amazingly, I've come this far, but I didn't expect to take on this challenge again, haha," said Hwang Il-Han.

Hwang Il-Han thoroughly enjoyed the journey, finding it both interesting and exciting. For the first time since settling on the 20th floor five years ago, he was experiencing genuine excitement. Every moment felt like a thrilling adventure to Hwang Il-Han.

"Why did you suddenly change your mind?" Vuela asked Hwang Il-Han.

"You may or may not know Mr. Vuela, but there was an incident with our Korean challengers two years ago. There was a time when Korean challengers could not come up from the first floor," said Hwang Il-Han.

Hwang Il-Han turned to see Lee Shin standing alone in the distance. Vuela also looked at Lee Shin and nodded, seemingly aware of the incident.

"So you know about the incident. Anyway, I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw that at the time. I was grateful that I had not entered the tower then. Watching that incident made me feel more comfortable settling on the 20th floor. I reminded myself that the tower was a very dangerous place," said Hwang Il-Han.

"That's also true," Vuela said.

"Hahaha,?I thought you were going to say something," said Hwang Il-Han.

Hwang Il-Han continued with a bitter smile.

"After more than a year, challengers from the first floor began to climb up. Besides, all of them were making remarkable achievements, and that was when I first realized..." Hwang Il-Han paused for a second.

The chilly night wind brushed past Hwang Il-Han and Vuela. Hwang Il-Han savored the saltiness of the sea carried by the wind, reminiscing about the exhilarating events of the past few days.

"I realized that I also wanted to climb the tower. I promised myself that if I didn't give up, I would see the light again someday. Being over 50 made me forget why I started climbing the tower in the first place. I think I worried about getting old too much."

"You're just a bit over 50; what's the big deal," Vuela muttered, looking at Hwang Il-Han.

Vuela appeared much younger than Hwang Il-Han on the surface, but the Elf had lived twice as long. Hwang Il-Han knew this and just nodded his head with a smile.

"Haha, compared to you, Mr. Vuela, it's not much. But each of my decisions is a bit heavier at my age," said Hwang Il-Han.

Hwang Il-Han knew that Vuela did not mean to criticize him and was just bad at expressing his ideas and thoughts. Furthermore, Hwang Il-Han felt relieved after expressing his feelings.

"I know what you mean. Even if we live the same number of years, we feel and understand things differently. Ask me if you need anything. I can easily help you," said Vuela, looking at Hwang Il-Han.

"Thank you," Hwang Il-Han replied.

Hwang Il-Han realized Vuela was much kinder than he had expected.

In the meanwhile, the other challengers were busy spending time on their own, and Lee Shin was investigating the strange mana he had felt in the ocean earlier.

'This is the residue of mana that controls people's emotions.'

Such traces remained in parts of this island. Lee Shin looked at the other challengers around him. They all seemed lost in thought for some reason.

Clearly, they were under this mana's influence. Since the island wasn't very big, Lee Shin could examine it by just spreading his mana. He realized that none of the creatures on this island had this kind of mana.

'That means something moved inside the sea.'

From Lee Shin's fingertips, several strands of mana spiraled out and penetrated the ocean. The mana flowed into the seawater, reaching the ocean floor and spreading further.

[Detect]

Finding the mana he had felt before with just its residue was no easy task. Compared to land, water bodies had a more complex mana flow.

'Well, it seems like I can't get anything more here.'

Lee Shin collected his mana and walked to Hwang Il-Han. Lee Shin could have erased all the residues of that mana on the island, but he had decided against it. Most of the challengers, including Hwang Il-Han and Vuela, were in a good mood thanks to that mana. Moreover, everyone already had their drinks out and was having a great time.

"Hi, Mr. Lee Shin, you're here," Hwang Il-Han greeted Lee Shin.

"Did you get bored talking to yourself?" Vuela made fun of Lee Shin.

"Be quiet, man," said Lee Shin, looking at Vuela.

Lee Shin sat beside Hwang Il-Han and looked at the calm sea.

"Do you know about Siren?" Lee Shin asked Hwang Il-Han.

"Of course I do. People say Sirens appear when Treasure Island appears," Hwang Il-Han replied.

"Why do you ask? Have you seen Siren or something?" Vuela asked Lee Shin.

"No," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin took out three bottles of an alcoholic beverage from his Subspace Pocket and handed them to the two.

"Oh, isn't this 100-year-old Gretaean alcohol?" Hwang Il-Han looked surprised.

"Man, I didn't know you had such good taste," said Vuela, looking at the bottles.

Hwang Il-Han and Vuela looked at the bottles with admiration on their faces.

"Let's lighten up the mood a bit," said Lee Shin.

Lee Shin wasn't particularly fond of consuming alcohol and spending time leisurely, but he believed that it was okay to indulge in such activities occasionally. Perhaps it was because he was also affected by Siren's mana. However, it was a good feeling, so the three of them raised their glasses and drank.

"Aaahhh,?this tastes so good. Wonder how long it has been since I had a drink?" Vuela muttered.

"Thank you so much, Mr. Lee Shin. This is a drink I cannot afford. It's just so darn expensive," said Hwang Il-Han.

"Do you like alcohol?" Lee Shin asked Hwang Il-Han.

"Well, yes. I used to live with a bottle in my hand, but I quit drinking when I started climbing the tower. I didn't have the luxury for it anymore," said Hwang Il-Han.

"I used to be the best drinker in my tribe," Vuela muttered.

Vuela boasted about his drinking capacity, gulping down his alcohol.

"Have you heard that Siren likes to drink too?" Hwang Il-Han asked.

"I've never heard of that. Do those creatures even know how to drink?" Vuela asked Hwang Il-Han.

"I'm not sure," Hwang Il-Han replied.

Vuela had a look of disappointment and took another sip of his drink.

"By the way, we must find Siren to get to Treasure Island. Based on what you said earlier, I'm assuming you found some traces of them here. Is that true?" Hwang Il-Han asked, looking at Lee Shin.

"Yes, there were traces of their mana. It doesn't seem like they left too long ago," Lee Shin replied.

"Why do we need Sirens to get to Treasure Island?" Vuela asked Lee Shin.

Hwang Il-Han could tell that Vuela really did not know anything, even after climbing the tower. If Vuela did not know such basic information, nothing was left to say.

"Before entering Treasure Island, we will experience a phenomenon called 'God's Wrath' in the sea. Sirens consider this a sign from the gods and sing their songs accordingly," Hwang Il-Han explained to Vuela.

"Oh, so if Sirens sing, we will know 'God's Wrath' is approaching," Vuela muttered.

"Yeah, that's correct. Sirens sing near the phenomenon, so all we have to do is find them," Hwang Il-Han continued.

"Don't we have the compass?" Vuela asked Hwang Il-Han again.

"The compass only tells you the direction, not the timing. Also, the compass won't work well near where 'God's Wrath' occurs. So, it's difficult to locate the exact position," Hwang Il-Han answered Vuela.

Vuela nodded.

"Is there a way to find them?" Lee Shin asked, looking at Hwang Il-Han.

"I'm not sure if it will work out, but there is a way," Hwang Il-Han said.

Lee Shin nodded with a satisfied smile after hearing Hwang Il-Han's solution.

"Great. Then let's just relax and enjoy tonight," Lee Shin replied.

Maldarian, who had fled as if Lee Shin was still chasing him, frowned at the sight of a distant fleet.

"Ugh, the ocean is so vast, so why am I encountering unpleasant fellows so often?" Maldarian muttered.

"I know! That's what I'm saying. What should we do?" One of the pirates asked.

"Ha, let's just go back before we get involv—no, wait a minute," said Maldarian.

Suddenly, a brilliant idea popped up in Maldarian's mind, and he smirked.

"Well, it will be annoying if only we suffer, don't you think?" Maldarian said with a smirk.

"What are you talking about?" asked the pirate again.

"You idiot! I'm talking about that damn wizard! If we're the only ones who suffer, it will be freaking annoying, don't you think so?" Maldarian shouted in anger.

"Y-y-yes, of course! That's right! They should suffer just like us," said the pirate.

"Yeah. This is actually an opportunity. Hectos isn't the type of guy to take anything lying down," said Maldarian.

"Exactly. Hehehe." The crew member laughed.

"Hey, you guys! Turn the ship around! We'll meet Hectos!" Maldarian shouted.

Maldarian's pirate ships turned toward Hectos' fleet. They faced Hectos' pirate fleet with no intention of fighting.

"What's going on?" Hectos muttered.

Hectos was not in a great mood. Lee Shin's thunderbolt had ruined his ship and him.

"I have some great news you'll like," said Maldarian.

"What kind of bullshit are you trying to sell?" Hectos did not seem interested.

"You know that thundermance—" Maldarian could not finish his sentence.

Wooong— Crack!

Hectos had drawn his sword and smashed the chair next to him.

"Don't you dare mention that bastard's name in front of me," said Hectos, furious.

Maldarian was slightly startled by Hectos' reaction; it was much more intense than he had expected.

'What's wrong with this guy?'

Maldarian whispered to one of his pirates standing beside him.

'I heard that Hectos' Twyde Bomb Cannon was struck by the thunderbolt and fell into the sea.'

'What? Seriously? All of them?'

'No, there are still three left, but they have lost two.'

Maldarian quickly understood the situation after hearing the reason and nodded his head, hiding his expression.

"Surely you must be angry about this. But listen to me for a moment, even though you're angry," said Maldarian.

"If you talk nonsense, don't even think about getting out of here alive," Hectos replied.

Hectos' cold words made the atmosphere inside the cabin tense in an instant. Nevertheless, Maldarian calmly spoke up.

"As you already know, I'm also pretty annoyed by those bastards' actions. So I'm looking for ways to get back at them," said Maldarian.

"... So what is it that you want to tell me," Hectos asked Maldarian.

"Don't you want revenge against that thundermancer? I know their location," said Maldarian.

Maldarian knew only idiots revealed their hands quickly; he had to ramp up the tension gradually.

"So what? What can we do with their location? Revenge is impossible as long as that wizard is around," said Hectos.

"Hey, do you think I don't know that?" Maldarian smirked as he spoke.

"Don't dawdle; just tell me quickly," said Hectos.

When Maldarian heard the impatience in Hectors' voice, he knew his plan would succeed.

"I've found out why those guys are here. They are here for a marine creature. They're looking for a monster that lives deep inside the sea," said Maldarian.

"A monster in the deep sea? Why are they looking for that?" Hectos asked.

"People say that that wizard is after that monster's heart. Think about it. With a wizard of that power, wouldn't it be possible?" Maldarian asked, looking at Hectos.

"Hmm..." Hectos was lost in his thought.

Hectos thought that it was possible but felt uneasy for some reason.

"And we got information that the wizard found the monster of the deep sea a few hours ago. So, that wizard is not with his fleet right now," Maldarian said.

"Are you sure about that?" Hectos asked Maldarian again.

If Maldarian's words were actual, this would be the best opportunity to take revenge on that wizard. No matter how great that wizard was, surviving in the middle of the sea was impossible without a ship.

"Yeah, if you're still uneasy, send a scout to the location I'm talking about. The wizard's ship will be there," said Maldarian.

"Go check it out," Hectos ordered a crew member on his ship.

"Yes sir!" the crew member replied.

Hectos sent a scout to the location that Maldarian had mentioned because he felt that Maldarian would not lie to this extent.

"All right, let's give it a try," Hectos said.

When Hectos said that, Maldarian cheered on the inside. He just prayed that things would not go wrong anymore.

"You guys probably thought the same, but let's approach the wizard's ship from different directions like last time. Because I'm assuming that it would be uncomfortable for us to get too close to each other, isn't it?" said Maldarian.

"I agree with that too," said Hectos.

The waves were particularly rough today; Hwang Il-Han could sense something bad was approaching.

"Captain! Pirate fleets ahead and behind!" shouted a crew member.

"What did you just say? Could that be Maldarian?" Hwang Il-Han replied with nervousness.

Hwang Il-Han knew the Maldarian fleet was getting closer to their ship because of the location tracker. However, Hwang Il-Han expected the pirates to do nothing because Lee Shin was on this ship. However, the appearance of the pirate fleets in the front and the back indicated the pirates' intentions.

"Prepare for combat everyone! Report the current situation to Mr. Lee Shin and Mr. Vuela!" Hwang Il-Han, the captain, ordered.

"They already know!" one of the crew members shouted.

"Good," Hwang Il-Han replied.

A sense of stability was felt due to the presence of one person: Lee Shin.

Even with the pirate fleets surrounding them, Hwang Il-Han was not worried at all.

"This is why we shouldn't show kindness to pirates," Hwang Il-Han muttered.

Meanwhile, Hectos was excited with thoughts of revenge.

"Hahaha! Let those damn guys sink in the sea! Kill them all!" Maldarian shouted with anger.

"Sweep away those who dared to disrespect Hectos' pirate gang!" Hectos shouted again.

"Show the terror of the sea!" Maldarian shouted.

"Fire the Burst Cannon! Sink their ships!" Hectos ordered.

Hectos and his crew sharpened their blades for revenge, unaware of what awaited ahead.