

The Tower 88

Chapter 88

Being inside Abaim Monstre was like being inside a seemingly endless and enormous cave. And frustratingly, the diverse marine creatures inside it kept blocking Lee Shin's path.

[Flare]

The flames from Lee Shin's fingertips burned the spider-like monsters. While the creatures inside posed little to no threat to Lee Shin, they were abundant and continually assailed him, leaving him no respite.

This place didn't seem like a monster's innards. There was a whole ecosystem here with its own animals and all, making it more like a new world.

Kieeek!

[Wind Cutter]

Lee Shin's wind blade sliced the screaming and screeching monsters in his path. It looked like he could easily handle the monsters with a simple spell, but that was not the case.

No one knew how deep in the ocean Abaim Monstre lived, but the mana flow inside differed from the outside. Using a single spell demanded significant mental power, as the massive flow was in a constant state of flux.

Lee Shin realized that he would fail to manifest a spell if he made even one mistake.

'Something's not right.'

If Lee Shin were to attack Abaim Monstre from within, its immune system would get activated and attack him immediately. Therefore, acting too hastily would most likely result in disaster for him.

Besides, Lee Shin did not even know how deep in the sea Abaim Monstre was, so getting out of the monster wasn't his only problem.

Lee Shin knew that he had to find the first heart of Abaim Monstre and destroy it to kill the monster. However, the flow of mana was so strong that Lee Shin couldn't spread his mana waves to find the heart. If the heart were close, Lee Shin could've done it, but it was too much for Lee Shin's current physical state to spread mana waves over a long distance.

Lee Shin thought that he might find a way if he took out the second heart from the Subspace Pocket, but he could not risk it because he did not know how Abaim Monstre would react.

Buzz—

Suddenly, Lee Shin felt the floor vibrate.

'No, wait, it's not just the floor. Something is coming.'

The resounding noise of rushing water flooded the vast space as water filled Abaim Monstre.

[Impede Web]

Lee Shin shot up a sticky slime, which adhered to the ceiling, and pulled him up.

Kwaaaaaah—!

The seawater rushed in violently under Lee Shin's feet. The seawater the monster consumed seemed to flow through this passageway.

'Am I in his esophagus?'

Monsters occasionally appeared in the rushing seawater.

Splash—!

Suddenly, a monster jumped out of the seawater and tried to swallow Lee Shin.

[Air Bomb]

The air in front of the monster exploded, pushing it back into the water.

‘Ugh, it’s annoying how I can’t predict when or where an attack will come from.’

When all the water was gone, Lee Shin came back down and saw a small hole.

‘Where would that lead to?’

Although it was difficult to see from a distance, it was definitely large enough for a person to enter. Therefore, Lee Shin immediately used Impede Web and entered the hole. As he stepped on the turbulent ground and continued inside, a new space appeared before him.

‘What is this place...’

If the last place was like a long cave, this place was an even bigger chamber. As Lee Shin landed on the ground, he immediately spread his magic to push away the pungent smell.

‘This is poison.’

Lee Shin had illuminated the space and noticed the fog permeating it. Although the fog had already touched Lee Shin, he was not poisoned by it yet. He thought he just had to keep it out of his body, so he looked around with ease.

Ssshhh—

Lee Shin abruptly heard something slithering on the ground. Since he could not see the ground too well due to the fog, Lee Shin immediately scattered his mana toward the ground.

‘One... two... tsk.’

Lee Shin frowned, having given up on counting the monster on the ground. That something was a snake-like monster that had camouflaged as the pink ground. It jumped toward Lee Shin and opened its mouth wide.

‘Damn!’

The dreaded moment had come. Lee Shin was about to tear the creature's mouth apart with Wind Cutter but failed to cast his magic after being hit by the creature's intangible ultrasound.

[Psychokinesis]

Lee Shin barely caught the snake that had come close to his neck with Psychokinesis.

Crack—!

Lee Shin grabbed its head and tail and chopped off the creature before throwing the corpse on the ground.

‘I never imagined that it would shoot an ultrasound from there.’?

The monsters of the deep sea had unique abilities as their living environment differed greatly from those in shallow waters or on land. People assume that the deep sea monsters feared light, but it was only partly true.

Swish— Swish—

"Kieeek!" More snake-like monsters screamed and rushed toward Lee Shin.

'These monsters were trying to read the wave of mana.'

Lee Shin again used Impede Web to fly to the next place with a hole, leaving the snake monsters behind. These monsters couldn't fly, so they couldn't follow Lee Shin. They also could not climb on the wall to chase Lee Shin; instead, these creatures simply moved back and forth in the same spot.

And since these creatures had adapted to living in places with no light and strong mana currents, they have developed a keen sense of mana. They attacked the light source by sensing the mana waves. Not using light could be risky for Lee Shin; on the other hand, using light could attract all the monster's attention.

'This is a dire situation.'

Lee Shin didn't have enough mana available. Therefore, at this point, quick thinking was necessary. The next moment, Lee Shin took out the second heart of Abaim Monstre from his Subspace Pocket.

Lee Shin did not want to take the heart out as much as possible, but he had no choice now.

Woong— Woong—

As soon as Lee Shin took it out, the heart reacted. The mana around Lee Shin began to move in one direction. Lee Shin returned to Abaim Monstre's esophagus and ran along the flow.

Thud— Thump!

The ground began to shake, and the walls began to move. It seemed like Abaim Monstre had sensed the existence of the heart and was moving. Then, tentacle-like stems protruded from the walls and began to attack Lee Shin.

[Shadow Space]

‘Shun! Decan!’

Fortunately, he could summon them here since he hadn’t summoned them on the ship.

“Protect me,” said Lee Shin.

“Yes, sir!” Shun replied.

“I got it,” Decan replied.

Shun's wand shot a stream of water that struck Abaim Monstre's tentacles, while Decan's thorns tore apart the approaching monsters, helping Lee Shin. After running for a while, a new space appeared. And in this larger space, there were tentacles, and some kind of white liquid was sprouting out.

Squelch—! Squelch—!

It was digestive acid coming from the ceiling and walls. The acid began disintegrating the corpses and debris scattered around. Lee Shin darted away while appropriately spreading his shield to block the acid, and then something familiar caught his eyes.

He had seen a pretty big human with a shaggy beard: Hectos. He was crawling on the ground as his lower body had completely melted away. And around him were the melted remains of his pirate crew.

Lee Shin felt sick after seeing their grotesque appearance and tried to ignore them and run away.

"W-wizard..." Hectos muttered with great effort.

Hectos was missing his lower half but wasn't dead yet, so he slowly uttered those words. Lee Shin, who had decided to just pass by, activated his mana after clicking his tongue.

[Fire Ball]

The Fire Ball created at the tip of Lee Shin's wand hit Hectos.

"Keughaa..."? Hectos screamed, but his screams of pain were a little off.

As Hectos' torso began to burn quickly, something elongated burst out of his head. As expected, an ordinary human could not survive in such a state. It turned out that a parasite had entered Hectos' body and was controlling him.

Swoosh—!

When Lee Shin gave Shun a signal, Shun cast a spell to chop up the parasite.

"Let's get going," said Lee Shin.

Unlike before, the mana waves from Abaim Monstre's second heart began to intensify.

"Should I go in here?" Lee Shin muttered.

The entrance was getting narrower as if intentionally trying to protect something inside. The writhing inner walls were slowly swelling and trying to block the entrance, but Lee Shin was not planning on leaving it like that.

[Deep Flare]

Intense black flames burned the swelling inner walls. With Deep Flare, which was several times hotter than usual Flare, the bulging inner walls started to reduce in size again. Meanwhile, Lee Shin, who had managed to get inside, confronted the furiously beating first heart of Abaim Monstre.

Since the second heart of Abaim Monstre looked like a small bead, Lee Shin had thought the first one would be similar, but it was different. The first heart had a diameter of at least 100 meters. And seeing the writhing veins on its surface, Lee Shin strongly felt that destroying it would not be easy.

"Shun, you block the monsters coming here from the entrance, and Decan, protect me by blocking the ones attacking me," Lee Shin ordered his two subordinates.

"Yes, sir!" Shun replied.

"Leave it to me," said Decan.

Lee Shin felt a strong mana wriggling inside the heart. The second heart of Abaim Monstre in his hand resonated with the first heart in front of him. A powerful flow began to surge.

The energy inside the first heart was highly compressed, and it was beyond Lee Shin's current capabilities. The two hearts resonated with each other, complementing each other's weaknesses as their energy flows weaved together.

'So... this was it.'

Lee Shin had once been a Great Wizard; still, the heart seemed like a formidable foe to him. Finding and manipulating the precise essence of the energy amid such a chaotic and overwhelming energy flow was also a difficult task for Lee Shin. If the two hearts had been together, handling them in such a short time would have been impossible.

However, the second heart was in Lee Shin's hands, and the flow the two hearts were creating would break as soon as Lee Shin returned it to the Subspace Pocket.

"Master!" Shun cried out.

"It's getting more and more difficult to stop them!" Decan shouted.

Hundreds—no, thousands of Abaim Monstre's tentacles sensed the danger and shot out. Shun and Decan alone couldn't block them all, but Lee Shin did not have the time to pay attention to the tentacles.

With time running short, Lee Shin needed to remain highly focused and find the correct moment to return the second heart of Abaim Monstre to his Subspace Pocket. He had to be precise in piercing the core of the first heart when the flow between the two connected hearts was severed, causing chaos.

Lee Shin had to scatter his mana and connect the flow. Furthermore, he had to read the vast and complex flow without missing anything. Therefore, he stretched his hand holding the Silver Tree Wand tightly.

Lee Shin's mana absorbed the complex flow and reached him. The small mana particles acted like grains of sand and followed the vast flow. The task was exceedingly difficult, to the point that it could only be accomplished when several crucial conditions were met.

Suddenly, Lee Shin put the second heart back in his Subspace Pocket.

Woong— Wooong—

The massive flow had transformed into a violent current, like a waterfall crashing down, and began to rush heavily. Within that vast and tumultuous flow, Lee Shin had to find a single stream and pour all of his mana toward it. He had no time to hesitate.

Lee Shin had to move with the flow, using his mana accordingly. He had to compress and then pierce with his mana.

[Good fortune occurs due to the Necklace of the Guardian of the Forest.]

Lee Shin managed to find the stream and grab it.

Babababam!

Kwaaaah!

A deafening explosion reverberated through the air, causing one's ears to ring. Then, the tentacles threatening to pierce Lee Shin suddenly ceased all movement.

[You have beaten the odds.]

[You have acquired a 『Stat - Luck』 .]

"Ha... Ha..." Lee Shin was out of breath.

Lee Shin's head started to throb, and he saw that his hands were trembling and covered in blood. Also, Silver Tree Wand had used all the mana at once and had gotten destroyed because it couldn't withstand all that power.

The wand's thorns dug into Lee Shin's flesh, but he didn't feel the pain. All he felt was bittersweet feelings for the wand—his longtime companion.

Lee Shin's mana was running very low. Therefore, Shun and Decan, who had been protecting Lee Shin, collapsed on the ground like marionettes without strings.

"Give me a moment," Lee Shin said, looking at his two subordinates on the ground.

[You have cleared the Hidden Stage.]

[You have obtained the first heart of Abaim Monstre.]

The massive first heart had disappeared, and only a small bead, which used to be inside the heart, with blue energy swirling inside remained. Lee Shin retrieved the second heart from the Subspace Pocket, and the two hearts began to resonate.

The nature of the mana emitted from each heart perfectly blended like the cogs of a machine.

‘This is...’

As the two hearts came together, they merged as they touched.

[Fragment of Chaos]

This is a fragment that contains the speck of a forgotten god.

Upon consumption, you will gain the power of chaos.

Upon consumption, you will gain mana.

Upon consumption, you will gain the qualification of ??? (unknown).

When Lee Shin saw a purple piece in his hands, his heart began to beat like crazy.

‘I finally understand why I felt a familiar sensation when I saw the second heart.’

It was because the second heart contained the power of chaos. Did that mean chaos was the power of a forgotten god?

[The Immortal Sphere]

This is a marble that contains a speck of the forgotten gods.

We don't forget.

The Immortal Sphere's power had made Lee Shin who he was now. The Immortal Sphere was also a speck of the forgotten god.

Did someone other than Lee Shin also have a speck of the forgotten god? Or was it just a coincidence that happened to him only?

While Lee Shin fixated on the Fragment of Chaos, his body instinctively responded to its presence, seemingly beyond his control. Normally, Lee Shin would have hated being swayed by such things, but he had no choice but to take the fragment if he wanted to survive in this place.

Lee Shin's mana was depleted, and since his Silver Tree Wand had broken, he could not even summon the Spirit of Water.

Gulp—

Lee Shin put the small purple piece in his mouth and swallowed it. And Lee Shin could feel the piece quickly go down his esophagus and disappear like melting snow.

[Checking the Power of Chaos.]

The Power of Chaos that spread throughout him instantly reactivated his destroyed mana veins.

[Your mana is rising.]

[Your mana class has reached Lv. 4.]

[An additional level of your body's seal is unlocked.]

[You have acquired a 『Skill - Summoning of Golem』 .]

Lee Shin felt an overflowing amount of mana. And then there was the vast amount of mana flowing around him. Lee Shin quickly absorbed the mana the deceased Abaim Monstre had left behind.

Everything in Lee Shin's sight seemed to move slower than a moment ago. Lee Shin felt confident and arrogant, feeling like everything was below him.

[You have acquired a 『Title - Qualification of an Adversary』 .]