

## The Tower 94

### Chapter 94

As if not only his skin, but even his vocal cords had melted, the man's voice was even gruffer than the Orcs' voices. The battalion sensed the incoming danger and immediately drew their swords. All three knights were official knights of Merteng, and among them, Veren was particularly skilled.

These knights were qualified people with at least a Green Pattern. The fact that they were getting nervous showed that their opponent's skill level was at least a Blue Pattern or higher.

'Indeed, is that relaxed attitude a sign of confidence?'

The white-haired man scanned them slowly as if he were searching for appetizing food.

"Are you guys at the same level as the knights I encountered last time? You look delicious," said the white-haired man as he licked his lips.

At the same time, Lee Shin, who sensed the mana emanating from the man's body, glared at the man. The feeling that Lee Shin was getting from this man was similar to a premonition of death.

Was he a Dark Wizard or another type of skilled person? Inside the laboratory, there were corpses of knights from battalions and monsters scattered here and there. Dealing with death was not an easy task, and it seemed like the man had contemplated and dealt with the deaths of many.

How many beings had this man killed and done research on?

'Perhaps I might be able to obtain a sample of his research.'

As Lee Shin was thinking about acquiring the research material that the white-haired man had, the knights made their first move. A strong mana extended from their swords toward the enemy. The distinct swordsmanship of Merteng was fully revealed in these knights' strikes.

The knight swung down at the man, but the white-haired man easily caught the sword with one hand. The knight's eyes flew wide open in astonishment.

The next moment, another knight reached out with his sword to pierce the opponent's side, but the man easily caught it with his other hand.

"This can't be real...!"

While the two knights panicked as they were unable to free their swords from the man's grip, Veren swung his sword at the man's neck.

"Die!" Veren shouted.

However, blackish-red mana flowed out and repelled Veren's sword strike. Then, the mana grabbed Veren's neck and lifted him up.

"Keugh...!" Veren gasped.

The three knights were subdued, unable to do anything, just staring at the man in shock. On the other hand, even while dealing with three of them on his own, the white-haired man appeared calm.

"Keauughhh!" Veren gasped again.

He was being choked by the blackish-red mana, and his own mana began to be absorbed by the man.

'So that's how it is.'

Lee Shin, who had immediately grasped the nature of the man's source of power, used his mana to cut off the man's.

"What the hell...?" The man looked startled.

The man's face twisted, perhaps not expecting his mana to be cut off so easily. His reaction was totally understandable, because what he had been using was not simple magic, but divine power. Who would think that some challenger from a low floor could easily cut off the power of a deity?

"Ha... ha..." Veren, who had escaped the man's grasp, breathed heavily.

The two knights had also been thrown aside. The white-haired man looked only at Lee Shin now, because he realized that he did not have the luxury of caring about anything else.

"How...did you do that?" the man asked Lee Shin.

"I didn't do anything special. Don't you think it's ridiculous for you to act so smugly just because you got some cheap power?" Lee Shin laughed at the man.

The man's power was not from the God of Death, but from a lesser god who had grown up devouring the death energy of others. This type of god only used specks of power from monsters that had failed to reach divinity.

"What are you trying to do with the power of monsters that reside in the World of Death? What can you do with such cheap power that only desires and consumes?" Lee Shin criticized the man.

"Hey... Do you know what you're saying?" asked the man.

"I know enough just by looking at you. You've been so consumed by power that your self-control is no longer functioning. Were you craving power that much?" Lee Shin said.

The man's face distorted as he listened to Lee Shin's words, resembling a demon more and more.

"What do you know! Don't act so smugly!" the man shouted.

The blackish-red mana soared up and rushed toward Lee Shin with a roar, filled with the will to take away all the power that Lee Shin had.

"Hah!" Lee Shin laughed at the man and emitted his black mana.

The man's blackish-red mana, which was trying to swallow up Lee Shin, trembled in fear and stopped in its tracks, unable to even come close to Lee Shin's black mana.

"What's going on? How can this be...?" The man started to panic.

"Hyenas are nothing but frightened little mice in front of a lion," said Lee Shin.

The death element of Lee Shin's black mana was on another level compared to the man's. A gluttonous monster that gained power by consuming specks of death energy would not dare to oppose the very origin of death energy.

"Get on your knees," Lee Shin demanded.

Thud—

"Huh? What are you doing to me...?" The man could not understand what was going on.

The man's own mana turned against him, crushing him in spite of his will.

"What is your name?" Lee Shin asked.

"It's Victor..." replied the man.

"Are you Russian?" Lee Shin asked.

"...Yes," Victor replied.

Someone as skilled as Victor would not have been left alone in Russia. Even if this man was consumed by power and lost his mind, the Russians were the sort of people who would do their best to make use of him regardless.

"Why are you here?" Lee Shin asked again.

"I came to destroy Merteng before the closure of Isocia," Victor replied.

"Then why are you here?" Lee Shin asked.

"I ate my fill while destroying Merteng. It was delicious. Kek...?Then I felt like I wanted to eat the people next to them. So I killed them all and ate them all. Even now, I can't forget that time..." Victor muttered.

"You crazy bastard," Lee Shin said.

As Victor explained himself, Lee Shin could see that tragedy replaying in front of his eyes. He could finally understand why Victor had been hiding here even after all this time.

The power of the gluttonous monster grew by devouring the power of others, so it was not strange that Victor had slaughtered everyone else. Lee Shin thought that Russia would still be obsessed with finding Victor, but since he had committed such a heinous crime, he could not apply for asylum in another country. Therefore, death was certain no matter where he went.

Perhaps the reason why Merteng was still alive was, in fact, Victor's influence.

"What were you doing here?" Lee Shin asked Victor.

"I was trying to create a Chimera. I haven't succeeded yet, though," Victor replied.

Lee Shin had a rough idea of what the man was doing based on what he could see inside the laboratory, but he hadn't expected that the man would really be making a Chimera.

"And in the meantime, you were sucking up the vitality of the battalions?" Lee Shin asked.

Victor did not reply. Instead, he lowered his head at the sound of Lee Shin's cold voice.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue.

Lee Shin shot his mana into the sky. At the same time, lightning bolts struck down.

Crack—! Bam—! Craaaackk!

"Kraaah!" Victor let out a hoarse scream.

Victor's eyes rolled back and he fell to the ground. Since Lee Shin had adjusted the power of the spell appropriately, he was not dead.

"Tie him up and take him. And investigate this place," Lee Shin ordered.

"Yes, sir!" the knights replied.

Together with the knights, Lee Shin entered the laboratory. Once inside, they could see that the laboratory was, in fact, much larger than it looked from the outside.

"Here, there are the bodies of the missing battalions!" shouted a knight.

The bodies were dismembered; their heads, torsos, arms, and legs were stored in a strange liquid. Witnessing this sight, even the knights felt nauseous, and their complexions turned pale.

"Collect all the bodies of the knights and go tell the border guards to contact Eltse," Lee Shin ordered.

"Yes, sir," the knights responded.

Lee Shin thought that they would be able to arrive at the Eltse Castle in the Red Zone in half a day.

"Hmm..." Lee Shin pondered.

Even after scouring the entire laboratory, they could not find any significant research data. There was some research data related to chimeras, but the work had reaped little success, and even the most successful one was not helpful for Lee Shin.

After skimming through all the data once, Lee Shin tried to hide his disappointment and disposed of all the data.

'It's better not to have this kind of data.'

Besides, dealing with death was much more difficult than one might think. If there had been a few more years, Victor might have achieved significant results, but the number of lives sacrificed in the process would have been enormous. It was not necessary to conduct research to that extent.

After surveying the entire laboratory, Lee Shin left together with the knights, who had blocked the entrance, and went to the soldiers guarding the border.

The view of the border that was covered with the Origin Demon Realm for tens of kilometers was truly magnificent.

Lee Shin almost thought that it was not necessary for the soldiers to guard that place so closely, because it was almost impossible for anyone to cross the border and avoid the demons that could appear at any moment in the vast area.

Besides, the path was very difficult to see due to the black mist when the challengers entered the Demon Realm. Therefore, the soldiers guarding the border were only deployed to prevent occasional waves of demons from breaking out of the Demon Realm.

"You're back!" A soldier greeted Lee Shin and the knights.

"Did you contact Eltse?" Lee Shin asked the soldier.

"Yes! They're sending their soldiers here right away," said the soldier.

"I want to contact Merteng," Lee Shin said.

"Ah, please wait a moment!" replied the soldier.

A soldier rushed off at Lee Shin's request and contacted someone. Then, the soldier called Lee Shin over.

The screen installed inside a small building showed Leiden.

When Leiden saw Lee Shin, he greeted Lee Shin with a happy face.

- Mr. Lee Shin, is there anything you need? Please let me know if you need anything.

"No, there's nothing I need. I contacted you to give a report," Lee Shin said.

- Oh, I see. You can report after the mission is over.

"The mission is over," said Lee Shin.

- Really? Oh wait... so you also concluded that it's difficult to find, right? But if you could just look a little more—



"That's not it. I found them," Lee Shin said.

- Really? Uh, what happened to them? The knights are all saf— oh... I can tell from your expression.

Leiden, who seemed excited for a second, then nodded as he saw Lee Shin's expression because he could already tell what had happened to the battalions.

"And, in the process, I also captured a Qualified from Aman," said Lee Shin.

- Oh, Aman? How did he get in?

"He seems to have been here for quite some time. Anyway, I'll send this captive too.

It will be useful for negotiating with Aman," said Lee Shin.

- Okay, so, are you coming back now?

"Yes, I should be going back now," Lee Shin replied.

- Okay, I'll be waiting for you.

Leiden bowed and disappeared. As Lee Shin began to prepare to return, a loud warning sound rang from the border checkpoint.

"What's that?" Lee Shin was surprised.

"Sir, the enemy has appeared!" shouted a soldier.

"What did you say?" Lee Shin could not believe it.

Why was it that they were suddenly being attacked? Lee Shin was bewildered, but he put that aside for the time being and hurried toward the source of the alarm.

"I'll go first. The rest of the soldiers stay back, because we don't know where another enemy might pop up from," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin let out his own mana, feeling around for the challengers' mana. There were five of them, and a quick assessment revealed that they were undoubtedly highly skilled.

Baaang—!

With a deafening explosion, the border wall collapsed. The border wall and the checkpoint that surrounded the Source of the Demon Realm crumbled, and the soldiers blocking the enemy's path were stabbed in the heart by the enemy swords.

Swoosh—! Cough!

Screaming and spitting out blood, the soldiers fell to the ground. As they were lying there, dying, they saw Lee Shin arrive.

"Mr. Lee... Shin..."

"Please... Help us... Mr. Lee... Shin..."

The invaders' eyes narrowed at the sound of the soldiers' voices.

"Lee... Shin?"

"No way..."

Only when they heard the name did they realize who the new arrival was, and they took a step back in fear.

Pizz—!

Seeing the approaching lightning whip, they tried to dodge, but one challenger who could not escape on time was caught in its grip and electrocuted.

“Keauughhh!”?the challenger screamed.

Others, perhaps to avoid revealing their voices, refrained from talking to each other. They just exchanged glances and connected to each other’s mana, surrounding Lee Shin.

‘Is this their combat formation?’

With their mana interconnected, they blocked Lee Shin from all directions.

A combat formation was a tactic that allowed them to complement each other and avoid redundant movement in order to focus their strength on strategic points. Their flow of attack and synchronization seemed very natural, as if it was water, showing that they had been practicing as a group for a long time.

"Hyaap!" The biggest of the four men swung his dagger and charged at Lee Shin.

Clang—!

His upward slash was blocked by Lee Shin's shield, but as if the man had already anticipated it, the man changed direction and launched consecutive attacks.

Wooong— Baaam!

At the same time, someone had pulled out a cannon, and a big cannonball flew at Lee Shin's back.

Creak—!

Then, a vine that sprouted from underground grabbed Lee Shin's ankle.

'This is quite nice.'

It was a smoothly coordinated attack, as if they had practiced countless times to catch a humanoid boss. As Lee Shin muttered to himself in surprise, the coordinated attack continued.

Clang! Clang! Baaam!

The challenger expected to be unable to pierce Lee Shin's shield with the first cannonball and so immediately switched to a Shock Cannon. They fixed the Shock Cannon on the ground and fired consecutive Shock Cannonballs at Lee Shin, who had become a human target.

The Shock Cannonballs were optimized for breaking shields. With these, the challengers were able to make cracks on Lee Shin's shield. As one Shock Cannonball after another landed square on the shield, more vines shot up from underground and bound Lee Shin's entire body.

A dagger flew at Lee Shin's neck, threatening to pierce him through. However, Lee Shin's gaze remained as calm as ever.

'Hmm... Is it not yet?'

Lee Shin's eyebrows twitched. He activated all of the mana that he had been suppressing.

Pizzzz— Pizzzz—

The electricity that surged around Lee Shin burned all the vines that had been imprisoning him. Lee Shin clenched his fist in the air, and his psychokinesis caught the man who was charging at him, throwing him right back at his companion who had been manipulating the vines.

"Keugh!" The man gasped.

As the man was thrown aside, another Shock Cannonball flew at Lee Shin. The strength of the impact was clearly different from before, and the damage kept piling up until, eventually, the shield shattered into pieces.

Clang—!

A bullet flew through the shards of the broken shield, aimed at Lee Shin's neck.

The sniper had calculated the perfect timing to hit Lee Shin—right before the shield regenerated. However, Lee Shin had been paying attention to the sniper from the beginning.

Woong— Pizz—

A bubble of compressed air exploded right next to the bullet, shifting the bullet's trajectory. The bullet missed Lee Shin's neck by the slightest of margins, flying off into the distance. Then, Lee Shin smiled at the sniper as if saying, 'Is this all you've got?'.

Suddenly, a white bullet appeared from thin air, right in front of Lee Shin's forehead. The sniper's eyes narrowed as she met Lee Shin's gaze. It was a fierce fight—both Lee Shin and the sniper were aiming for a surefire hit, the kind that would not let their opponent escape.

The sniper was confident that Lee Shin would not be able to block her attack this time.

Blob—

However, the next moment, the sniper shouted in frustration as she saw her bullet disappear, absorbed by a cloud of bloody mist that had suddenly appeared in front of Lee Shin's head.

"What the hell is that...?" the sniper muttered.

A cute bat that came out from the bloody mist perched on Lee Shin's shoulder.

"Why aren't you calling me these days? It's not that burdensome for you now, is it?" Lilian asked, looking at Lee Shin.

"As you can see, I'm quite busy right now," Lee Shin replied.

The bat, who was annoyed by Lee Shin's attitude, transformed into a beautiful woman.

With a captivating smile, Lilian let her purple hair down. Then, she looked at the challengers with a cold gaze.

Woong— Crack—!

Lilian caught the bullet flying toward her face and crushed it into dust, scattering it on the ground. Then, she produced a bloody whip, which she wrapped around the sniper, picking her up like a baby chicken.

"K...uh...agh..." The sniper gasped, unable to breathe.

"It's been a while, so can I have some fun, master?" Lilian asked, looking at Lee Shin.