

## **The Tower 96**

### Chapter 96

Lee Shin, who had returned to Merteng, went to meet Leiden right away.

"Thank you for your hard work, Lee Shin," said Leiden.

"No problem. Is the King here? I would like to talk to him," replied Lee Shin.

"Yes, he is waiting for you. Please come this way," said Leiden.

As Lee Shin and Leiden entered the Throne Room, the King greeted Lee Shin warmly.

"I've completed my mission and returned, Your Highness," Lee Shin said, looking at King Adolf.

"I can't help but admire your abilities. You have resolved an issue that no one else could for very long," remarked King Adolf.

"Please don't mention it." Lee Shin smiled.

"I should give you a reward. Will you choose to claim it later again?" King Adolf asked Lee Shin.

"If there is an artifact that can increase my mana regeneration rate, I would like to receive it," Lee Shin replied.

"Hmm... Let me see... What would increase the mana regeneration rate... Oh, I think I have something that suits you," King Adolf said.

A soldier went out on King Adolf's orders and returned shortly with a small chest.

"Open it," said King Adolf.

The chest slowly opened to reveal a blue earring inside. Inside the tear-shaped earring that shone like a jewel was white powder.

"Check this out," said King Adolf.

[Germanic's Bone Dust Earring]

This is an earring made from the bone dust of Germanic, which lives in the deep sea.

# 20% increase in mana regeneration rate.

# 10% increase in mana absorption rate.

"This is..." Lee Shin muttered.

Lee Shin's eyes widened. The reward was better than what he had expected. An artifact like this, with both a high mana regeneration rate as well as mana absorption rate, was very rare.

"I think you like it," said King Adolf.

"You're right. This is awesome," Lee Shin muttered.

"I've heard that you were able to bite Wildes in Narden," said King Adolf.

"I was lucky to be able to capture one of Wildes' key figures," Lee Shin explained.

King Adolf, who had been smiling at Lee Shin, interjected. "If you manage to break through the ranks of Tetir and Aman, and reclaim Aderta, this reward may not be enough."

"No, Your Highness, this is more than enough," said Lee Shin.

"I'm curious if you have a plan in mind," said King Adolf.

"I will tell you," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin was about to tell King Adolf about his plan that would shake the balance of power in the continent of Isocia.

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"Get in there! And don't make a fuss! Someone who wants to see you is coming," a soldier shouted.

Tadashi Kohei, Miura Kanoko, and Inyuu Kogo, each with special handcuffs on their hands and feet, entered the meeting room and sat down.

"Who called us again?"

"I hope it'll be over soon so we can leave."

"Tsk, it's probably some ridiculous request for us to join them again."

As they were chatting, the door opened, and a familiar face appeared.

"Is that you, Lee Shin?"

"What? That person is Lee Shin?" Inyuu Kogo looked surprised.

Upon meeting Lee Shin for the first time, Inyuu Kogo scrutinized Lee Shin as if he was looking at an animal in a zoo. Feeling his gaze, Lee Shin felt uncomfortable and sat down opposite them.

"Wildes has come over to our side," Lee Shin said.

Lee Shin started the conversation with such a statement after calling for them out of the blue. How could they believe that Wildes had betrayed them with only Lee Shin's words? Although none of the three trusted Lee Shin's words, there was a difference in the degree of disbelief.

"Why are you lying about something that cannot be true?" Inyuu Kogo did not believe Lee Shin at all.

"Even if the betrayal is true, don't you think you've gone too far to say it was Wildes who joined you guys?" Kohei thought that he could have believed Lee Shin if he had mentioned another country, not Wildes.

"No way... You're lying, right?" Kanoko was skeptical.

"Do I look like I'm lying right now?" Lee Shin asked them once again.

Lee Shin did not really care whether these challengers believed him or not, and the Japanese challengers were more frustrated by Lee Shin's reaction. It was a hard-to-believe story, but since it was Lee Shin, they could not easily dismiss it.

Inyuu Kogo thought that this story was irrational, but he could not shake the nagging thought of 'What if?'.

The person who had caused all the disturbance in the Tower up until now was the man standing in front of Inyuu Kogo. It was the same person who brought together the major powers of the world to crush Korea for the first time. The suspicion inside Inyuu Kogo began to grow even more.

"Why did you say that?" Kanoko asked Lee Shin with a serious look.

Even though the Japanese challengers tried to rush him into an answer, Lee Shin took his time sipping his tea.

'This should have been enough time for them to think.'

The reason why Lee Shin had brought up the story about Wildes at first was to take control of the conversation and create an atmosphere that benefited him. Lee Shin wanted to leave a strong impression and arouse their interest. Then, through silence, Lee Shin was trying to give space for their imagination to run wild.

All that Lee Shin wanted to do was to trigger the thought of 'What if?' in these Japanese challengers' minds. That was the most important thing for Lee Shin at the moment.

Lee Shin was aware that in fights that involved many countries, negotiation tables always appeared, and the direction of the negotiation changed depending on the style of conversation. The next moment, Lee Shin looked at the three people's expressions and smirked, realizing that things were going the way he had wanted

"Is Japan still hostile toward Korea?" Lee Shin asked the Japanese challengers.

Lee Shin threw another question at them instead of answering their question. Although Lee Shin did not get the response that he wanted, the challengers could not help but think about their answer to Lee Shin's question.

"So what if that's the case...?" one of the Japanese challengers asked.

"Don't you understand why Merteng is looking after the captives?" Lee Shin asked back.

"...Are you trying to say that Lantan should also abandon the Union and join Merteng?" Inyuu Kogo asked Lee Shin.

"Hah, do you think Lantan would do that?" Kanoko replied to Inyuu Kogo.

Inyuu Kogo snorted in response to Kanoko's question and said, "Lantan exists on an island that is far apart from the continent. Without the cooperation with Merteng, they cannot survive in the end."

"No... But WOFP decided to hand over Merteng to Lantan," Kanoko said, causing Lee Shin to chuckle.

"Haha, that's just superficial. Doesn't Japan know better? That's why you two came here to meet me. Am I wrong?" Lee Shin asked, looking at Kanoko and Kohei.

Kanoko and Kohei's eyes quivered for a moment at Lee Shin's words because Lee Shin knew their intentions very well.

"I don't want both of you to be exiled because there's a penalty for that. However, I want a reliable alliance with Lantan," Lee Shin said.

"That's impossible," one of the Japanese challengers replied.

"Don't you know that most of the Demon's territory is already taken up by the United States and China? Do you really think that WOFP can last long?" Lee Shin asked, looking at the challenger.s

"Well, at least as long as you're alive..." one of the challengers replied.

"No, I told you earlier that Wildes will come over and join us," Lee Shin said.

"That's a lie—" said one of the challengers.

"And Turkey and India will join us too." Lee Shin added on.

"What...?" The Japanese challengers looked confused now.

If Wildes, as well as Dier and Tashara formed an alliance with Merteng just like Lee Shin had mentioned, they could be a credible force that could stand up against WOFP. Assuming that everything Lee Shin had been saying was true, the three of them started to look worried.

"But Merteng would not have had the time to contact Dier and Tashara though, no?" Kanoko asked Lee Shin.

Lee Shin flinched inwardly at Kanoko's sharp question, but he did not let it show on his face.

"Just because you don't know about it doesn't mean that it is not true," said Lee Shin.

After saying his last sentence, Lee Shin rose from his seat, because he did not want them to realize some of what he had just said was wrong.

"Think hard about it. I get that you wouldn't want to abandon your country. But, you wouldn't want to die either... So, think about it carefully," Lee Shin said.

As Lee Shin was about to leave the room, Lee Shin suddenly stopped and said, "Oh, and if you're curious whether what I said is true or not, come follow me."

"What? Where...?" Kanoko asked.

However, Lee Shin had left the room without answering her question. Therefore, the three of them looked at each other, confused, and got up from their seats.

"Should we follow him first?"

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Lee Shin headed straight out of the castle.

'It went better than I expected.'

To be honest, Lee Shin did not think it would be easy to persuade the Japanese challengers. Lee Shin had not shown anything to them yet, and Merteng was not in a condition good enough for them to visit.

That was why Lee Shin had lied to them about Wildes, Dier, and Tashara joining them. It was technically false for now, but it was not entirely a lie either. Lee Shin believed it would actually happen according to his plan.

‘As long as everything goes according to my plan, we should be good.’

Besides, his time with King Adolf had also come to an end. It was time for Lee Shin to move on with the next step in his plan.

Woong—

Lilian, who appeared from a cloud of bloody mist, settled on Lee Shin’s shoulder in the form of a bat.

"Master, are we finally going to taste someone else's blood?" Lilian asked Lee Shin with excitement.

"What are you saying..." Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin reached into his Subspace Pocket and took out the Germaric's Bone Dust Earring, which he had received as a reward from the King earlier, and put it on. The speed at which his mana rose became noticeably faster.

Due to the increased absorption rate of mana, the efficiency of converting the mana in the air into his own mana also increased. And now, Lee Shin could finally afford to keep Lilian summoned without any worry.

"Finally, I get to move more freely," Lilian muttered.

"But, you’re still not allowed to exert power in your true form. Do you understand Lilian?" Lee Shin asked.



"I know... Hah...?when will that body be completely unsealed?" Lilian asked Lee Shin with little annoyance.

"I don't know either," Lee Shin replied.

It was not bad to have a conversation with Lilian while traveling. As they were waiting outside the Castle, Lee Shin and the challengers heard the sound of a carriage rattling.

"It's here," Lee Shin muttered.

"Are those the kids that you carry around like your luggage?" a knight asked Lee Shin.

"Yes," Lee Shin replied.

As the carriage arrived in front of Lee Shin, three familiar faces got off from it.

"Where are we going?"

"Wow, are we finally out of the castle? How long has it been?"

"Where are you trying to take us?"

The knight who had dropped off the three Japanese challengers bowed to Lee Shin and left three bags behind before leaving. The moment Lee Shin saw the Qualified of Wildes pass through the Origin Demon Realm and cross over to the Red Zone, Lee Shin had a thought.

If the opponents did it, why couldn't we? Just then, the faces of those who had made it through even more challenging places and had closed in on him popped into Lee Shin's mind. Lee Shin knew exactly what to do with them.

"Kanoko, what did you say your class was again?" Lee Shin asked.

"Huh? Why are you asking that all of the sudden... I'm an Explorer... sir," Kanoko replied.

As she spoke, Kanoko trembled with anxiety. That was because she noticed a faint smile on Lee Shin's lips.

"We're going to break through the Origin Demon Realm and head to Tetir," Lee Shin said.

"What?" Kanoko could not believe what Lee Shin just said.

"That's a nonsensical thing to say!"

"W-w-why are you taking us with you?"

Not only Kanoko, but the other two challengers were also flustered and they began to stutter.

"Well, you're the ones who followed me here," said Lee Shin.

"You didn't say anything like this before!"

"Do you know how vast that place is? It's over hundreds of kilometers! And you're going to cross it barehanded without any equipment? You might encounter not only demons but also enemy soldiers!"

"I'll handle the enemies," Lee Shin said calmly.

"How are you going to find the way? You might get lost in the Origin Demon Realm and be missing forever."

As if he had been waiting for those words, Lee Shin smiled and looked at Kanoko and Kohei.

"You have already come through the Origin Demon Realm by the sea, haven't you?" Lee Shin asked them with a smirk.

Lee Shin remembered them saying that it only took them a week to break through.

While they had utilized the latest Hextech equipment, it was only possible for them to get through because they also had the skills. Lee Shin had planned to use their abilities to cross to Tetir.

"Wow... Infiltrating the enemy country barehanded...? You are indeed my lord," said Lilian.

The three Japanese challengers pointed at Lilian, the bat who spoke like it was natural.

"Since when was the bat here with us?" Kohei asked.

"Oh my! How cute! You can even talk?" Kanoko shouted in excitement.

"...What is that...?" Kogo muttered.

The three challengers had been so confused by the series of unexpected events that they had not even noticed Lilian.

"She's my subordinate. Be careful how you treat her, or you'll be sorry. Anyway, let's go as planned. Pick up the bags from over there."

Lee Shin looked at the bags left by the knight.

"No, I don't want to go! No way! I'm not going!" Kogo screamed.

As Inyuu Kogo continued screaming that Lee Shin's suggestion was nonsense and lay down on the ground, Lee Shin frowned. The faces of the other two challengers had turned white. The next moment, Lee Shin's mana soared into the sky.

Crack—! Rumble—

Pizz— Pizzzz—

A sharp thunderbolt struck right above Inyuu Kogo's head. Even after the thunderbolt had disappeared, the crackling sound of electricity remained in the air, indicating just how powerful the thunderbolt was.

"I'll ask you one more time. Only those who want to come with me should follow. I won't force you," Lee Shin said.

After saying that, Lee Shin moved forward without looking back. Kanoko and Kohei, who were watching his back, picked up their bags and followed him. Kogo, who had been frozen in place, was startled by the thunderous sound coming from the sky and hastily picked up his bag to follow him.

"Just because you don't say 'I'm forcing you,' it doesn't mean you're not forcing me..." Kogo grumbled.

"Just be quiet! Do you want to get struck by the thunderbolt again?" Kanoko said.

"Why can't I even say anything? Besides, I wasn't struck by it yet, you know?" Kogo muttered.

At Kanoko's shout, Kogo walked weakly, his shoulders slumped.

"Ugh... it smells really bad," Lilian said.

"What smell?" Lee Shin asked.

When they came out of the Citadel, Lilian frowned at the sight of the surrounding Demon Realm.

"This pungent smell covers the entire world," said Lilian.

"Are you talking about the smell of demons?" Lee Shin asked Lilian.

"Yeah, and it's really terrible," Lilian replied.

Even Lee Shin's expression had turned cold at Lilian's words. It could possibly be that Lilian was sensing great danger before anyone else could even notice.

"What kind of smell is she talking about? I don't smell anything," Kogo grumbled.

"Right? I don't smell anything either," Kanoko replied.

"What are you talking about? Please just be quiet and let's go!" Kohei shouted.

After walking for a while, the challengers, Lee Shin and Lilian, had arrived at the Red Zone. The sky from a while ago was bright, but it got darker as they approached the Demon Realm; and the Demon Realm was becoming one with the darkness.

The soldiers guarding the border saluted Lee Shin and escorted them to the barrier surrounding the Demon Realm.

"Wow... are we actually going to go in?"

"Are you sure this is the right thing?" Kanoko looked worried.

As they stood in front of the Demon Realm, the three of them froze and could not move their feet.

"Get in there." Lee Shin ordered.

Even at Lee Shin's order, the three were still hesitant to go in and none of them took a step forward. This place itself was already too dangerous, but due to the handcuffs, these Japanese challenges could not use their mana. Besides, their physical abilities had deteriorated so much that they could not resist even if they wanted to.

Therefore, if Lee Shin did not protect them, their lives would be in danger even if they encountered just one low-rank demonic beast.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue.

Lee Shin could guess what they were thinking. Lee Shin activated his mana.

[Psychokinesis]

"Huh... huh?"

"Arghhh!"

"Keuk!"

Ignoring their screams, Lee Shin used his psychokinesis to lift and throw them into the Demon Realm and Lee Shin slowly followed them inside.

[You have entered the Demon Realm.]