

The Tower 111

Chapter 111

The air was thick with dust, the rubble from the destroyed buildings was everywhere, and the area was littered with demonic beast corpses. Natasha and Lee Shin stepped on a few of those corpses as they walked on the blood-soaked street.

Natasha was drenched in blood, and her sense of smell seemed to have stopped working because of the bloody stench.

"Ha... ha..." Natasha was out of breath.

She felt like her muscles were contorting. Every part of her body was screaming in pain. Natasha was a seasoned fighter, but she had never been part of a fight this brutal.

From the entrance to the inner city, Natasha had taken care of almost half of the demonic beasts alone. She never imagined that she would one day kill so many demonic beasts. The experience had certainly broadened her horizons.

She could now use Space Distortion drastically better. And just as Lee Shin had expected, a great danger seemed to creep toward her whenever she used Space Distortion in a way.

Natasha looked at the man in front of her while panting. Lee Shin had taken care of exactly half of the demonic beasts as if saying that the rest was not his problem. She had to clench her teeth and kill all the remaining demonic beasts alone.

Now she had truly reached her limit. She had no strength left, not even enough to move her finger. Her eyelids trembled, and Lee Shin's figure became increasingly blurry, eventually fading into darkness.

"Is this your limit? You lasted longer than I thought," Lee Shin muttered.

She heard Lee Shin's faint voice.

'What... did he just say?'

Natasha could not hear his voice too well because she was seemingly losing her mind. She just wanted to close her eyes and rest. Just like that, she fell into a deep sleep as if she had fainted. Thankfully, Warrie caught her as she collapsed.

"Keep an eye on her." Lee Shin ordered Warrie.

"Yes, Sir," Warrie replied.

Lee Shin's assessment of Natasha was complete. He had been harsh, but she had coped well enough. She might struggle to comprehend how she had survived in the hellish place after waking up. After all, she had collapsed after making her final effort to stay alive.

"She'll be even more of a monster when she opens her eyes," Lee Shin muttered as he watched her sleeping peacefully.

"Although she's not at the level of Park Joo-Hyuk or Baek Hyun at the moment, I can't say anything about the future," Warrie said as he carried her on his back.

"Her talent is well beyond them," Lee Shin said.

Park Joo-Hyuk and Baek Hyun had the most outstanding talents among those taught by Lee Shin. And yet, Natasha seemed to have even greater talent in some respects than those two.

Kuooo—!

A roar echoed from within the inner city. As if calling its lifelong enemy, it roared a few more times. And with that, demons with black skin gathered around the huge inner city.

Lee Shin's eyes sparkled with interest. Although the creature was nothing compared to Abaim Monstre, he still felt slightly nervous.

'Am I lucky?'

Clang!

Kieeek!

With the sound of glass breaking, a demonic beast with a long, thick tail jumped out of a building. In its relatively small hand was a long sword.

'It's the Swordmaster Arbon.'

The nickname "Swordmaster Arbon" was given to this creature because of its exceptional swordsmanship. It occasionally appeared in Isocia, causing a lot of trouble to humans.

Although it was considered a demonic beast, its intelligence was close to that of humans, and its physical abilities were better than most other demonic beasts. The soft-looking tail could freely change its form.

If one carelessly leaned against that tail, the tail could produce thorns to riddle them with holes. Name-class demonic beasts usually appeared outside the Demon Realm, but Lee Shin was grateful that he had encountered Arbon here.

'Is this also the effect of luck?'

However, was it really fortunate for Lee Shin to encounter Arbon here? If the Narden army had come to reclaim Aderta, there would have been a significant loss of life. If they were unlucky, Arbon would've defeated them and used them as a source of experience points.

Consuming the corpse of its victim made Arbon stronger.

'I don't sense the presence of the guardians.'

That meant Arbon had killed the guardian already. Since Arbon wasn't that old, it rarely preyed on its ally.

Kieeek—!

A screech-like roar echoed throughout the castle. And then, the nearby demonic beasts and demonized humans rushed toward Lee Shin.

"Were you scared?" shrieked the creature.

If the creature had more experience, it would have realized the skill gap between itself and Lee Shin and would not have recklessly charged toward him.

Lee Shin's mana revolved along his index finger. The past days flashed before his eyes. The screams of the many Arbon had killed echoed in his ears.

'You will regret not running away.'

Lee Shin's cold eyes were fixed on Arbon. The revolving mana accelerated gradually. The air had split in the direction of the mana, and the wind blew.

The atmosphere instantly changed, sending a chill down Arbon's skin.

"Kieekk!" The demons around Arbon had no idea what Lee Shin was planning and were acting lazy, which frustrated Arbon.

Arbon decided to move independently instead of waiting for the other demons.

Swish! Clang!?

However, black chains, which seemed to have come out of nowhere, suddenly wrapped around him.

"Kieek?" Arbon could not avoid the chains and thus couldn't move further.

The black chains pierced his body, but he felt no pain. Arbon looked at Lee Shin.

The air around Arbon became even hotter. Lee Shin's revolving mana had become even more powerful in the meantime.

"Kiiiiek!" Arbon cried out.

Arbon shouted to others to kill that human, but it was meaningless. Before those useless things could get close to Lee Shin, the spiral mana was before Arbon, who couldn't even try to dodge it.

Bang!

Let alone dodge, Arbon couldn't even think a few moments after that, as the spiral mana had pierced Arbon's skull. And the corpse fell from the tower to the ground.

[You have defeated Arbon.]

[Your merit points have increased by 7,400.]

Lee Shin's heart was pounding as he processed the surreal feeling of having defeated Arbon, a creature that had caused despair to many humans.

Arbon's death had seemingly agitated the demonic beasts nearby. They were confused because their controller was no more. So, Lee Shin decided to free the confusion from them.

Lee Shin released his mana into the sky. The golden light shone brighter and brighter until it finally rained down to the ground. The deafening sound of thunder echoed through the space, and the world became silent after.

Lee Shin stepped forward, and all he could hear was the dying echoes of the thunderbolt in his ears. He went into the castle—the Nucleus of the Demon Realm was here.

Crack—!

Breaking the Nucleus of the Demon Realm was all too easy. The only thing in front of the Nucleus was a demonic beast, but its head had already been chopped off.

[The Nucleus of the Demon Realm has been destroyed.]

[Aderta is getting reactivated.]

[Your merit points are being calculated.]

[The top three challengers will obtain the 『Blue Pattern』.]

First. Lee Shin - 61,300 points.

Second. Natasha Polly - 27,100 points.

Third. None.

[You have acquired the 『Blue Pattern』.]

A Blue Pattern appeared on Lee Shin's hand.

[Blue Pattern]

You have received the qualification to go to the Blue Zone.

Your Health and Mana points increase by 17%.

Your overall stats increase by 26%.

The appearance of the once-destroyed and ruined castle began to change rapidly. New figures began to occupy the space, and the corpses of the demonic beasts in the castle turned to dust and disappeared.

The Demon Realm was lifted, revealing a clear blue sky. The Task Force members waiting outside the castle walls were shocked to see the Demon Realm dissipating.

"This can't be happening..."

It was an unbelievable sight, but they could not deny what was happening right before them. They couldn't even fathom how it had been accomplished. Even the bounded Qualified of Aman and Cormir, who had been laughing at them, could not hide their surprise.

Natasha and Lee Shin had managed to break through the Demon Realm alone.

"Man... It hasn't even been that long..."

Lee Shin and Natasha had been gone for half a day at most. It was an unbelievably fast speed.

"No, wait, we don't have time for this right now."

"Let's go in first."

"Okay."

The four of them led the captives and entered Aderta.

Aderta's castellan, Louis Battenberg, exchanged only a few simple words with the Savior who had revived this place. After that, he left the castle without conversing with others, saying that he had things to do.

‘Lee Shin...’

A Qualified from a foreign country had greatly contributed to the recovery of this place. Lee Shin had entrusted Natasha's recovery to Louis and told him to receive the Qualified from Wildes, who would soon arrive at this castle.

Louis had given the order as requested by Lee Shin and was now looking out the window. He had heard that the two of them, Lee Shin and Natasha, had cleared the Demon Realm surrounding Aderta.

One of them, Natasha Polly, had collapsed from fatigue, but the other Qualified, Lee Shin, did not even rest and immediately left for other tasks. Louis felt a surge of fighting spirit because he wanted to try competing against Lee Shin once.

‘Oh well, it's too bad I can't do that.’

However, it was crucial to get a grasp on Merteng's current situation now, so Louis refrained from making such a proposal to Lee Shin. Louis promised himself that he would be in peak condition by the time Lee Shin returned, so he could challenge him to a competition then.

Lee Shin headed straight to Windsor after leaving Aderta. Windsor would soon get the information that Aderta had been reclaimed.

‘Something doesn’t feel right.’

Lee Shin pondered this inexplicable sensation because it was beyond his five senses. As one approached the realm of transcendence, one could experience supernatural phenomena. Lee Shin did not think that what he felt was meaningless.

[Shadow Space]

A large Skeleton capable of flying sprung out from Lee Shin’s shadow. As soon as he climbed onto its back, the Skeleton began to fly rapidly. The sound of the Skeleton cutting through the air was distinctly audible to Lee Shin.

The terrain of Isocia was mostly made up of mountains and forests. Therefore, moving through the air was much faster than traveling on the ground. He got this huge aerial demonic beast not too long ago, so this was his first time riding it.

It was the corpse of an aerial demonic beast he had found in Aderta. Flying across the sky, they quickly left the Green Zone and entered the Blue Zone.

Windsor was visible in the distance. Lee Shin could even see a fierce siege underway at the north gate. The protective barrier seemed to have lost its function, and the people of Windsor were leaning on the walls to defend themselves.

There were a lot of enemies. The castle walls were collapsing, and brutal hand-to-hand fights could be seen everywhere.

"Fight! Don't let the enemies get into the citadel!"

"Go block where there are cracks in the castle wall! Defend those spots no matter what!"

"Snipe the wizard! There aren't many enemy wizards left!"

Lee Shin could faintly hear loud shouting. There were explosions everywhere, and screams filled the battlefield. The closer he got, the more familiar faces he could see.

He could see the challengers who had come up from Undermost. Lee Shin's face froze as he watched the fight.

‘Why aren't they here?’

Park Joo-Hyuk, Baek Hyun, Park Hye-Won, and others—the Saviors—seemed absent. Even those who had left before Lee Shin, such as Kim Kang-Chun’s group and the Qualified of Lantan, were not here either.

He could see soldiers in Lantan's armor but not the Qualified from Lantan. Lee Shin realized this was what his instinct had warned him about. He did not seem to be concerned about the state of the partially-collapsed castle wall or the impending threat of Windsor being breached, as it had not yet happened.

However, the absence of those who should have been on the front line to stop the enemy was a severe concern for Lee Shin. Therefore, he swiftly flew to the battlefield on his Skeleton Crow.

Whoosh— whoosh—

A strong gust of wind swept over the heads of the soldiers, causing them to look up in surprise. As they did, a large shadow fell upon their faces. The sudden appearance of a giant Skeleton made both the besieging enemy and the allies flinch.

“Mr. Lee Shin!” Someone who recognized Lee Shin’s face greeted Lee Shin warmly.

"Why did you come so late!" Hwang Kang-Woong, who had been smashing an enemy's head with a pickaxe, looked relieved and said with a smirk.

"Lee Shin?"

"Lee Shin came?"

"Then that Skeleton is..."

Lee Shin's name was unbelievably influential. Just hearing that name on the battlefield increased the morale of allies and disheartened enemies.

Lee Shin landed on the intact castle wall and quickly scanned his surroundings. There was no danger. Even Arbon, who had not fully grown, was more dangerous than the enemy currently on the battlefield, according to Lee Shin.

"If you surrender now, you will be forgiven!" Lee Shin shouted, using his mana to make his voice echo throughout the battlefield.

It was to avoid the hassle of combat. The enemy soldiers began murmuring among themselves. Lee Shin knew he had to capitalize on the confusion caused by his sudden appearance. He unleashed his black mana into the sky.

[Dark Thunder]

Thunderbolts replaced the negative emotions dominating the battlefield, and Lee Shin's fierce mana became active. Dreadful thunder began to ring in the sky.

Rumble— Kwaaaahhhh—!

Thick black flashes poured down on the battlefield. The name contained thunder, but it was like a bombardment from the sky. The thunderbolts left remnants that spread in all directions.

Soldiers who had thought they were at a safe distance were hit and paralyzed by the descending thunderbolt. With one magical blow, Lee Shin had neutralized the enemy soldiers.

"This... is insane," muttered the knight commander who had witnessed the dark thunder from afar.

To those who encountered Lee Shin, he was a natural disaster in and of himself.