

## **The Tower 125**

### **Chapter 125**

Miura Kanoko and Inyuu Kogo overheard the conversation between Lee Shin and Sonoda Hazuki.

"I'll come too. Please take me with you," Miura Kanoko said.

"I'm going too, Ms. Sonoda," added Inyuu Kogo.

Lee Shin, who had originally planned to operate alone, frowned. Sonoda, who also wanted to honor Lee Shin's plans, looked at him with a troubled expression.

"N—" When Lee Shin was about to answer, another person showed up.

"Wait a minute, Mr. Lee Shin! I want to join too! Please take me with you," Baek Hyun said.

"Mr. Lee Shin, I want to go as well," Han Sang-Hyun said.

Seeing Kanoko and Kogo, now Baek Hyun and Han Sang-Hyun also wanted to follow. When Lee Shin looked at all of them, his expression became even stiffer.

"No... absolutely not. Go back, all of you," Lee Shin said.

"Why not! We won't get in the way," said Baek Hyun.

"That's right. Mr. Lee Shin, I want to fight properly now that I've returned to Merteng," Han Sang-Hyun said.

Baek Hyun and Han Sang-Hyun clung to Lee Shin in order to show how desperate they were, but he was unmoved. Lee Shin thought that there was a high probability that more time would be wasted if he were to have them come along. Moreover, he had to quickly deal with the Pestilence King before he went to Bilone.

"I can't take you guys with me this time. Besides, you guys have to protect this base while I'm gone. You two need to wait here because we don't know what might happen," Lee Shin said, looking at Baek Hyun and Han Sang-Hyun.

"But..." Baek Hyun muttered.

"We're not as strong as these two, so please take us with you," Kanoko said, interrupting Baek Hyun.

Inyuu Kogo felt a little upset by her words but kept his mouth shut because she was not wrong.

"Don't push it," Lee Shin said.

"Kohei has been taken by the Pestilence King. We have to save Kohei," said Kanoko.

"I can save him even if you don't come," Lee Shin replied coldly.

"What about after you save him? His being injured could become a burden for you, Mr. Lee Shin. We'll do the job of taking care of him," said Kanoko.

"Kohei is our country's challenger and our colleague. Please let us help," said Inyuu Kogo.

Kanoko and Kogo asked Lee Shin desperately. Lee Shin looked into their eyes and it seemed like they were not planning on giving in. Suddenly, Lee Shin's past came to mind—the past where he had failed to save his comrades and lost them. That image burned in his mind as he looked at these two people standing before him.

'Tsk.'

Lee Shin clicked his tongue and nodded slightly.

"Wow! Thank you!" Kanoko was so excited that she could join Lee Shin.

"Great!" Kogo was glad too.

"What about us?" Baek Hyun and Han Sang-Hyun asked Lee Shin once again, watching the happy faces of the two.

"No." Lee Shin rejected them again.

Lee Shin set off with Kanoko and Kogo. Riding on the Skeleton Crows, the three rode in the sky for a while until they saw the base of Stan. Above Stan's base was the Demon Realm.

‘Thankfully we’re not late...’

The fact that the Demon Realm was still there meant that there was a high chance that the Demon Corps were still inside.

"Well... Waiting for the Demon Realm to dissipate would be foolish, wouldn't it?" Inyuu Kogo spoke hesitantly as he looked at the Demon Realm.

"Then, you stay out of this," Kanoko said.

"Hey, I didn't really mean it. Let's go in," said Kogo.

Although the two Japanese challengers might not be able to see inside the Demon Realm, Lee Shin could. Inside the Demon Realm, which covered the base, was a complete disaster. The base was in ruins, and the debris from what used to be buildings were scattered everywhere. The only strange thing was that Lee Shin could not quite see the dead bodies.

"Let's go in," Lee Shin said.

Wooong—

As if being covered by a cloud, the three were engulfed by the Demon Realm and entered inside.

"Damn, I can't see anything around here." Inyuu Kogo grumbled and cursed while entering the Demon Realm for the first time in a while.

"It's surprisingly quiet," said Kanoko.

Despite walking for almost five minutes after entering, no enemies attacked them. Although the aftermath of a fierce battle could be seen everywhere, only a few dead bodies lay on the ground. As Kanoko got suspicious about this, there was a sudden sound of footsteps.

Clomp clomp clomp clomp—

Kanoko flinched. The next moment, humans, who looked like zombies, appeared around the corner. They were demonized humans whose bodies were covered with demon power. Judging from their clothing, most of them were clearly the Qualified as well as soldiers from Stan.

‘Are they testing the waters?’

Lee Shin, who covered his face with a robe, realized that the Pestilence King was testing the waters to decide whether he should run away and abandon the infected individuals, or kill the new intruders who had come to attack. Lee Shin had been trying to hide his presence and find the Pestilence King, but he could not sense the Pestilence King's mana waves properly.

‘Did he acquire a mana tool... or I mean, an artifact? Or is this his unique ability?’

Lee Shin was aware that the Pestilence King had not fled. That meant that the Pestilence King was using a special power to prevent Lee Shin from detecting his mana waves.

‘But that doesn't mean there's no way to find him.’

Lee Shin expanded his mana waves throughout the entire base and changed the pattern of the waves. Lee Shin then had to find a place where the flow of mana was unlike the rest of the base. Or, it could be a place that seemed out of place with its surroundings.

‘I found it...’

A thin smile appeared on Lee Shin’s face. He had no reason to delay any longer.

"Now stay focused. If you can't keep up, I'm going to leave you behind," Lee Shin said.

"Huh?" The two people looked at Lee Shin, puzzled.

The black mana that was hovering above Lee Shin’s hand now gathered in his palm, emanating an ominous aura. Then, it dropped down.

Baaaang—!

Baaamm—! Thud!

The floor of the building began to crumble and collapse.

"Aaaah!" Kogo screamed.

"This is not ‘following’, but being dragged along!" Kanoko shouted.

Ignoring their complaints, Lee Shin focused on what was at the bottom.

Thud—! Thud—! Thud—!

They kept falling deeper underground for what seemed like an eternity. Every time their feet touched the ground, it collapsed; and after seven times, the deafening noise finally subsided.

Thump thump—

Kanoko prepared herself for the impact of falling seven floors. However, when she landed, the ground felt surprisingly soft. Kanoko and Inyuu Kogo bounced off and landed somewhere adjacent onto something soft again, and then again, before landing on hard ground with a thud.

However, Lee Shin used Psychokinesis to cushion the impact of his fall and landed firmly on the ground on both feet. Kanoko looked around with a confused look, because she could see nothing in the darkness. Lee Shin immediately illuminated the surroundings with magic.

"This is..." Kanoko muttered, looking at her hands.

Kanoko had used her hands to push herself up from the floor. When she could finally see, she realized there was something sticky on her hands. They were surrounded by cocoons.

These were cocoons made by the Pestilence King. Kanoko never thought there would be such a huge space underground. Half of the space was filled with cocoons. In the midst of them, the Pestilence King was swinging his tentacles, expressing his hostility toward them.

"Stay focused if you want to save your comrade," said Lee Shin.

After hearing Lee Shin's words, Inyuu Kogo and Miura Kanoko looked ahead, eyes wide open. In front of them stood a familiar-looking man with a sword.

"Kohei..." Kanoko muttered.

"Kohei!" Inyuu shouted.

Despite noticing the two of them, Kohei only looked on with a blank expression. Meanwhile, Lee Shin found the source of the power that was surrounding them.

When Lee Shin got closer, he was able to understand. This power was not from a simple mana tool. It was more like a power from an artifact or unique ability.

Whatever it was, it formed some kind of a barrier that separated a space from another. In a way, it was a higher level concept than that. The reason why Lee Shin could not locate the Pestilence King at first was because of this.

‘I have to find the user of this power.’

Lee Shin did not know what was possible in this space. Besides, his senses had started to be gradually distorted as soon as he entered this space.

‘Tsk.’

Dozens of humans surrounded the Pestilence King—demonized humans. Their eyes were glaring.

[Shadow Space]

Undead rose up from the expanding shadow, exuding a strong energy of death.

"Kill them all," Lee Shin ordered.

As soon as Lee Shin gave the order, the undead rushed toward their enemies. At the same time, the Pestilence King's tentacles extended in all directions, cutting open the large cocoons. The sticky mucus oozed out from the split cocoons. Through the holes, large demonic beasts came out.

"They're name-class!" Kanoko shouted as soon as she recognized them.

‘Were they recovering from the wounds they sustained during the battle inside the cocoon?’

Even so, there were only ten name-class demonic beasts. It was nothing compared to the number of Lee Shin’s Corps. When Belzark and Dualcarss appeared from the Shadow Space, the Pestilence King seemed to be bewildered.

"Darn it, there are too many enemies!" Kogo shouted.

"I'll try to lure Kohei over," Kanoko said.

Inyuu manipulated the flames to create barriers to seal the enemies away, trying to move toward where Kohei was. However, it was difficult to deal with both the demonic beasts and the demonized humans through his efforts.

"There’s no need to do that," Lee Shin said, when he saw what Inyuu Kogo was doing.

Lee Shin, who noticed their difficulties, cast his mana toward where Kohei was.

[Psychokinesis]

Lee Shin clenched his fist in the air.

"Keu...augh...!" Kohei, who was fighting against the Undead, suddenly dropped the sword he was holding onto and grabbed his own neck.

"Figure it out on your own," Lee Shin said.

Woong— Thud!

With a whoosh, Lee Shin swung his clenched fist, throwing Kohei in front of Kanoko and Inyuu Kogo. The two were startled and did not know what to do when Kohei collapsed in front of them.



"First, knock him out and tie him up!" Lee Shin ordered.

Inyuu swung the wand he was holding, smacking Kohei's head.

"Ugh...! You... bast... ard...!" Kohei fell to the ground with blood trickling down the back of his head.

"What are you doing? He won't faint that way," said Kanoko.

"Ah... Isn't this the way?" Kogo looked confused.

Since the demons swarmed in from all sides, Kanoko and Kogo could not just focus on Kohei. Meanwhile, Kohei picked up the sword rolling on the ground and charged toward Inyuu Kogo.

"Hey, wait! I didn't mean to do it on purpose!" Inyuu cried out.

"Die!" Kohei yelled back.

"Help me, Kanoko! Do something!" Inyuu shouted.

As Inyuu Kogo had to avoid killing Kohei unintentionally, it was even more challenging to deal with him. Besides, since Inyuu Kogo was a wizard of the flame attribute, the power of his flames made it even harder to control precisely.

Bang! Baaang—!

A series of deafening sounds echoed through the air, drawing Kanoko and Kogo's attention. A large steel fist, which appeared out of nowhere, was striking the invisible barrier that surrounded the Pestilence King.

Baaamm—!

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Finally, the invisible barrier burst open. The steel fist penetrated the barrier, crushed the tentacles that were flying toward it, instantly smashing the Pestilence King.

"Keeek!" the Pestilence King shrieked.

As soon as the barrier burst, one of the demonized humans who was near the barrier, vomited blood. Seeing this, Lee Shin extended his left hand and shot mana at the man's location. The black mana slashed through the air like a sharp bolt of lightning, piercing his neck before disappearing.

Thud—

Darkness descended and followed the man as he died. The next moment, Lee Shin could sense the energy that messed with his senses fading away. However, the Demon Realm was still intact, and a familiar power was still present in this place.

"It won't work this time," Lee Shin muttered.

A black thunderbolt appeared above Lee Shin's hand. At the same time, the power of death started to emerge around the Pestilence King's surroundings.

[The Chain of Death]

Suddenly, the Grim Reaper appeared above the Pestilence King and swung his scythe at him.

Swoosh— Cling!

Black portals emerged all around them; chains emerged from those portals and started to bind the Pestilence King. No one alive could escape these chains—not even to resist. The black chains, just like the demon soul, surged forth, dragging the living into the world of the dead.

“Keugh... ugh...” the Pestilence King groaned.

"I will definitely kill you this time," Lee Shin muttered, looking at the Pestilence King.

The pitch black spear of thunderbolt, containing immense power, revealed itself in front of the Pestilence King.

Woong— Crack!

The spear pierced through the Pestilence King’s body, and the lightning energy inside the spear ran through its body mercilessly, shredding it into pieces.

Pizzz—

Khaaa—!

The black lightning energy divided into several branches and spread in all directions. As a result, the demonized humans belonging to the Pestilence King started to tremble uncontrollably and fell to the ground.

[You have defeated the Pestilence King.]

[Your merit points have increased by 65,000.]

The body of the Pestilence King, whose internal organs had melted away, slowly dropped to the ground. At that sight, the Demon King’s sentinel, who had revealed himself to take the Pestilence King away, disappeared.

The power of the Demon Realm that covered the space began to shrink gradually.

"Has anything changed?" Lee Shin muttered.

The Pestilence King was certainly dead. However, the humans who had already turned into demonized humans still remained the same. Most of them were swept away and died in the aftermath of the attack.

The remnants could be handled by Lee Shin's subordinates. He turned around and saw Kogo and Kanoko, who were still dealing with Kohei.

Inyuu Kogo was trapped under Kohei's body, struggling to block Kohei's attack. Kanoko was trying to pull Kohei away from Inyuu while keeping an eye on the demonic beasts that were around her. However, she seemed to be having a hard time.

Lee Shin clicked his tongue when he saw how hesitant these two people were in dealing with Kohei. Thinking of Kohei as their comrade, Kogo and Kanoko could not attack Kohei properly, so they just seemed helpless.

"Get out of the way," Lee Shin said coldly.

Lee Shin pushed Kanoko, who was blocking his way to Kohei and Inyuu, to the side and pulled Martyr out from his waist belt.

"Umm... Mr. Lee Shin?" Kanoko was surprised at Lee Shin's action.

Lee Shin approached Inyuu Kogo, who was lying underneath Kohei, grabbed Martyr in the opposite direction and raised it up.

"W-w-what are you trying to do...!" Inyuu Kogo panicked.

Swoosh—!

Ignoring Inyuu Kogo, Lee Shin stabbed Kohei in the back with the sword. The sword passed through Kohei's body and pierced Inyuu Kogo's chest.

"Why... are you doing this to me...?" Inyuu Kogo said with a fading voice.