

The Tower 133

Chapter 133

The swirling torrent of demonic power gradually subsided, and the fake Belzark, whose arm Belzark had severed with his black sword, could no longer effortlessly regenerate. He collapsed, unable to sustain his form any longer.

Belial's Illusioncraft had reached its limit, but Lee Shin was also scratching the bottom of his mana reserves. The World of Death had disappeared due to the lack of mana, but he still had one last move to finish the fight: his ultimate power.

Lee Shin glared at Belial, who was trembling and then approached her.

Thud. Thud. Thud.

Her facial expression changed rapidly with his every step. Lee Shin pulled out Martyr; when she saw that, her entire being seemed to shake like a leaf in a storm.

"No... No way..." Belial started to panic.

The powerful aura that Lee Shin had initially felt from Belial was gone. Instead, the aura of death started to emanate from her surroundings. Lee Shin promptly stabbed Belial's heart with Martyr.

Swoosh—!

"Keugh..." Belial gasped in pain.

Martyr emitted a radiant white light that enveloped Belial.

"Do you think... it will be over... like this...? Kek," said Belial, looking at Lee Shin.

Even as her demonic power was dissipating, she let out a displeased laugh.

"Yes, this world will now return to normal," Lee Shin replied.

"Do not be arrogant... Kek!" said Belial.

Dark red blood trickled from Belial's lips as she spoke.

"Your... people... are probably all dead... by now..." said Belial.

"..." Lee Shin remained silent but narrowed his eyebrows at her words.

"The Demon King... led all the Corps and launched an attack... the moment you arrived here..." said Belial.

"The Demon King cannot leave the White Zone," Lee Shin replied.

She laughed again; this time, it was louder and more ridiculing.

"Well... it's still possible to support the Corps, you know? And if the Demon King sacrifices himself, he can bring forth even stronger beings," Belial explained.

Lee Shin did not say anything to that.

"You are bound to lose. Your cherished humans will all die," said Belial.

Lee Shin frowned in response to her taunts and tightened his grip on his sword.

Swoosh—! Splash—!

Lee Shin yanked Martyr out of her heart and immediately beheaded her. Belial's head, with the eyes still wide open, fell to the ground, splashing blood everywhere. While Martyr couldn't harm the living, the weapon showed no mercy to devils.

Dark red blood had stained the white blade of the sword, so Lee Shin swung the sword with force in the air, splattering off the blood, and then used magic to return it to its pristine condition before sheathing it.

[You have taken away Belial's divinity class.]

[Your divinity class has increased by 1.]

Lee Shin's eyes widened in astonishment. He had hoped for it, and now he had truly gained another divinity class.

'Now I'll probably have a divinity class of 3.'

Chaos had helped him acquire two more divinity classes before he had even stepped foot on the thirtieth floor. The speed at which he had gained them had surpassed his expectations. He would likely be even stronger by the time he reached the thirtieth floor.

[You have defeated Belial, the devil of deception, desire, and delusion.]

[The immense evil rooted in the world has been eliminated.]

[The distorted world is now returning to normal.]

[The power of the Pattern is gradually returning.]

[The rewards have been improved based on merit points.]

[The merit points associated with Belial are being calculated.]

[Your merit points have increased by 1,010,380.]

Lee Shin frowned when he saw the messages. Indeed, Belial was a truly world-devouring creature who had stealthily infiltrated this realm to absorb its energy and restore her power. However, he had doubts.

Was this Belial the real one? Or was she a fake Belial created in the tower? How could she have entered this world if she was the real one? Did the Demon King have something to do with this?

Lee Shin felt that there was a multitude of uncertainties surrounding the tower. And without power, his knowledge was severely limited. He had to become stronger to gain more information.

He approached Belial, lying on the ground, headless. He then activated his power as He Who Knows Death.

Swoosh—!

A colossal peacock, its size rivaling a house, spread its tail feathers and stood before Belial.

Back then, she had suffered such immense damage that her very existence had been on the verge of extinction. In her disheveled state, she had used her illusions to flee from the scene, which had led to her losing her place on the thrones. And standing before her now was a familiar figure.

- Belial.

Deep within a pitch-dark cave, Belial looked at the eyes before her in alarm. The owner of the rough voice, reminiscent of scraping iron, was familiar to her.

"Baal?" Belial asked.

- You really look pathetic.

"I didn't know you were interested in me," Belial replied.

- You think you have the luxury to talk nonsense to me?

"So, what is it that you want from me?" Belial asked Baal.

Belial couldn't comprehend why the guy on the first throne would visit her after she had fallen from her throne. Baal was typically too busy to show any interest in others.

- I'll tell you how to climb back up to the throne. It might make you stronger beyond just recovering your body.

Baal's words made Belial's eyes wide open. The burning, quaking pain did not even register for a moment.

"Don't try to fool me," said Belial.

She spoke, pretending not to believe him, but her racing heart told a different tale.

- Huh... Even a fake devil can't silence their heartbeat.

Belial did not reply.

- I'm not lying. So, do you want to give it a try?

After hearing Baal's plan, Belial had crossed over to the tower—a newly created world. The power of Patterns existed in this world consisting of humans and demons. With that power, one could temporarily raise their class; if they managed to maintain that class, they could get it permanently.

Ultimately, Belial had rooted herself in this world and spent decades for maximum efficiency. She gradually devoured the power of this world, raising her class. And then, He Who Knows Death suddenly appeared in her world, and Belial met her end mercilessly at his hands.

Whoosh—

Lee Shin's vision flickered, and the world changed. He had seen her memories before she had met her demise.

"Baal... He is involved. I never expected that," Lee Shin muttered.

It wasn't the Demon King but the one sitting on the first throne who had a connection to the tower. Baal had guided Belial to the tower.

'Why is that? And how is this even possible...?'

His thought soon became complicated, so he turned his gaze toward Belial's corpse.

'You were called the devil of deception... but were you the real one?'

He had witnessed her past till the moments leading to her death, so she was undoubtedly dead. And the dark red thought that appeared before his eyes further confirmed it. She was the real Belial, not a fake created in the tower.

[The Qualification of an Adversary has responded.]

[You have defeated an enemy with a divinity class of 5 or higher.]

[Your transcendental class has risen.]

Time seemed to have slowed down once again for Lee Shin. And at that moment, a boulder dislodged from the ceiling and began its descent.

Thud... thud... thud...

The boulder rolled down the slope at an agonizingly sluggish pace. Each bounce felt excruciatingly prolonged, frustrating Lee Shin to the point of a frown as he impatiently observed it.

‘This is insan—’

However, Lee Shin could not finish his thoughts.

Thud—! Thud, thud, thud.

The boulder’s speed abruptly increased, rolling down as if it had gone mad.

"Keugh...!" Lee Shin gasped.

Ha... ha...

Lee Shin took a deep breath due to the sudden pain. The powerful recoil seemed to be a consequence of pushing the transcendental class to its maximum limit. He had already been on the verge of collapsing, so he couldn’t endure the pain.

"Ha." Lee Shin unconsciously gave a hollow laugh, looking at the system message.

[Qualification of an Adversary]

This qualification is given to those who can challenge the gods.

You are one step closer to transcendental class.

Your transcendental class will elevate if you defeat someone with a divinity class of 10 or higher.

Lee Shin was ecstatic to discover that he had managed to elevate his transcendental class.

‘The divinity class and transcendental class are opposite concepts.’

The divinity class represented a position of superiority over others, granting comparatively greater power. On the other hand, the transcendental class emphasized surpassing personal limits and achieving growth solely through one's own abilities.

In other words, the divinity class wouldn't grow if no one was around. But the same wouldn't be true for the transcendental class. Transcendence was a path of solitary growth independent of others.

Lee Shin believed that transcendence suited him better than divinity class.

‘Good.’

In any case, the fact that both powers had increased was a positive outcome. There was no need to worry any further.

"Harpness," Lee Shin called out.

Harpness materialized and asked,

- Did you call me?

"Do you think you can turn this one into an undead?" Lee Shin asked while pointing at Belial's corpse.

This foe was completely different from the ones he had faced so far. Besides, he considered himself very lucky in his encounter with Belial. Given her class alone, she was already stronger than him.

Various factors like her limits, Lee Shin not overestimating his abilities and focusing on Misteltein, and how little she knew about him had led to this outcome.

‘It could have been my corpse there.’

Lee Shin believed that luck also played a part in his victory over Belial.

- Well... It is possible to turn her into an undead. However, if she becomes an undead now, she will go berserk.

"Tsk. So it's not possible after all?" Lee Shin asked with a slightly disappointed look.

- He Who Knows Death, if it's a higher-level spirit... it might be possible.

"A higher-level spirit? How can I meet a higher-level spirit?" Lee Shin asked Harpness.

- We don't know, but you will meet one when the time comes.

With those words, Harpness disappeared. Disappointed, Lee Shin placed Belial's corpse in the Subspace Pocket because leaving it behind was both unsettling and felt like a waste for him. All that remained was her flickering soul, but he could not put her soul in the Subspace Pocket.

"Do you think it's unfair? Or are you angry or something?" Lee Shin provoked Belial's quivering soul.

Her soul had been highly agitated from the beginning. It turned so red that it almost looked black.

‘She is now a demon soul... Can I really handle it?’

Belial's soul had become a demon soul, so her thoughts would break free as her vassal had disappeared. A necromancer must be able to receive and endure the demonic thoughts of such souls while using them. However, accepting the thoughts of a powerful demon soul without caution would only lead to disaster.

‘Tsk...’

However, Lee Shin couldn’t leave Belial's demon soul in this world. He had to deal with her here or absorb her soul with necromancy.

‘It would be a waste to leave her here.’

Lee Shin turned around and picked up Misteltein from the ground.

[Misteltein’s ego has shattered.]

[The ego has fallen asleep for recovery.]

[Misteltein’s power has been sealed.]

Another aftermath of Belial's attack. Lee Shin put Misteltein in the Subspace Pocket, approached Belial's demon soul again, and reached out his left hand.

[You are absorbing Belial's demon soul.]

[Belial's demon soul is resisting!]

The intense murderous intent and hostility emanating from Belial’s soul overwhelmed Lee Shin, disrupting his thoughts. The muscles in his face twitched, and he trembled uncontrollably. However, he gritted his teeth and remained fixated on the demon soul, determined to stay focused despite the challenges.

“Keugh...!” Lee Shin tried to stay focused.

The soul would consume him if he lost focus for even a second; therefore, he held on. And before long, he had suppressed and dominated it.

Swoosh—!

He absorbed the soul in his left palm. The soul had resisted until the very end.

“Ha... ha...” Lee Shin, dripping with cold sweat, took a deep breath.

[You have absorbed Belial's demon soul.]

[Your Dominance has increased by 3.]

He had also considered using Martyr to sever the connection with the demon soul; thankfully, it didn't come to that. The divinity class and the Qualification of an Adversary had made this task possible.

‘Stay in here quietly.’

The resistance was bound to be greater if he used her demonic soul in the future, but until then, increasing his dominance would suffice.

- She is a wicked one, Master, so be careful.

"Don't worry, I won't let souls like this devour me," Lee Shin replied.

He glanced at the cave one last time, noticing how battered it looked now, before leaving.

[Shadow Space]

The Skeleton Crow emerged from his shadow, and Lee Shin mounted it.

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

Lee Shin arrived at the Valley of Despair, alighting the crow in the desolate valley. He knelt on the ground, extending his hand toward the lingering bloodstains.

"Blood has already coagulated?" Lee Shin looked surprised.

It took at least two days of exposure to air for demonic blood to start thickening. However, it had not even been more than a few hours since Lee Shin fought Belial. Belial had stated that the Corps left for battle the moment Lee Shin had entered her cave.

'Could it be... time distortion?'

Lee Shin quickly checked the bloodstains in other places and saw they were identical. Besides, the absence of humans in this area meant that the enemies had invaded.

- The Demon King... would have led all the Corps and launched an attack... the moment you arrived here...

- ... In the end, you will lose.

Belial's words rang in his mind. He realized why she had been confident even in the face of death. The base now had clear signs that told the tale of a vicious battle.

'Did she use Illusioncraft to make it seem like the flow of time was the same inside?'

He hastily mounted the Skeleton Crow again, traversing through Meldeuren's Purple Zone and skimming over the Navy Zone. He could see dozens of bases—all devastated and desolate.

The same was true for Canada's National Under. When Lee Shin moved to the Blue Zone border between the two countries, a massive force, accompanied by a dense fog covering the Demon Realm, was attacking Meldeuren and Under.

'They have poured more resources into this side than I expected.'

Lee Shin had anticipated this to some extent and had therefore made a request to Clark.

- A request, you say? What is it?

- Well... I want all the countries' fronts to be in the blue zone.

- Ah...

- Currently, I am the inhibitor of the Demon King's Corps. The best time to crush you all is when I am absent.

- ...I see. It would be more advantageous for them to launch an attack right away, whether you kill the devil or not. Moreover, if you were to return, this stage would soon end. So I guess protecting the Navy Zone and beyond would be meaningless.

- Yes, that's right. But the probability of that happening isn't actually high. The Demon King needs to know about my existence, power, and plan to launch an attack there for all these things to happen.

- Yes, I'm aware of that. So, are you saying that it could become excessive defense?

- Yes, that's right, but it is the "better safe than sorry" scenario. So, prepare to hold out as much as possible in the citadel of the Blue Zone. I'll be there soon.

- Lee Shin, my opinion of you seems accurate, just as I expected.

- And... please look after Merteng. The demons might be willing to give up on other places just to destroy Merteng.

- All right, Sir, I understand.

Lee Shin smiled satisfactorily, seeing that Clark had successfully fulfilled the request.

'Attacking the Demon King's castle like this is also a way, but...'

If the operation had been carried out successfully, it would become the optimal condition for growth. Lee Shin had already experienced the power of chaos, which had gone up to level 3 thanks to his Pattern.

Although he had been on the verge of defeat in his fight against her, it did not matter now because he was a completely different person now.

Lee Shin's Skeleton Crow arrived above the densely packed Demon Corps. He could feel the gazes of the demons looking at the sky.

"Kieeek!" The demons started to cry out.

Some demons had broken through Meldeuren's Iron Wall Fortress. One of them was Veck Jack, who spewed venom. It flapped its enormous wings, letting out a deafening roar. Lee Shin's black mana soared into the sky.

'I'll quickly deal with these creatures and return.'