

The Tower 151

Chapter 151

The loud cries of the rampaging demonic beasts echoed. The demons had pridefully entered the village; they burst into laughter when they saw the humans.

"Hahaha! I never expected to see humans here."

"I can tell at a glance that they are weak. How did they even manage to get here?"

"Well, occasionally, strange creatures visit the first realm... but these poor things, meeting us of all creatures."

The demons were riding boar-like beasts and swinging their large clubs. Lee Shin approached them.

"Do you know the entrance to the second realm?" Lee Shin asked the group of demons.

The demons were taken aback by Lee Shin's sudden approach and question. One of the demons decided to resolve their confusion by swinging their club at Lee Shin.

"What nonsense is this guy talking about!"

Woong—!

Crack!

As if cracking an egg, Vuela caught the club and broke it into pieces.

"Huh... how is this possible?" The demon was shocked.

"Ugh, all of you look so annoying. How come all you demons act and behave the same?" Vuela, with a smirk on his face, grabbed the face of the demon in front of him and lifted him.

"What do you think you're doing—!" shouted the demon in pain.

"You gotta learn your lesson," said Vuela.

Kueeek!

Keuakkk!

Kiiiiik!

Vuela beat all the demons mercilessly. The demons quickly kneeled in front of Lee Shin's group after that.

"Oh dear, we're so sorry for failing to recognize such honorable individuals!"

"We would like to apologize sincerely! W-w-what would you like to know?"

"Shut up, you idiot! Did you already forget he asked you about the second realm? Why are you making them repeat it!" shouted a demon and smacked the head of the demon beside him.

"What did you just call me? Did you call me an idiot? And who are you to smack me! Do you want to get beaten?"

"Do you guys really want to die?" Vuela brought his head forward to meet their eyes.

"N-no, Sir. We didn't mean to do that!"

"Do you guys know where the entrance to the second realm is?" Lee Shin asked.

"Yes, we do know! We heard a gatekeeper protects the gate leading to the next realm. A high-ranking devil connected the gatekeeper's soul to the door. Even if you kill the gatekeeper, he would just come back. You must be recognized by the gatekeeper to use the gate," explained a demon.

"Good, you seem to know much. Do you also know where the gate is?"

"I've seen it before, but... I don't remember exactly... keuackk!"

The demon's voice had trailed off, so Vuela had swiftly beheaded one of the demons standing beside him.

Startled by the sight, the other panicked demon hurriedly spoke up.

"Oh, yes! I think I remember. I'm certain I saw it, uh, about a month ago!"

"Oh, is that so? But you know, I can detect lies, right? Think carefully before you speak. Lie and die," Alice said to the demon.

"I'm speaking the truth! Please trust me!" the demon replied.

"Oh yeah? Then take us there," Alice said.

"Huh? Are you trying to go to the gate that leads to the second realm? It's full of demons, though. It could be dangerous, and you'll risk your life if you make a mistake." The demon shuddered as if recalling that place's location.

"You don't have to worry about that," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin summoned the undead Veck Jack and mounted it.

"So, where should we go?" Lee Shin asked.

"Keep walking day and night toward that massive mountain range over there. It'll be visible after a few days," the demon replied.

"Then one day should be enough," Lee Shin replied.

Swoosh—

Veck Jack spread its enormous wings and took to the sky, carrying the three individuals and the demon.

"Don't fly too high, but go at full speed in that direction," Lee Shin said to Veck Jack.

"W-What did you say? There's no way we can make it in just one day— Aaah!" cried out the demon.

Veck Jack flew rapidly through the air. The demon had to use all his strength just to hold Veck Jack's protruding bones tightly.

'Keugh... What if I lose my grip and fall?'

Although he could get injured, he believed it was better than going to that place. He knew that if he were to go to that place, he would surely die. With this thought in mind, the demon loosened his grip slightly, but an intangible force grabbed his arm.

"Kyaah!" screamed the demon.

Now his entire body was in the air, swaying like a flag, and only one of his arms was firmly attached to the Skeleton's protruding bone. He could not let go, no matter how hard he tried.

"Where do you think you're running off to?" Alice sneered as she glanced at the demon.

"Save! me!" cried out the frightened demon.

A fierce gust of wind filled his mouth, preventing any words from coming out. He felt like his arm would be torn off any second. He deeply regretted trying to flee now.

"Burf—!"

After finally landing, the demon started to gag again despite having gagged several times during the flight. With a disdainful look, Alice pushed the demon aside.

Meanwhile, Lee Shin and his group looked at the grand gate leading to the second realm, situated far in the distance.

"Is that the gate that leads to the second realm?" Vuela asked.

"That's right," Lee Shin replied.

"It's unnecessarily magnificent." Vuela sighed in admiration as he looked at the gate but furrowed his eyebrows upon seeing the fierce battle occurring before it among the demons.

The demons kept appearing out of nowhere. They kept popping up and killing each other to go to the second realm.

"This place really is chaotic," said Alice, disgusted by the bloody scenes.

"There must be more than one gate leading to the second realm. So, why are they all gathering here?" Vuela asked with a puzzled expression.

"That's because the Demon World is unimaginably vast. This, here, is a fight between the demons solely from this area," Lee Shin explained.

"May I... go now?" the demon asked Lee Shin politely.

"Sure, go ahead," Lee Shin replied.

The demon hastily retreated. If he were lucky, he would survive; if not, he wouldn't get far. There was no reason to sympathize with the demons.

"Let's go," Lee Shin said, looking at Veck Jack.

Veck Jack flapped its wings and headed toward the gate. The arrival of the massive Skeleton drew the attention of the demons in the area. Before long, various attacks were flying from the ground toward the Skeleton.

It revealed the foolishness of the demons as they attempted to stop the Skeleton's swift advance toward the gatekeeper, desperate to stop it from reaching its destination. However, these low-class demons from the first realm were no match for Veck Jack.

The green venom from Veck Jack's mouth melted down the demons on the ground instantly.

Thud—!

Veck Jack reached the gatekeeper and landed on the ground. There were no longer any enemies around. The demons had finally realized the power difference between them and their opponents.

"Are you humans?" The gatekeeper's eyes lit up as he looked at Lee Shin and his group.

The gatekeeper had small wings and sharp claws. It was a gargoyle, a stone statue with a thick body and limbs.

"Well, you already know the answer. Move aside and don't waste our time like this," Lee Shin said.

A gargoyle's eyes could see through their opponent's power. Their eyes could discern demonic power, mana, and every other type of supernatural force out there. Lee Shin activated his black mana and demonstrated it to the gargoyle.

"What an extraordinary human you are... You may enter," said the gargoyle.

As the gargoyle made the declaration, the massive gate opened wide.

Creeeak!

Kyaahhh!!

Demons from all sides screamed and tried to rush inside.

"Huh? What's going on?" Vuela looked confused.

"Why are they suddenly acting like this?" Alice asked with a bewildered expression.

"For demons, entering a new realm increases the probability of gaining more demonic power. Compared to this realm, the demonic power in the second realm is stronger. And even stronger in the third realm. They are just reacting to the demonic power pouring in from the open gate," Lee Shin explained.

The two were taken aback, but Lee Shin remained calm.

"The unqualified ones cannot enter," said the gargoyle.

The gargoyle struck the ground, and stone fragments shot up from the floor, swirling in the air and obliterating the charging demons. The strength gap between these demons and the gargoyle was overwhelming. The demons who followed behind, witnessing the pitiful deaths of their comrades, could no longer approach the gate.

"You may enter," said the gargoyle, looking at Lee Shin's group.

"Are all three of us allowed to pass?" Lee Shin asked.

"Yes," the gargoyle replied.

The gatekeeper stepped aside, allowing Lee Shin and his party to enter the gate. Lee Shin's group held onto each other tightly and entered the gate, as they could end up in different places if the contact broke.

After entering the second realm, Lee Shin and his party realized that they had entered some kind of ruin. They landed on a desolate land, with remnants of collapsed buildings strewn everywhere. And above them, Cecil Ravager floated in the sky.

The second realm didn't look that different from the first one. The only difference was that the first realm started in a wasteland, while the second realm started amidst the scattered ruins of collapsed buildings.

"I can hear the ground shaking," said Vuela.

His ear perked up, and he brought them close to the ground. He heard some sort of collision happening incessantly at regular intervals. Also, many such collisions were happening.

"I hear demons over there," Alice said.

'The demons have gathered there.'

Lee Shin spread his mana and scanned the area from where the noise originated. Then he examined the ruins of the collapsed buildings. He saw long steel beams and something shaped like a giant drill there.

‘Were they trying to dig the ground?’

If that was the case, the location of the demons, which he had just detected, made sense to him.

"Did you figure out something?" Alice asked Lee Shin.

Lee Shin nodded.

"I'm not sure what they were looking for, but the demons dug here. This is a drilling machine," said Lee Shin pointing to the machine.

"Then how did this place end up like this?" Vuela asked Lee Shin.

"There must have been a fight. There must have been something valuable here for them to unearth," said Lee Shin.

Vuela turned his head to look in the direction of the demons.

"So, is that sound..." Vuela muttered.

"Yeah, that's right. It must be the sound of the demons digging underground," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin and his group quickly moved toward the sound's origin. There, they saw an entrance leading underground, but someone walked out from there just when they were about to enter.

"Tsk, those damn Belkins. Did they still leave sentries?" The demon looked frustrated.

This demon had long white hair, black skin, and sharp eyes. He had a relatively small stature, but his numerous scars conveyed that he was a battle-hardened veteran.

"Wait a second. Is that a human? No wonder I couldn't sense any demon power," grumbled the demon.

"Are you a demonized human?" Lee Shin asked.

The demon burst into laughter.

"Well, you could say that. I used to be a human. Well... to be honest, I hardly remember those days anymore," the demonized human replied.

"Oh, really? Then do you remember the location of the third realm's entrance?" Lee Shin asked.

"What did you just say? You guys are completely insane." The demon's face distorted quickly.

The demonized human's hands transformed into ghouls, soon becoming tainted with demonic power.

"It's been a while since I had some fun with humans... I want to have some fun with you guys, but I guess I'll just have to kill you," the demonized human said.

"What did you say? Lee Shin, let me take care of this guy," Alice said with a smirk.

"All right, but be careful. He's not an ordinary second-realm creature," Lee Shin warned Alice.

Even after handing the demonized human to Alice, Lee Shin never took his eyes off the demonized human, as its aura was different from other creatures.

"Well, you're a pathetic bunch. You think you can defeat me alone when, in fact, not even all three of you together can defeat me?" The demonized human started to laugh at them.

"I alone should be enough to defeat you," Alice replied.

"Wow, that hurt my pride," the demonized human replied.

Cruel-looking claws of demonic power formed over the demonic human's hands. He swung them at Alice with a slicing sound, carrying intense pressure. However, the demonized human's claws fell short of reaching Alice.

"Keugh...!" The demonized human gasped in pain.

"What the hell? Is that really all you've got?" Alice seemed confused.

An intangible hand had materialized in the air and grabbed the demonized human's claws. With a bewildered expression, the demonized human withdrew his hand and gritted his teeth.

"So, you have some tricks up your sleeve," said the demonized human.

"Calling it a trick won't do justice to my abilities, as they have grown a lot," Alice replied.

During their ascent to the forty-ninth floor, Alice had continuously learned about Psychokinesis from Lee Shin and trained tirelessly day and night. As a result, her proficiency in Psychokinesis had significantly improved compared to when she had been on the thirtieth floor.

'I still have a long way to go... but oh well.'

She hadn't gotten a lot of time to learn it from Lee Shin, five months at most. Nonetheless, she had trained hard, even sacrificing sleep, not to be a burden to Lee Shin.

'I shouldn't be struggling against mere second-realm demons like this.'

Woong— Bam—!

Alice's mana clashed with the demonized human's demonic power, causing an explosion in the air. The battle proved more challenging than they had anticipated, catching both off guard.

'Darn it! Why is this woman so strong?'

'What's going on? If an ordinary second-realm demon is this powerful, how strong would the third-realm demons be?'

Although Alice had not even used her unique abilities or unleashed her full power, she still felt perplexed.

"Who are you guys? How can you fight me, one of the Four Great Masters of the second realm, on equal footing?" the demonized human asked with a bewildered expression.

"Huh? You're one of the Four Great Masters here?" Alice asked as if she could not believe him.

"That's right," the demonized human replied.

"Huh... I see. That explains why you are better than I expected," Alice replied.

"Just... better than expected?" the demonized human seemed slightly offended.

"All right then. I wasn't going to use my full power, but I guess I can show you more of my skills," said Alice.

"Hah! You were holding back? Stop boasting!" the demonized human laughed at Alice.

"Well, feel it for yourself," said Alice.

After saying that, Alice unleashed even more of her mana.

[Thumbtack Attack]

The intangible force rose, now sharp and condensed, and hailed down on the demonized human.

"Keugh...!" The demonized human gasped.

The attack had struck him so abruptly that he couldn't even react. The demonized human slammed into the ground, and his back bent at an unnatural angle.

"P-Please... help...!" cried out the demonized human in pain.

"Tell me where the entrance to the third realm is, then I'll forgive you." Alice grabbed the demonized human's head and lifted him, speaking with determination.

"Well, that place is... It's too dangerous. There's a high chance that the Four Great Masters will be there," said the demonized human.

"All of them?" Lee Shin asked.

"Y-Yes," the demonized human replied.

"Hey, you demonized human. What's your name?" Alice asked.

"My name is... Zephyr," replied Zephyr.

"All right, Zephyr. Lead us to that gate," said Alice.

In response to Alice's words, Zephyr hastily nodded and struggled to stand up.

"Stop pretending like you're in pain, and get on board quickly!" Lee Shin shouted.

Lee Shin summoned Veck Jack again and used Psychokinesis to lift and make him sit on Veck Jack.

"Keaukkk!" Zephyr, starting to panic, struggled to maintain his balance on Veck Jack.

Slap—!

Vuela had swiftly struck the back of Zephyr's head and sat behind him.

"Ouch! Why did you... hit me?" Zephyr shouted.

"Shut up! Don't think of playing any tricks on us. By the way, she's the weakest one here, so be on your best behavior," said Vuela, pointing at Alice.

Zephyr widened his eyes and started to think fast as if he could not believe it.

Slap—!

"What now! Why did you do that again...?" Zephyr shouted.

"Well, just cause you're annoying," Vuela replied.

After delivering another blow, Vuela finally seemed satisfied. He finally looked relaxed and displayed a calm expression. Zephyr gritted his teeth; inside, he was laughing maliciously.

'Ugh, how dare you! All right, you damn bastards, let's see if you can maintain your attitude there.'?