

## **The Tower 176**

### Chapter 176

Central District Airbase, Wuhan, China.

The 52nd brigade was in chaos due to the appearance of an unknown challenger.

"What the hell...! What is he doing! Who even is that guy!" Mao Xia Tian shouted.

"Waiting for confirmation, Sir!"

"How long will that take?! Why wasn't that the first thing you did? Follow the damn protocols, will you?!" Mao Xia Tian seemed frustrated.

"Well, based on appearance..."

"What about his appearance? What is it! Just speak clearly!" Veins popped out on Mao Xia Tian's forehead as he angrily shouted.

"Well... I'm not certain, but..."

"Another challenger has appeared!"

"What is the Air Defense Control Command doing right now? They should shoot that bastard down immediately! Are surface-to-air missiles just for show?" Mao Xia Tian shouted again.

"Surface-to-air missiles are useless, as even Lei failed to do anything. We need ammunition with a special mana-suppressing circuit, but that requires approval from higher-ups—"

"Fuck! This damn situation is already complex enough!" Mao Xia Tian shouted again.

The recent mass kidnapping of top-ranked challengers from various countries by Reverse in China had caused a major headache for the headquarters. The United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Korea, Japan, and others had responded by sending military forces into China.

Therefore, the higher-ups in China were very sensitive. The destruction of the Xuan-Yuan Sword, which the country's Chancellor had desperately sought, had heightened the already tense atmosphere. Mao Xia Tian had to forcibly suppress the urge to crack the necks of those who had mishandled the situation.

"It has been confirmed!"

"What? Who is he? Who is that bastard—" Mao Xia Tian asked.

"His name is Lee Shin! No challenger can control Skeletons this well and unleash such bizarre and unimaginable magic skills."

"Did you say Lee Shin? But he never appeared at the Korean Dimension Gate—" Mao Xia Tian was lost in thought when a thought crossed his mind.

'Wait a second... Lee Shin's origin has always been uncertain. The fact that he had returned to Earth shows that he passed through the Dimension Gate... But he did not appear at the Korean Gate.'

Mao Xia Tian thought this situation would prove that Lee Shin wasn't from Korea. And even if that wasn't true, it could at least be used as a stepping stone to deny it. It was valuable information.

The next moment, Mao Xia Tian clenched his lips and looked at the screen. The screen showed dozens of fighter jets flying toward Lee Shin.

"Call them back immediately! Now!" Mao Xia Tian shouted.

"Sorry, Sir? But..."

"If you think the surface-to-air missiles are useless, do you think those fighter jets will stand a chance against Lee Shin?" Mao Xia Tian shouted; he had a good point.

"But we need to save Lei..."

"Lee Shin won't kill Lei, so call back the fighter jets immediately and request a conversation with Lee Shin. Make sure you do it politely," said Mao Xia Tian.

"Yes, Sir!"

"And keep a tight lid on this Lee Shin situation. Make sure it does not spread to other countries. You understand?" Mao Xia Tian said.

Mao Xia Tian hurriedly left the Air Defense Control Command. Then, he picked up his phone and made a call somewhere.

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Lei looked at Lee Shin with trembling eyes from the ground. His Draylia couldn't even use its power against Lee Shin before it had crashed. Lei couldn't even feel angry due to the overwhelming difference in strength.

"You are..." Lei spoke in Chinese.

"I don't understand Chinese, so speak in Korean," Lee Shin replied.

"Oh, yes, Sir," Lei spoke in Korean.

"You can speak Korean?" Lee Shin seemed surprised.

"Well, just a little bit," Lei replied.

Lee Shin finally showed a satisfied smile.

"Good, listen carefully," Lee Shin said.

"Yes, Sir," Lei replied.

"First of all, where are we at right now?" Lee Shin asked.

"We're at Wuhan, Sir," Lei replied.

Lee Shin could finally pinpoint his exact location.

"If we're in Wuhan, does that mean we're in the Central District?" Lee Shin asked to confirm.

Lee Shin did not know much about this area.

"Yes, that's correct, Sir," Lei replied.

"Where is the closest air base?" Lee Shin asked.

"Well... I cannot disclose that information, Sir," Lei replied.

"You think I can't find it just because you won't tell me?" Lee Shin asked.

"..." Lei remained speechless.

With a stern expression, Lee Shin looked at the approaching helicopter.

"If you don't speak up, I'll make that one crash right now," Lee Shin threatened Lei coldly.

Lei's face turned pale, and he hesitated. Someone exited the approaching helicopter and came to them.

"Nice to meet you, Sir. I am Lieutenant Wei Shi Wen of the Central District Airbase. Are you Lee Shin?" Wei Shi Wen introduced himself to Lee Shin in fluent Korean.

"Yes, that's me," Lee Shin replied.

"It seems our soldier made a mistake. I would like to apologize in his stead. We'll lead the way, so please come with us in the helicopter for now and—" Wei Shi Wen tried to explain.

"Well, do you really expect me to forgive you just because you said it was a mistake?" Lee Shin replied coldly.

"Sorry?" Wei Shi Wen gulped at Lee Shin's cold voice.

He could feel the goosebumps on his arms.

"But, Mr. Lee Shin, you also attacked our fighter jets, and Lei—" Wei Shi Wen tried to justify his actions.

"As you already know, it was an unavoidable choice for defense. Haven't you already admitted it was a mistake on your side?" Lee Shin replied coldly with valid points.

"Yes... that's right," Wei Shi Wen replied with a voice lacking confidence.

"I don't want to engage in meaningless arguments with you. And, first, I would like to go to the Korean Challengers Association, so if you could connect me to them, that would be great," Lee Shin said.

Wei Shi Wen hesitated with a complex expression. Seeing that, Lee Shin laughed and summoned a Skeleton from his Shadow Space, believing that talking more would only be a waste of time.

"W-Where are you going?" Wei Shi Wen asked Lee Shin with a bewildered expression.

"I'm going to Korea," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin quickly took to the sky and sensed another person flying toward them. He wanted to ignore them and was about to leave. However, he turned his head sharply when he detected their mana wave. He blankly stared in that direction; soon, a familiar challenger came flying on a large bird. The man's face was hidden behind a fan.

"Hello, Mr. Lee Shin! Long time no see," said a man.

The man retracted the fan, revealing a faint smile. It was Zhuge Yun.

"I rushed here as soon as I heard the news. Shall we move to a different place to talk?" Zhuge Yun asked Lee Shin.

Lee Shin nodded. With an embarrassed face, Wei Shi Wen followed the two, but since Lee Shin didn't allow it, he could not hear their conversation.

"If you come any closer, I will shoot them down. You understand?" Lee Shin threatened Wei Shi Wen and others around him.

No one dared to enter the place due to Lee Shin's fierce threat. Zhuge Yun invited him to a small cabin in the mountain range and offered him a cup of tea.

"This is my hideout," Zhuge Yun said, showing the place to Lee Shin.

"Did you live here?" Lee Shin asked.

"Yes, it's where I used to hang out," Zhuge Yun replied.

It was surprising, as it contrasted with Zhuge Yun's image of being a noble figure in the city.

"So... why did you bring me all the way here?" Lee Shin asked.

"I brought you here because I wanted to chat with you privately, Mr. Lee Shin. I have something to ask," said Zhuge Yun.

"What is it?" Lee Shin asked.

"How did you come here without using the Dimension Gate?" Zhuge Yun asked with a puzzled look.

Lee Shin thought about it a bit before explaining his project. He decided to let Zhuge Yun know because the Chinese challenger was a piece of his plan to gather power in the world.

"I see... Many people make plans, but very few can put them into action like you," Zhuge Yun said.

"So... I hope you can help me protect the Dimension Gate here," Lee Shin replied.

"All right, Sir. Then, does that mean I can also return to the Tower through that Dimension Gate?" Zhuge Yun asked.

"Probably," Lee Shin replied.

Zhuge Yun nodded repeatedly, looking interested.

"Currently, the Chinese People's Army is planning to turn you into a Chinese challenger," Zhuge Yun said.

"What did you just say? That's nonsense!" Lee Shin seemed shocked.

Zhuge Yun also let out a bitter laugh, recognizing the futility of trying to make Lee Shin a Chinese challenger. Planning such things would be a mere waste of time.

"You don't need to worry about that, though. I will stop them. I mentioned it to you as a precaution," Zhuge Yun said.

Mao Xia Tian seemed to have connections with the Deputy Chairman of the Challenger Association, but Zhuge Yun had already won over the deputy. Unfortunately, Mao Xia Tian's absurd proposal could sway the high-ranking officials in the Central District, so Zhuge Yun had to prevent such nonsense from spreading through the media.

Also, if the Dimension Gate in Wuhan were discovered, these people would be ridiculed. It was not the time to pay attention to such nonsense.

"Mr. Lee Shin, I have another reason for bringing you here," Zhuge Yun said seriously. "Reverse has revealed themselves."

The WA was held in Nanning, China, and numerous challengers, rankers of the next generation, were all kidnapped by Reverse. Zhuge Yun explained in detail to Lee Shin what had happened so far.

"I also received the invitation to the Third Auction Hall, but I couldn't join the auction as I was busy managing the formation outside at the Auction Hall. Thanks to that, I did not get sucked into the black hole," Zhuge Yun said.

In reality, Zhuge Yun had suspicions about Reverse's intentions, so he had used the formation as an excuse to avoid entering. However, he had not expected things to turn out like this.

"Many countries joined hands after that and have been able to locate them roughly. They are now mobilizing their forces and challengers to target Reverse," said Zhuge Yun.

'Wait a second...'

Lee Shin noticed the similarities between this incident and the past Putorana massacre, where challengers and military personnel from various countries stormed Reverse's headquarters and were massacred by their test subjects.

"Where is that place?" Lee Shin asked.

"It's the Putorana Plateau in Russia," Zhuge Yun replied.

"Tell them to fall back immediately," Lee Shin said seriously.

After seeing the change in Lee Shin's demeanor, Zhuge Yun realized the gravity of the situation and made a few calls. He handed Lee Shin his second phone.

"Use this to contact anyone you want to get in touch with first," Zhuge Yun said.

Lee Shin made a call, hoping the number was still the same as before.

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After Lee Shin disappeared through the Dimension Gate, the remaining individuals, exhausted, looked at the Gate in Lardel Archipelago on Island 43. The Gate shimmered, sparking their curiosity.

"Wait... He said you can use it even if you're not an Earth challenger, right?" Cain, the leader of Platinum Group, looked at the Gate with curiosity.

"Wait up! Are you planning on going through the Gate? Lee Shin entered because he was certain he could return to Earth. But you aren't from Earth, are you?" Startled by Cain's curiosity, Sevrino exclaimed.

"I have no homeland. And that only makes me more curious to know why Lee Shin wanted to return to Earth so badly," Cain replied.

"You... Crazy. Do what you want! Become a dimensional orphan for all I care. It will be interesting to watch," Vian said sarcastically.

Cain raised his eyebrows at Vian's sarcasm.

"You old man... He's cursing at me," Cain muttered.

"Stop it," Laurent intervened.

Laurent's intervention made Cain hesitate. After all, the other guy was strong enough to deal a near-fatal blow to Lee Shin, so Cain turned his head.

"I have no intention of doing anything harmful in Lee Shin's homeland," Cain said.

"I want to go too. Because, just like the leader, I also don't have a homeland." Pleta, the deputy leader, agreed with Cain's words.

It wasn't that they truly had no homeland; they had simply erased it from their hearts. They longed to witness Earth's breathtaking night view, a thing of beauty according to many.

"Hmm... It's not like you can't try it," Sevrino muttered.

The two looked at him with hope.

"Does that mean we can go?" Cain asked.

"Unlike the original Dimension Gate, I made this Gate by forcibly connecting different dimensions. I took the coordinates of the existing Dimension Gate and used an expedient, but I think you can probably use it too," Sevrino explained kindly to them.

Vian did not appreciate Sevrino's friendly explanation, furrowed his brow, and went to the basement.

"Tsk, that old man... He hates us so much," Pleta muttered, looking at Vian.

"Don't mind him. Since that old man is also an important figure, we must accept him as he is."

Sevrino checked the graphs and numbers on the screen and drank some water.

"Well, I was wondering what would happen if challengers not from Earth used this gate. Where would they end up? I also want to know if Lee Shin made it there safely. So, are you guys willing to go?" Sevrino suggested.

"Yup, sounds interesting," Cain smirked at Sevrino's suggestion.

"Leader! I want to go too!" Pleta shouted.

"Do as you please," said Cain.

"Give me a moment to prepare. I'll take care of it quickly. Dr. Song!" Sevrino called out.

"Yes!" Song Sotar replied.

Sevrino and Song Sotar started moving busily again without a break.

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Air Force Commander Wang Jing Hai slammed the table harshly upon hearing the report at China's People's Liberation Army headquarters.

"Did this damn guy ridicule our Air Force!" Wang Jing Hai shouted in anger.

Upon hearing that the entire Central District Airbase had been disregarded, Wang Jing Hai fumed and gritted his teeth. Zhuge Yun, from the Challenger Association, taking Lee Shin away without their input further fueled his anger.

"The Excellency has ordered us to bring Lee Shin to our country," said the sergeant.

"And how do you suggest we do that? Just use the simple fact that he didn't appear from the Korean Dimension Gate, and his origin is unknown? Huh?" Wang Jing Hai said.

"But... if we can capture Lee Shin and obtain his consent, wouldn't that be enough?" the sergeant asked.

Wang Jing Hai furrowed his eyebrows after hearing the sergeant's words.

"Oh, so you can capture him?" Wang Jing Hai said.

"With the power of our People's Liberation Army, it is certainly possible. If we launch attacks from all directions and use ammunition that can penetrate Lee Shin's mana shield, it's definitely possible," said the sergeant.

"All right. This sounds like a much better plan than kneeling in front of that damn arrogant bastard," Wang Jing Hai muttered.

"Even if he's a challenger, he can't survive a barrage of missiles," said the sergeant.

"And what would our justification be?" Wang Jing Hai asked.

"Didn't he destroy our fighter jet first? Furthermore, our challenger, Lei, is half dead because of him," said the sergeant.

"Ha! That should be good enough. I want to see that arrogant challenger messed up."

"Soon, Sir," the sergeant said with a sly smile.