

The Tower 18

Chapter 18: The Preparation

Hwang Kang-Woong left and May came in. There were huge bags under May's eyes.

"What's going on?" Lee Shin asked.

Skeletons could not get bags under their eyes. May had made something that looked similar using mana.

"Haha... I've collected as many ancient language books as I could find. I tried to sort them by the strokes of the characters in the text, so you can use these for interpretation for the time being," May explained.

"Thanks, you've worked hard. I know everything already, so you didn't have to do that," Lee Shin answered.

"... No, it's all right. I can do it," May replied.

Lee Shin thought it was absurd how May protested and said he was fine.

"No, I can do it from now on. So you can just train the people from Undermost and take a rest when you can," said Lee Shin.

"Alright, thank you," May replied.

May left the room and Lee Shin looked at the data in the ancient script. Staying up all night for a day or two was not enough to do this work. It was something that would take him at least a few months of hard work. It was possible to complete this in a few months, because May was a Skeleton.

'I can't believe they decided to use ancient words on the tombstone.' When Lee Shin looked at the data set, he was convinced that the characters he saw earlier were ancient words.

The timing was very good. Lee Shin thought he could focus on this work for a while.

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"Hey, man! If you go up the tower with that skill, you will barely be able to climb a few floors. You'll be beaten to death!"

"Yeah, come on! He doesn't have the grit. Are you sure you were a mixed martial arts professional athlete?"

"Dammit! How can I do more her— Argh!"

While Shin Ha-Neul was distracted by Baek Hyun and Kang Ji-Hoon, Warrie hit Shin Ha-Neul's wrist with a blade.

"Oh, you must have a lot of spare time to look away. I was complacent. I guess I made it too easy for you." Warrie was ready to raise the level of difficulty for Shin Ha-Neul.

"No, it's not that!" Shin Ha-Neul cried out.

To his excuses, there was no reply, besides a tougher attack from Warrie.

Swoosh— Swoosh— Swoosh—

Shin Ha-Neul's body moved like a mollusk and he continued to avoid Warrie's sword marginally. His whole body was soaked with cold sweat and he could not relax for a split second. Shin Ha-Neul was aware that a slight slip would allow Warrie to pierce him with his sword.

There was no hesitation on Warrie's end. He did not seem to care that he might pierce his opponent. Shin Ha-Neul, facing his attack, was frightened.

"Keugh!"

A sharp blade skimmed Shin Ha-Neul's flesh, and his butt almost separated from his body; but to only protect his behind would have meant paying the price of certain death, because the next moment, a sword came rushing toward his neck. Shin Ha-Neul screamed when he saw the sword and a million thoughts raced through his mind.

"Ahhh!" He shouted convulsively, but there was nothing wrong with his body.

Only then did Shin Ha-Neul realize that Warrie's sword had stopped in front of his neck. He sighed in relief.

"Ugh, he's going to cry again. He will cry soon."

"Don't call yourself a man. How is he going to climb the tower if he whines and cries so easily!"

"Stop! I didn't cry!" Shin Ha-Neul shouted.

The door hinge squeaked when Shin Ha-Neul cried out in frustration.

Squeak—

Lee Shin opened the door and entered the training ground.

"Is he crying again?" Lee Shin asked, looking at Shin Ha-Neul.

"I didn't cry!" Shin Ha-Neul replied angrily.

"Are you guys aware that you will soon have to climb the first floor and go beyond?" Lee Shin clearly ignored Shin Ha-Neul.

"Yes, we are aware of that."

"That's why we are here to be trained by Warrie."

"Let's see how well you guys are doing. You two, come at me." Lee Shin was here to train the challengers.

The two people were surprised by Lee Shin's words and quickly got up from their seats. Lee Shin had been working so hard on his research that he did not train them for the past few months. Since it had been a while, the two wanted to show him how hard they had trained.

"It will be different from before."

"Be prepared for it."

Their eyes were burning with determination. The next moment, another person opened the door and entered the training ground. It was Park Joo-Hyuk with his sharp gaze, wielding a sword around his waist. He bowed to Lee Shin.

"Join them," Lee Shin demanded.

"Okay, master," Park Joo-Hyuk replied.

When Park Joo-Hyuk joined, it made the two more determined to fight. Baek Hyun was more concerned with Park Joo-Hyuk than Kang Ji-Hoon, because the best rival for him was none other than Park Joo-Hyuk.

"Show me what you got." Lee Shin signaled with his fingers.

Lee Shin flapped his index finger and middle finger. As soon as Baek Hyun's sword was drawn from the scabbard, the sword aura was revealed and flew directly at Lee Shin. In fact, it was more accurate to call

it an expedient use of mana, instead of a sword aura; nevertheless, it was quite threatening. At the same time, a spear slipped from Kang Ji-Hoon's back, swirled around and rushed to Lee Shin.

"Oh, that is pretty good," Lee Shin was amazed.

Lee Shin's mana flowed and was absorbed into the ground. In the next moment, a stone wall protruded from the ground, blocked the sword and twisted the trajectory of the spear. The two, who naturally expected Lee Shin to block their attack, continued on to the next skill with a smooth connection just like flowing water.

Lee Shin smiled at the two in satisfaction, but the two had no time to see his expression.

Bang! Kwakwang!

The two of them who had been in control of the attack for a moment, quickly lost control and were forced to defend against Lee Shin's attack several times. Dozens of Ice Spears fell from the ceiling.

Kagagagak—

Lee Shin continued to be conscious of Park Joo-Hyuk while attacking the two. His swordplay was different from those of Baek Hyun and Kang Ji-Hoon. It was very practical and efficient. There was no useless movement at all, just like an assassin. Nevertheless, it was overwhelming.

Ice spears fell from above, stones rose from the ground, and explosions of air went off.

He used Triple Casting. All the attacks were just the basic mana of the second and third level, but the casting speed and the range of use made them different from an ordinary skill.

Lee Shin seemed relaxed, but that was not how he felt on the inside.

'With Mana Power Level 2, I can use up to the third level mana, but I can't use mana from higher levels...'? Lee Shin knew he could not clear them in one shot.

It was frustrating for Lee Shin because he had to link two to three mana skills to deal with the three simultaneously, when one fourth-level mana could easily defeat them all at once. Still, it was not difficult, just frustrating. Dozens of Ice Spears plummeted over Baek Hyun's head.

"Why is a swordmage only using his sword? Don't forget to use your mana! Use your left hand to draw a mana technique and swing your sword to find a way out!" Lee Shin gave him instructions.

On one side, a wide-range flame radiation wrapped around Kang Ji-Hoon.

"It's a good idea to rotate the spears to block the flame. But, are you just going to cover the front? What about the back? What about the sides? How about the top! The flame will come from all directions, so how are you going to block them like that? How many times have I told you to use the wind to deal with flames? Huh? Find a way to use your mana effectively!" Lee Shin shouted.

The two people had clenched their teeth. Shin Ha-Neul's laughter from behind annoyed them.

'I can't be humiliated in front of that guy!'

'If I keep going like this, I can't make fun of him anymore! I have to protect my dignity!'

Park Joo-Hyuk seemed to be dancing around in accordance with Lee Shin's mana, as if he was a stringed doll, with the Air Bomb that burst without warning.

"I told you to use mana power, didn't I? The only thing in your head right now is the [Power of Transformation]! Do well in combat before you think about using it at all! Your mastery of mana power is still lacking by so much!" Lee Shin shouted.

Park Joo-Hyuk clenched his teeth at Lee Shin's words. Although he had trained like crazy, he still had a long way to go. That necromancer did not even use his best power, black magic, and yet the three's concentration had reached its peak. The confrontation with Lee Shin was coming to an end.

Lee Shin was admiring three people in his mind. The skills of the two people who stayed on the first floor for the longest time were outstanding within the Undermost. Lee Shin had not been able to oversee their training, but they had achieved considerable growth without the help of the tower.

This was important. When challengers eventually started climbing the tower, they relied on the rewards given by the tower, and their own honing of skills slowed down. In the end, they would reach a plateau in their skills while climbing the tower, and they would die due to the sudden increase in difficulty and numerous other variables.

"This is it. You guys did a great job. You have improved quite a lot," Lee Shin said, looking at the three people, lying on the floor with satisfied looks.

"Don't be so conceited. In the end, it's just that you've become stronger as you wasted your time on the first floor. Even if you guys break the record on the earlier floors of the tower, the higher up you go, the more likely people like Cha Yu-Min will catch up with you. The top rankers are not the rankers for no reason. So keep going," Lee Shin reminded them.

"Okay, I will."

"I will keep that in mind."

Lee Shin paused and was about to leave the room.

"Oh, and you, Shin Ha-Neul," Lee Shin called out.

"Ah, yes?" Shin Ha-Neul answered in surprise.

"I'm afraid you'll be beaten up if you leave the first floor. When you start climbing the tower, don't draw attention to yourself and climb quietly. I think you might be sent to the afterlife sooner by other challengers or the monsters of the tower rather than later as you climb," Lee Shin reminded him.

"Okay..." Shin Ha-Neul replied.

Shin Ha-Neul lowered his head in despondency. When he first climbed the tower, he thought of becoming a supernova and ruling the tower, but he got less and less confident when he realized that he was insignificant compared to the people of the Undermost. There even was a time when he briefly struggled with Mrs. Kang's son.

'Wow, I'm tearing up already.' Shin Ha-Neul became a little scared to climb the tower after hearing Lee Shin's words.

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[2,136,320/3,000,000]

A large system window was launched in the Central Square of the Undermost. Toeing sat in front of it and collected points from people.

"Thank you!" Toeing replied.

"Wow! You brought 5,000 points? Mr. Jang, you must have worked hard!" said Toeing.

"Wow! We have collected so many points!" Toeing was excited.

Three million points were needed. This was a fundraiser to buy the Heart of the Soul Scavenger. And they were almost at the end. People looked at the rising numbers and were more motivated to collect points. The fort of the Undermost was almost finished. Upon hearing the news of the fundraising process, Lee Shin stepped up the plans for creating a boss to replace him.

"Hmm... I think this is good enough. He probably wouldn't need brains as much as May," Lee Shin muttered.

"Master, but isn't the boss too strong compared to the previous first-floor boss?" May asked anxiously.

"That's right, the previous boss on the first floor is not even close to what I'm making right now," Lee Shin answered.

"But then why are you making him so strong? If that's the case, the new challengers would not be able to clear the first floor again."

"That's exactly what I want to do. Because even if I get out of here, I need a boss who can challenge the Undermost challengers on the first floor for the sake of their growth. It's very stupid to clear the first floor without any growth. So shouldn't we force them to get trained?" Lee Shin suggested.

"I see, but won't people protest?" May asked.

"You still don't understand the Korean challengers. People want others to suffer as much as they did. What would the current Undermost people do to the newcomers if they couldn't clear the first floor?" Lee Shin asked.

"Aha, they will teach the newcomers a lesson, just like how they went through training," May replied.

"Exactly! And even if we leave, there is no need for those who are here to occupy this place. They will know that they can return from the upper floors later," Lee Shin explained.

"You are brilliant, master!" May shouted.

"Hahaha! We will be able to get out of the first floor before the Dimension Gate closes," Lee Shin was excited.

During this period of the Dimension Gate, the shock people would experience was not a joke, because the ranking would change completely.