

## The Tower 216

### Chapter 216

Saintess Belle had once ventured alone into Obscarit, the World of the Night, to save countless people. She sacrificed herself to rescue them, and Martyr—the life-giving sword—was known to be her embodiment. And that sword was showing a strong will for the first time.

- The Great Evil is hiding himself in the abyss. We must eradicate him!

Martyr spoke without stopping. Suddenly, Lee Shin wondered if the Saintess had also been this talkative.

- If we enter this abyss, we will find the Great Evil.

Crafting a sphere of magical light illuminated the cracks in the ground. However, even moving the light sphere toward the fissures could not dispel the endless darkness enveloping them.

"This is eerie," Lee Shin muttered, looking around.

A chilling sensation passed over his skin—the fear of falling into the abyss when he entered this place.

‘But I guess I have no choice but to go in...’

After enveloping his body in mana, Lee Shin shot a thin mana thread into the cliffside and leaped into the abyss. He used the thread to control his rapid descent, sending additional mana strands downward to detect any obstacles.

“It seems like there are no apparent issues,” Lee Shin muttered, observing the situation.

- What are you saying, Master! There is a very big issue! The Great Evil is so close!

"Well, all right..." Lee Shin replied.

Martyr continued emphasizing the danger to Lee Shin, but he could feel it well enough without her reminder. Lee Shin could sense that the deeper he went into the abyss, the thicker the darkness clung to his body.

- He is an Evil Spirit who seizes souls, inflicts suffering, and takes pleasure in destroying minds. He is an evil that must not be spared!

Thud.

Lee Shin had no idea how long his descent had lasted. Upon landing on the ground, within the dense darkness, something shimmered before his eyes like mist, emitting a faint green glow.

"I can't believe that someone alive has come all the way here... Are you hoping to die?" asked the Evil Spirit, laughing at Lee Shin.

Within the hovering green armor, the black mist had taken shape. A mask-like object also clung to its head, emanating a sinister green glow.

"Looks like a tasty soul has come," the Evil Spirit said.

The blue-bladed scythe held by the Evil Spirit began slowly rotating at the end of its chain.

- I'll take care of this.

As soon as Martyr said that, divine power flowed into Martyr from Lee Shin's body and enveloped it. Meanwhile, light emanated from Martyr, which floated toward the sky, forming a faint apparition.

'Saintess Belle...'

She had pure white hair and bright, intelligent eyes. She walked toward the Evil Spirit in her priestly attire.

"You... are..." the Evil Spirit muttered in shock as he saw Saintess Belle.

"You evil spirit who fell from your place as a Great Devil, creating the World of the Night known as Obscarit to delight in oppressing and plundering virtuous souls," said Saintess Belle.

"Well, well, you've appeared before me...!" the Evil Spirit replied, looking at Saintess Belle.

The spinning scythe continued its onslaught, piercing Saintess Belle. However, she was merely a divine power projection. After the giant scythe struck the ground, creating a crater, it returned to the Evil Spirit as if being absorbed.

"Oh, I see, you were just an illusion," said the Evil Spirit with a slight hint of disappointment.

"No, although my physical form has disappeared, my will remains intact. And there is a wizard here who will act on my behalf," said Saintess Belle boldly.

Her words made the Evil Spirit's gaze shift toward Lee Shin. His thick, sinister, murderous intent enveloped Lee Shin.

Swish!

The iron chains started to attack Lee Shin without warning. With a fierce tearing sound, the scythe tip swiftly broke through Lee Shin's shield, which he quickly put together.

'Tsk...!'

Surprised by the overwhelming force, Lee Shin activated Transcendence and jumped backward to evade the attack.

Boom!

Facing the rushing air pressure, Lee Shin lowered his body and pushed against the ground with his right hand to minimize the recoil. Then, he dispersed mana in every direction.

[Earth Burst]

Red flames erupted from the ground as if a volcano had exploded.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Five consecutive flame explosions occurred, disrupting the scythe's trajectory and engulfing the Evil Spirit.

"I won't let you win like this...!" the Evil Spirit muttered, glaring at Lee Shin.

Woong—!

The massive chain extended and spun rapidly, generating wind that wrapped the flames and shot them in all directions.

Swoosh—!

The scythe struck the abyss surroundings, destroying the embankments and stone formations around.

- Do not get hit by that scythe! If you do, it will be over!

Martyr shouted worriedly as she watched the Evil Spirit's attacks from the sidelines. However, Lee Shin was already well aware of the danger.

Geughhh—

Keuughhh—

Save me...

Please... Free me from this agony...!

The souls in this place cried out in pain as the Evil Spirit's scythe took them away.

'The chain is binding the souls.'

The chain could ensnare the souls like a spider's web with the slightest graze.

- The Evil Spirit's weakness is... the souls.

"Huh? Did you say souls?" Lee Shin asked to clarify.

- Yes, that's right! The Evil Spirit's power comes from capturing and extorting souls. As long as there are souls present, he won't die. So, we need to get rid of all the nearby souls that are nearby.

Lee Shin quickly scanned the surroundings. Just from a glance, he could tell that there were thousands of souls in his immediate vicinity alone.

Behind the Evil Spirit lay darkness, a lightless expanse. Lee Shin pondered how many souls slumbered in the shadows and how many more the Evil Spirit's gourd-shaped bottle held captive. The number must be unfathomable.

"Hey there, human wizard... Did Saintess Belle tell you my secret?" The Evil Spirit chuckled slyly. "Hehe... Go ahead and try your absolute best. But, know this, I won't make the same mistake twice."

The mask-like face scattered a green glow over the dark smoke. Then, as his eye glowed, the black fog was pushed away in all directions.

"Keugh...!" Lee Shin groaned.

Lee Shin blocked the surging fog with a barrier; then, he heard chilling screams echoing from various places.

Kiiiaah!!

Kkaaah!!

Lee Shin knew it was the souls wailing, but he didn't know why. However, it seemed like the pure souls were being corrupted and succumbing to evil.

- The Evil Spirit is crushing the souls and plundering their power! Please, do something, Master!

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue.

Lee Shin was already taking action, sensing the situation's urgency without being told. He knew that delaying his response could lead to grave consequences and was determined to act swiftly.

[Soul Chains]

Swoosh—!

Lee Shin extended his mana in all directions, hitting the empty space, and created mana circles in various places. Translucent chains emerged from within the circles, entwining the souls.

"I won't let you do that...!" Lee Shin muttered.

Woong—

The Evil Spirit gave the iron chains a bit of slack, and the chain and the scythe began spinning wildly, shattering the Soul Chains.

[Demon Explosion]

The Evil Spirit couldn't absorb the souls for a bit; Lee Shin used that opportunity to detonate the nearby demon souls.

Bababam—!

"Keugh!" A groan escaped from the Evil Spirit's lips for the first time.

- It's working!

The Demon Explosion had swept away some of the Evil Spirit's black smoke. The Evil Spirit's green eyes trembled in confusion.

"So, you were not a wizard but a necromancer?" the Evil Spirit asked.

The Evil Spirit's rough voice seemed to be mixed with anger.

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"Hehe... But can a mere human like you withstand the power of a demon soul?" mocked the Evil Spirit.

The Evil Spirit narrowed his eyes, now resembling crescent moons, and laughed; it was nasty laughter. He then lifted the gourd-shaped bottle he kept around his waist.

"Come forth!" ordered the Evil Spirit.

With that order, thousands of souls flooded out of the bottle. The number and hostility of the souls were enough to turn the surroundings red.

"Urgh!" Lee Shin muttered.

Demon Explosion had already filled the area with demon souls, but now more had come from the bottle; their onslaught made Lee Shin's mind reel. The area now had low-class and high-class demon souls, and both were emitting fierce murderous intent. Even Lee Shin found this situation difficult to handle.

"You seem to be struggling," the Evil Spirit said, looking at Lee Shin.

Unlike Lee Shin, the Evil Spirit was familiar with the demon souls' murderous intent. As if to prove it, he grabbed a few demon souls and swallowed them.

- Don't worry. I'm here with you.

When Martyr's golden divine power enveloped Lee Shin, the haze left his vision and clarity returned. The foggiest clouding his mind began dissipating.

"Haah... Ha..." Lee Shin let out a sigh of relief.

Lee Shin had nearly gotten into big trouble. It was difficult to believe he struggled so greatly to rein in his mental strength.

"You have some tricks up your sleeve," said the Evil Spirit.

The Evil Spirit's chained scythe came for Lee Shin again.



[Steel Plate Shield]

Lee Shin placed a steel shield in the air to deflect the scythe, but the demon souls under the Evil Spirit's control were now pouring toward Lee Shin.

"Hahaha... Try blocking them," said the Evil Spirit with a laugh.

Lee Shin realized his usual method for controlling demon souls was ineffective. There was a vast gap in necromantic ability between them.

'Well, then, I guess I'll have to use my main power.'

Whoosh!

Lee Shin called upon the Grand Spirit of Fire, Igrett.

Pizz—

He threw the flames that he had conjured in his palm directly near the spot where the Evil Spirit stood.

"It will be meaningless—"

Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!

The blazing flames rapidly expanded, cutting the Evil Spirit off and instantly engulfing the surrounding demon souls.

"Huh? How in the world...!" exclaimed the Evil Spirit, bewildered.

Lee Shin could feel the power of the Evil Spirit rapidly diminishing.

"This is what happens when a Great Wizard also knows how to handle souls," Lee Shin replied with a smirk.

This outcome was the result of his elevated status and enhanced understanding. Lee Shin had used [Soul Chains] on souls during his time on the second floor. While it had been an inefficient spell then, circumstances had changed now.

'All I need to do is convert the power to materialize mana into souls.'

This magic worked on a different principle than his makeshift method back then.

"Keaughh...!" screamed the Evil Spirit in agony.

Igrett continued to emit flames relentlessly, increasing the firepower.

- The souls seem to be withering away. Now is the time! We have to finish this now to defeat the Evil Spirit!

"All right!" Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin grabbed Martyr and leaped into the air.

- You have to pour all your power into this!

"Okay, I got it!" Lee Shin replied.

Both black mana and divine power came together and enveloped Martyr.

[Divine Strike True Sword]

When Lee Shin swung his blade, it clashed with the Evil Spirit's scythe, creating a thunderous sound.

Clang—!

"Kraaah!" the Evil Spirit screamed.

Martyr gradually pushed back the scythe; finally, the sword's purple aura succeeded in cleaving the Evil Spirit.

[You have defeated an opponent with a divinity class of 10 or higher.]

[You have partially fulfilled the conditions of The Path to Become an Adversary.]

"Ha..." Lee Shin took a deep breath as he looked at the Evil Spirit's remnants dissipating like fog.

It had been a terrifying and dangerously powerful creature. The fact that such a creature had been hiding here sent chills down Lee Shin's spine.

- Great work.

"Yeah," Lee Shin replied to Martyr.

Lee Shin put Martyr back into the sheath, and the stage clear message appeared before him.

[You have cleared the eighty-fifth floor.]

[Your achievements will be recorded.]

[Amazing achievement...]

[...]

The Tower's difficulty level grew exponentially with each new floor. Even in the past, Lee Shin had not dared to choose Extreme difficulty mode on the eighty-fifth floor. Now, though, he had selected Hell difficulty—all but risking his life in an attempt that pushed his limits.

- What are you going to do with the video you recorded?

"I'll show it," Lee Shin replied.

Lee Shin had recorded the video for Cha Yu-Min's sake. However, he could now also use it to instill a sense of caution among challengers. Just as Baek Hyun had nearly died due to selecting Hell mode on the fifth floor, some challengers allowed arrogance to cloud their judgment of their own limits.

Given Lee Shin's ease in overcoming the lower floors' Hell modes appeared surmountable. However, witnessing the harrowing reality of the 85th floor's Hell difficulty firsthand would dissuade rash decisions.

- What do you think about bringing these souls with you?

Lee Shin hesitated when he heard Martyr; she sounded doleful.

[You have acquired the 『Skill - The Mental Strength of the Evil Spirit』 ]

[You have acquired the 『Item - The Gourd Shaped Bottle of Tolcher』 ]

These were the rewards that Lee Shin received for clearing this stage.

[The Mental Strength of the Evil Spirit]

You, who have withstood the malice of Tolcher, the Evil Spirit, possess mental strength even superior to the Evil Spirit.

# You are immune to any mental interference.

[The Gourd Shaped Bottle of Tolcher]

This is a gourd-shaped bottle that can hold infinite souls. Rumor has it that Tolcher entrapped over tens of millions of souls inside.

# You can forcibly contain souls.

# You can retrieve the contained souls.

# You can store the souls infinitely.

Lee Shin acquired immunity to mental interference and the gourd-shaped bottle. The rewards were quite remarkable.

“All right, that sounds like a good idea,” Lee Shin replied to Martyr.

Many souls still resided within the Gourd Shaped Bottle. The demon souls that lingered in this realm were of an entirely different caliber than ordinary ones. They had survived the aftermath of Lee Shin's battle, distinguishing them as formidable opponents beyond the mediocre.

"Come in here, everyone," Lee Shin said.

When Lee Shin held out the Gourd Shaped Bottle, the remaining souls were drawn inside, compelled by some power within. Though he had no immediate plans for them, he made a mental note to contemplate how to utilize them later.

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

Clearing the floors from eighty-first to eighty-fifth had consumed considerable time for Lee Shin. He believed the Heavenly Secretary would arrive on Earth soon.