

The Tower 227

Chapter 227

Lub-dub— Lub-dub— Lub-dub— Lub-dub—

Lee Shin's heart raced uncontrollably, pounding like a drum. He felt an intense sense of peril as if his life was in imminent danger. Cold sweat dripped down his spine, and he hesitated momentarily, unsure of what to do next. Should he try to run away or face whatever was coming head-on? But as he glanced around, he quickly realized he couldn't escape the massive tentacles.

'Do I not have any other choice?'

Lee Shin decided to gather every ounce of his mana. Glints continually appeared in his eyes as his mana underwent endless changes.

[Transcendence]

Time seemed to slow down for Lee Shin as he entered a state of heightened focus. Despite the throbbing pain in his head, he flooded his mind with countless calculations and formulas, using his keen intuition to process them at lightning speed. His experiences coalesced into a singular image, which he then projected onto the world around him.

[Absolute Shield]

Lee Shin turned the entire space into a shield and tried to calm his rapidly beating heart.

Crack—

He then relaxed his jaw muscles and focused on the magic. As Lee Shin erected the Absolute Shield, immense pressure bore down on him.

Kugugugugugu—

"Keugh...!" Lee Shin groaned in pain.

Suddenly, blood oozed out of his mouth, trickling down from his lips. The tentacle struck the Absolute Shield; simultaneously, he felt his mana depleting. While he had anticipated this, the sheer force of the extortion still caught him off-guard.

[The power of chaos has extorted your mana.]

[The power of chaos has extorted your mana.]

[The power of chaos has ...]

Lee Shin struggled to concentrate as an influx of messages bombarded his mind. His mana, the source of his power, was being steadily depleted, causing the flow that formed his Absolute Shield to weaken and falter.

‘Damn it! How much longer can I endure this...?’

However, thankfully, Gene did not look so well either. Lee Shin suspected that Gene couldn’t use the power of chaos endlessly, and Gene seemed to be feeling the strain of wielding it. Despite this, he knew that enduring the attack and waiting for Gene to tire himself out was easier said than done.

"Keugh!" Lee Shin groaned,

[The God of Divinity has expressed his astonishment.]

[The God of Destruction smirked.]

[The God of Blessings laughed loudly.]

[The God of War has shown amazement.]

[The God of Time has shown interest.]

[...]

Messages from the gods continued to flow in, their interest in the situation almost palpable. Lee Shin couldn't help but wonder what they hoped for—did they want him to die here, or did they want him to endure and win?

'I still don't know the gods' intentions, but...'

Nevertheless, Lee Shin did not plan on dying here like this for them.

Thump. Thump. Thump. Thump.

Lee Shin heard the sound of urgent footsteps from the side; as he felt a warm breeze rush in, he saw Oskepel leaping in.

"That's the Divine Sealing Spell...!" Lee Shin muttered in amazement.

Crack—!

As Martyr pierced the tentacle, divine power emanated from the sword and drilled into it, inscribing incomprehensible symbols as it spread.

'Oh, the pressure is decreasing.'

It felt like the strength coming from the tentacle was dispersing. Small tentacles sprouted from the main body of the tentacle and flew toward Oskepel.

"Divine Grand Magic," Lee Shin muttered, looking at Oskepel.

Oskepel closed his eyes, and a golden glow illuminated him.

Swoosh—!

When the tentacles surged from all directions and attacked Oskepel, his divine power erupted, engulfing the tentacles. The pressure of the chaos pressing against Lee Shin's Absolute Shield disappeared. Instead, a fierce wind rushed in, and fragments of divine power struck the Absolute Shield, making sweat trickle down his nose.

"Haa..." Gasping for breath, Lee Shin slowly walked through the swirling dust and wind.

Sand, dust, dirt, blood, and other debris brushed against Lee Shin's skin and passed by. Oskepel's radiance used to be brighter than anyone, but it had rapidly diminished.

"Oskepel," Lee Shin called out.

"Commander..." Oskepel replied, his voice weak and death near.

Oskepel looked at Lee Shin with trembling eyes.

"P-please... finish it for me," Oskepel said, looking at Lee Shin.

Martyr, now stuck in the ground, supported Oskepel as he grabbed Lee Shin's hand.

"Of course," Lee Shin replied.

"And... please... put me in your... Corps..." Oskepel asked.

Lee Shin felt the rough texture of Oskepel's hardened skin as it fell down, lifeless. His once brilliant gaze faded. The overwhelming power of chaos had also vanished, torn apart. Oskepel had achieved this result through his sacrifice.

'Or maybe I just panicked.'

Knowing the great power of the speck of chaos, it might have loomed even larger in Lee Shin's mind. If he had considered Gene's state, he would not have panicked.

"Tsk." Lee Shin clicked his tongue and sent dark mana toward Oskepel.

[You have attempted to turn 'Oskepel' into an Undead.]

['Oskepel' has accepted the black mana.]

['Oskepel' has become one of your subordinates.]

Oskepel's flesh began decaying instantly; as it disappeared, his pearly, white bones were revealed.

Clank— Clank—

A rustling sound came from inside Oskepel's armor as he rose with an awkward gesture. He picked up Martyr, drove it back into the earth, and knelt before Lee Shin.

"I am Oskepel, reborn as one of your subordinates," said Oskepel, now an Undead.

"All right, just stay back for now," Lee Shin said.

"Yes, Sir!" Oskepel replied.

Despite acquiring a formidable subordinate, Oskepel, Lee Shin didn't feel particularly pleased. With a hardened expression, he turned to look at Gene Ebrium, who lay on the ground, defeated. Lee Shin's last attack carried a force that surpassed the capabilities of the body he had crafted for Gene. The tower had probably enhanced that body, but it surely also had its limits.

'If it weren't for Oskepel, it could have been really dangerous this time.'

Lee Shin could not figure out how Gene Ebrium had used the power of chaos, as Gene just shouldn't be able to harness such power.

"Gene," Lee Shin muttered, looking at Gene Ebrium.

As he looked at Gene Ebrium, a black light flashed in his violet eyes.

Swoosh—!

The background changed suddenly.

"Keugh..." Gene Ebrium was injured severely and collapsed.

One of his arms had a gash so deep that his white bone was visible, and his violet hair was slick with blood.

- Arrogance has led you to your downfall.

A god with white hair stood before Gene Ebrium, looking down at him. Slowly raising his head, Lee Shin looked around. Dozens—no, hundreds of gods had gathered there, each with their avatars. The desolate land had a distinct smell: the smell of death. Gene and his Corps of Immortality had lost to the gods.

'It feels like I'm looking at my past.'

The main difference was that Gene's past had an incomparable number of gods.

- Be our Apostle.

"No, I don't want to." Gene refused.

- And we know asking again will do nothing. However, know that by becoming our apostle, you have everything to gain and nothing to lose. You can know more, and you can achieve more.

Gene reluctantly agreed due to the god's persistent urging, and the scenery shifted again. He now stood at the edge of a cliff in a harsh, icy wasteland. Each breath he took produced a plume of white vapor like smoke from a cigar. Battling against the biting wind, Gene approached the cliff's edge and peered down.

Thunk!

The cliff edge cracked under the weight and plummeted into the dark abyss below as if pulled by an unseen force. Gene's brow furrowed in alarm as he attempted to retreat swiftly, but the cliff began disintegrating beneath his feet.

Thud!

Gene's clothes were shredded as he became snagged on a jutting rock halfway down the cliff. Though battered from his fight with the deity, he slid into a cave beneath the jutting rock. Aware that another fall would mean certain doom, Gene cautiously looked outside the cave.

'Damn it.'

Gene entered the cave, and inside, he found something unexpected.

"Did someone have a laboratory here...?"

Gene examined various materials and research equipment before leaning against the wall, lost in thought. Time was passing quickly. Gene picked up a pen from the desk. Lately, his mind had been drifting strangely. His fight with the gods had damaged his mana vessels; it showed no signs of repair. Moreover, his memories were slowly fading away.

"I, Gene Ebrium, will begin recording from today..." Gene Ebrium muttered as he wrote things in a notebook.

With vacant eyes, Gene looked around after closing the notebook.

"Where is this place...? Where exactly am I right now?" Gene Ebrium muttered absentmindedly.

Everything began to feel artificial to Gene, owing to the presence of a laboratory, the necessary research equipment, and the consistent growth and availability of moss, mushrooms, and water daily.

'This is a place made for me...'

It may have been an exaggerated notion, but Gene couldn't shake off the feeling. Soon, he created a new space inside the laboratory. He made a large wooden chest big enough for a person to lie down, took off the necklace around his neck, and placed it inside.

"Lilian, if I never recover... if you wake up later... bury my body," Gene Ebrium muttered solemnly.

Gene clenched his teeth and lowered his head. After leaving this room, he never returned to it. Time then began passing quickly, and within those flashing moments, Gene seemed to be fighting against something alone.

"Why in the world did you imprison me here? Why!" Gene shouted in frustration.

Black mana had formed in Gene's hand, and he began destroying the laboratory like a madman. More time passed, and Gene lost his vitality. With vacant eyes, he stepped outside the laboratory. There was

an unfamiliar chair outside the laboratory and in the common area. Gene sat down on it as if possessed by something.

Thump... Thump...

The sound of footsteps echoed softly, signaling the arrival of someone with an obscure figure in the common area.

"Hmm... This guy won't do." The voice was very rough, like scraping metal. And it was filled with discomfort, regret, irritation, anger, and multiple other emotions.

"There's nothing else I can do..." muttered the newcomer.

Approaching Gene, he placed something resembling a hand on Gene's head.

"You'll have to become the boss of the first floor," said the man.

"Y-you are..." Gene muttered, looking at the man as if he knew something.

"I will compliment you for noticing my presence. But you're not strong enough to accept me," said the man.

"Keugh...!" Gene groaned.

Gene's eyes snapped open as he felt a sudden sharp pain, and then he lowered his head, closing his eyes.

"Gods are eternal—" Gene muttered.

Swoosh—!

The background changed, and they were back to the present.

'What was that just now?'

Lee Shin was confused about what he just heard. What did he mean by becoming the boss of the first floor? He thought that gods could not come to the first floor. However, just now, that person had made Gene Ebrium the first floor's boss.

'Wait a second... When I obtained the Immortal Sphere...'

Lee Shin remembered that someone was definitely standing there when he obtained the Immortal Sphere. He also found the silhouette of that person and the figure he had just seen quite similar.

'If I can hear this story from Gene, I might learn something.'

A soul slowly left Gene Ebrium's body. The initially pure white soul began to turn reddish.

'Is he trying to become a demon soul?'

Lee Shin bit his lips and immediately activated his mana.

[Necromancy]

Lee Shin suppressed and absorbed the demon soul using his strong dominance. Extending his black mana to Gene's soul, he captured the demon soul as it screamed in agony.

[You have absorbed the demon soul of 「Gene Ebrium」]

Absorbing Gene's demon soul was not as difficult as he had thought. Lee Shin absorbed his steadily improving necromancy skills, exceptionally high dominance, and familiarity with black mana, all along with his demon soul.

Subsequently, the clear messages for the ninetieth floor appeared in front of Lee Shin.

[You have cleared the ninetieth floor.]

[Your achievements will be recorded.]

[Amazing achievement! Many gods are paying attention to you!]

[Requests for conversation from the gods are pouring in!]

[You have achieved 7,312,597 points.]

[...]

[You have acquired the 「Shadow of Gene Ebrum」]

[You have acquired the 「Skill – Bone Fusion」]

[You have acquired the 「Skill – Bone Decomposition」]

[The ability of your 「Skill – Shadow Space」 has been improved.]

[Gene Ebrum's demon soul has been purified.]

[The seal on the physical body has been completely lifted.]

Lee Shin looked at the rewards and lowered his head to look at the shadow underneath him. A strangely ominous aura emanated from the murky shadow beneath his feet.

‘The Corps of Immortality...’

Gene’s Corps of Immortality was now in Lee Shin’s hands, and so was its power to resurrect endlessly. His heart began to race. The Corps of Immortality hadn’t been in their peak form during the last battle because Gene couldn’t use all his power.

Gulp—

Lee Shin gulped unknowingly.

- You are...

A familiar voice rang soon after. Lee Shin had heard this voice in his memories due to the title “He Who Knows Death.”

"Gene Ebrium?" Lee Shin asked, looking at the soul.

[The God of Battle has requested a duel with his Apostle!]

[The God of Truth seeks the truth.]

[The God of Death smiled in satisfaction.]

[The God of Destruction smirked.]

[The God of Time has requested a conversation.]

[The God of Light has...]

Upon hearing the name Gene Ebrium, the gods began sending numerous requests.